

INDEPENDENCE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Student/Parent Procedural Handbook

2026–2027 School Year



Jodie Hughes

Principal

7600 Hillside Road
Independence, OH 44131

216-642-5870 (Main #)
216-236-7350 (Fax #)
216-642-5879 (Attendance #)

Approved by the Board of Education on June 20, 2026.

Welcome to Independence Primary School for the 2026-2027 School Year!

A new school year brings opportunities for fresh beginnings - new classes, new faces, and new learning experiences. As a proud **2025 Blue Ribbon School** and recipient of an overall **5-star rating from the Ohio Department of Education**, we are committed to maintaining a tradition of excellence for every student.

This handbook provides important information about the policies and procedures that guide our school. Please review and discuss the appropriate information with your child.

Many individuals contribute to the strength of our educational program, including Board of Education members, administrators, teachers, secretaries, tutors, nurses, paraprofessionals, student aides, counselors, custodians, maintenance staff, psychologists, bus drivers, speech and occupational therapists, librarians, and cafeteria personnel.

Our success also depends on the partnership we share with our families. We encourage you to get involved through the PTO and stay connected to our school community. By working together, we ensure that Independence Local Schools students receive an outstanding start in their elementary years. The entire IPS staff wishes you and your family a wonderful and successful school year!

Jodie Hughes	Principal	216-642-5870 ext. 1400 jhughes@independence.k12.oh.us
Brooke Gradert	School Counselor	216-642-5870 ext. 1402 bgradert@independence.k12.oh.us
Cindi Lu	Principal's Secretary	216-642-5870 ext. 1401 clu@independence.k12.oh.us
Victoria Robertson	Attendance Secretary	216-642-5870 ext. 1443 vrobertson@independence.k12.oh.us
Kelli Cogan	Superintendent	216-642-5850 kcogan@independence.k12.oh.us

For a complete **Staff Directory**, visit the School website.

This school procedural handbook contains procedures and information unique to Independence Primary School and is intended to supplement, not replace, the District Handbook and Board of Education policies. All students and families are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the policies outlined in those documents, in addition to the information provided here. In cases of conflict, Board policies and the District Handbook take precedence.

IPS School Hours

First Day of School: August 24, 2026

Last Day of School: June 3, 2027

Regular School Day Hours:

Grades K-4	8:30 AM - 3:10 PM
AM PreK	8:30 AM - 11:10 AM
PM PreK	12:20 PM - 3:00 PM

Office Open	7:30 a.m.
Building Open for Students	8:15 a.m.
Classes in Session	8:30 a.m.
Lunch (Kindergarten)	11:00 a.m.
Lunch (3rd Grade)	11:30 a.m.
Lunch (2nd Grade)	12:00 p.m.
Lunch (4th Grade)	12:30 p.m.
Lunch (1st Grade)	1:00 p.m.
Car Rider Dismissal	3:05 p.m.
Bus Rider Dismissal	3:10 p.m.
Office Closed	4:00 p.m.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Topic	Page No.
Stay Connected_____	5
Arrival, Dismissal & Attendance_____	6
MORNING ARRIVAL_____	6
Car Riders_____	6
ATTENDANCE_____	6
How to Report an Absence in SafeArrival_____	6
Attendance Calls_____	7
Leaving During the School Day_____	7
Late Arrivals and Tardiness_____	7
Planned Vacations and Absences_____	7
Attendance Records_____	7
Excessive Absences or Tardies_____	7
Make Up Work & Requests for Homework_____	8
DISMISSAL PROCEDURES_____	8
Car Riders_____	8
Bus Riders_____	9
Changes to Dismissal Plans_____	9
General Information_____	9
SCHOOL VISITATION PROCEDURES_____	9
Visitor Sign In_____	9
Classroom Visitors_____	9
Forgotten Items_____	9
Parent/Guardian Lunch Visits (In School and Out of School)_____	9
PARENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES_____	10
PTO_____	10
Classroom Parties_____	11
ANIMALS ON DISTRICT PROPERTY_____	11
OUTDOOR RECESS_____	11
CELL PHONE AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY_____	11
STUDENT VALUABLES_____	12
LOST AND FOUND_____	12
SNACKS_____	12
BIRTHDAY TREATS_____	13
SCHOOL FEES_____	13

Academics_____	14
GRADING_____	14
REPORT CARDS_____	14
PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICIES_____	14
Grades K-2_____	14
Grades 3-4_____	14
Third Grade Reading Guarantee_____	15
PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES_____	15
HOMEWORK_____	15
FIELD TRIPS_____	16
I-PRIDE CHARACTER PROGRAM_____	16
Student Recognition_____	16
Student Conduct_____	17
PLAYGROUND RULES_____	17
CAFETERIA RULES_____	18
BUS RULES_____	18
DETENTIONS_____	19
Activities_____	19
Art Club_____	19
Drone Club_____	19
IPS Choir_____	19
IPS PTO Drama Club_____	19
IPS Sewing Club_____	19
K-Kids_____	19
Running Club_____	19
Snapology_____	20
Student Council_____	20
Tadpoles (Jr. Biology Club)_____	20
Wrestling Club_____	20
Special Services_____	20
TUTOR – READING SUPPORT_____	20
READING IMPROVEMENT MONITORING PLAN (RIMP)_____	20
GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM_____	21
GUIDANCE_____	21
INTERVENTION_____	21
OUTSIDE TUTORING_____	21
PSYCHOLOGICAL/COUNSELING SERVICES - SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST_____	22
RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)_____	22

RELATED SERVICES	22
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST	22

Stay Connected

- **Website:** Independence Primary School and District independence.k12.oh.us
 - Find school news, calendars, lunch menus, staff directory, documents, parent links, and more - all in one place. (**App** "Independence Local Schools")
- **Alerts:** We use **Blackboard Connect** to make announcements and update families on many important events, including weather-related delays and closures. All families in our information system automatically receive updates.
 - Your account will be linked to the phone numbers listed for the students' parents or guardians. Please contact the office if you are not receiving notifications.
- **Weekly Parent Update:** through **Constant Contact** is emailed home each Friday.
 - If you do not receive this weekly email or would like to subscribe additional email addresses, click "SUBSCRIBE TO RECEIVE DISTRICT EMAILS" at the bottom of our homepage or click [HERE](#).
- **Social Media:** Independence Primary School and PTO **Facebook** page.
 - We regularly post photos, reminders, and more. Search for "Independence Primary School" and "Like Us" to receive regular updates in your Facebook feed!
- **Attendance:** Need to inform us of an absence or early dismissal? Subscribe to enroll in [SchoolMessenger: SafeArrival](#), the Independence attendance program. (**App** "SM Home")
- **School Records:** report cards, attendance history, and more - [ProgressBook Parent Access](#) (**App** "ProgressBook") Registration Keys will be provided by the school office around the start of the school year for those who need access.
- **Lunch Menus:** [My School Menus](#) (**App** "My School Menus")
- **Online Payment Platform:** [PaySchools Central](#) (**App** "PaySchools Central")
- **Meal Transaction History, Free & Reduced:** [LINQ Connect](#) (**App** "LINQ Connect")
- **Bus Routes:** (**App** "My Ride K-12")

Please call the office at 216-642-5870 if you need help getting started with any of these!

Arrival, Dismissal & Attendance

MORNING ARRIVAL

In the interest of student safety, students should **not** arrive at school before 8:15 a.m.

Car Riders

Drop-off 8:15 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

- Use the Brecksville Road entrance to drop off your student at the Kindergarten door.
- IPS staff members will be by the doors to greet the students.
- If you arrive after this time, you will have to accompany your student to the office to sign in.
- As part of our security procedures, the doors are locked at all times.

Families with preschool students may drop off at the front circle outside the preschool doors from 8:25 a.m. until 8:35 a.m. and after all buses have cleared the circle.

For before-school programs, the club coordinators will meet the students at the front entrance for drop-off. Please be prompt - students arriving late will need to buzz into the building.

ATTENDANCE

One of our top priorities is ensuring that every student arrives safely at school every day. Please notify the school as early as possible to report your child's absence, late arrival, or early dismissal. Attendance can only be communicated by a parent or guardian, regardless of the student's age. Refer to the District Handbook for a complete list of legal excuses for absences.

How to Report an Absence in SafeArrival

Whether your child will be **late, leaving early, leaving and returning, or absent all day**, you can report your child's absence in advance using any of these three convenient methods:

1. **SchoolMessenger mobile app** - The first time you use the app, select Sign Up to create your account. Select Attendance, then Report an Absence.
2. **SafeArrival website, home.schoolmessenger.com** - The first time you use the website, select Sign Up to create your account. Then select Attendance and Report an Absence.
3. **Toll-Free Phone Number - Call 1 (888) 906-3890** and follow the prompts to report an absence using the automated system.

Same day notifications can only be received until 9:30 a.m. After 9:30 a.m., or for absences longer than two days, you will need to call in to the building.

Attendance Calls

If you have not reported your child's absence before the start of the school day, either in SafeArrival or by calling the building, **SafeArrival will automatically contact you** through multiple communication methods until a reason is provided. If the system cannot reach you, our school office will follow up. **Failure to report the reason will result in an unexcused absence.**

Leaving During the School Day

If it becomes necessary for a student to be absent for any portion of the school day, as for doctor appointments, the following procedures must be followed:

- **Notify the school office** of the reason and dismissal time for the absence no later than the day of the appointment (see SafeArrival instructions above).
- The parent must sign out the student in the office when leaving school and sign them in upon returning using the School Safe ID kiosk. **Identification is required.**
- When a student is signed out from school, their attendance will be reflected in instructional hours missed out of the day.

Late Arrivals and Tardiness

Please report the absence if your student will be arriving late to school. Any student who reports to school after the start of school time is considered tardy or partially absent. To check in after 8:30 a.m., a student must report to the office accompanied by their parent or guardian and be signed in.

8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	The student is marked tardy.
9:31 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	The student is marked as a partial absence based on hours missed.

Planned Vacations and Absences

For absences longer than two (2) days, such as family vacations, the District requires families to complete a [Planned Absence Form](#). Whenever possible, please submit the form at least 14 days in advance.

Attendance Records

Parents may seek updates about their child's attendance in ProgressBook or by contacting the Attendance Secretary.

Excessive Absences or Tardies

Parents will be notified if their student has reached the maximum number of tardies and/or absences allowed. **For additional information, refer to the District Handbook or visit Board Policy 5200.**

Make Up Work & Requests for Homework

Students will be permitted to make up work if they have an excused absence. It is the parents'/student's responsibility to confer with teachers regarding making up the missing work.

If you know your child will be absent two (2) days or more, please contact the school before 9:00 a.m. to request missed assignments for your child. Please do not leave this information on the "attendance line." This line is dedicated for absences only. Every effort will be made to have assigned work ready in the main office by 3:45 p.m. on the second day. Please note: Our office closes and the building is locked at 4:00 p.m.

We encourage your child to check with the teachers upon their return to school to review any missing work. Students will have additional time to complete work missed during their absence, i.e., 2 days absence, 2 days additional make-up time.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Car Riders

In August, you will have the opportunity to sign-up for the afternoon car rider procedure. Please be on the lookout for an email with instructions. Before the school year starts, car tags will be available for pick up at school. This tag **MUST** be displayed and visible in the vehicle so staff can safely and efficiently dismiss students.

Students must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or an individual authorized by the parent/guardian at dismissal. All persons picking up students at the Primary School need to be 18 years of age or older.

In our continued efforts for safety and security, the following pick-up procedures are in effect for all parents and guardians:

- Use the Brecksville Road entrance for end of day pick-up from 3:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.
- Display the car tag with the student's last name from the rear view mirror.
 - If the person picking up your child does not have a tag, we cannot release your child unless you have communicated the pick-up in advance.
- Vehicles will be directed into designated lanes and should remain in line while students are dismissed from the building. IPS staff will be by the doors to dismiss students.
- Please remain in your car at all times, wait until all students in your lane have entered their cars before exiting, and follow staff directions at all times.
- Students exit and enter the vehicle through the right-hand side vehicle door (side nearest the building).
- If arriving after the pickup window, please park and enter through the front of the building to pick up your child. **DO NOT** pull up behind the buses if they are present in the circle.

Bus Riders

Parents will receive an email via Constant Contact in May with a link to sign up for transportation. Parents will have to Opt-in for transportation by July 1st. The student's routing information will be on the app "My Ride K-12" by the second week of August. Instructions to sign up for "My Ride K-12" are on our website's transportation page. If you do not sign up for transportation by July 1st, your students will not get bus transportation until the second week after school begins. Students will ride only their assigned school bus and will board and depart from the bus at assigned bus stops.

Changes to Dismissal Plans

Each student will have a regular dismissal plan. **Parents are asked to notify the main office by 10:30 AM if there is a need to change their child's mode of transportation for dismissal.** To maintain a safe and orderly end-of-day process, we respectfully request that such changes be reserved for emergencies or unavoidable circumstances.

General Information

SCHOOL VISITATION PROCEDURES

Visitor Sign In

In the interest of safety, visitors are buzzed into the building. After being admitted, use the kiosk at the front desk to create a visitor's badge. A valid Driver's License must be presented at your initial visit in order to create a visitor's profile in our security program, School Safe ID. At the conclusion of your visit, return to the kiosk at the main entrance and sign out.

Classroom Visitors

Because classroom visitations can be distracting to the students, parents/guardians are to confer, in advance, with the principal and the teacher and state the purpose of the visitation. In an effort to maintain continuity in the educational process, do not go directly to the classroom.

Forgotten Items

Drop off any forgotten items in the cubbies located in the front lobby and notify the front office. The shelves are designated by homerooms. Please label the item(s) and place them on the shelf.

Parent/Guardian Lunch Visits (In School and Out of School)

In School

Parents/guardians are welcome to join their child for one special lunch visit during the school year. We recommend the student's birthday or birthday week, although we recognize that many birthdays occur outside of school days. Please use the link provided in the weekly **Constant Contact** parent email to let us know the date you plan to visit. The following guidelines apply:

- One lunch visit per student per school year
- Register for your visit in advance
- Outside food may not be brought into the cafeteria. If you wish to eat lunch with your child, you may bring a packed lunch for yourself or purchase a school lunch using funds from your child's lunch account
- Visits will take place in the cafeteria only
- You may sit with your child at their assigned seat; please respect any seating arrangements that are in place
- All cafeteria rules and expectations should be followed

We look forward to welcoming you for this special time with your child!

Out of School

Parents/guardians who wish to enjoy lunch with their child off school grounds may do so on special occasions by signing them out during their recess and lunch time. Since this time occurs during non-instructional periods, it will not be counted as an absence.

If you choose this option, please give the office and your child's homeroom teacher a heads-up so we can take an accurate lunch count and keep your student in the lobby rather than sending them to recess. Be sure to sign your child out before leaving and sign them back in upon returning when lunch/recess ends.

As a reminder, only a parent/guardian may check out a student or grant permission for another adult to do so, consistent with our school policy.

IPS does not allow third-party (e.g. Uber, DoorDash, or pizza delivery) lunch deliveries for students.

PARENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers are a valuable part of our educational environment at the Primary School. They contribute their time and talents in many ways. Some volunteers work on regularly scheduled days in the building, while others offer assistance on individual projects or work at home.

PTO

We are deeply grateful for the Independence Primary School PTO, whose dedication and partnership play a vital role in the life of our school community. The PTO builds strong connections among families, staff, and students while enriching the educational and social experiences of all learners. Through their generous support of cultural arts, field trips, scholarships, and countless school initiatives, they help enhance our programs in meaningful ways. Their commitment to nurturing the whole child inspires positive change both within our school and beyond. By joining the PTO, families become part of a caring team devoted to supporting every student's success. To learn more or get involved, visit [IPSPTO.com](https://ipspto.com).

Classroom Parties

Parties may be held for Halloween, Christmas, and at the end of the school year. The parent helpers plan games, activities, and refreshments. You may be asked to contribute to these activities.

ANIMALS ON DISTRICT PROPERTY

Animals, including service animals, brought onto the Primary School property must meet every veterinary requirement set forth in State Law and County regulation/ordinance, including but not limited to rabies vaccination or other inoculations required. If your pet is visiting the Primary School, please bring a copy of your pet's immunization records. Visits should be scheduled in advance with the homeroom teacher or building principal.

OUTDOOR RECESS

The need for exercise and playtime is very important to a growing child's development. All children will participate in outdoor recess unless excused. The Primary School uses the National Weather Service Wind Chill Chart (20 degrees or below) to determine if the children go outdoors for winter recess. Kindergarten through fourth grade students need to have warm coats and hats as well as boots and gloves. Please label all items of clothing as insurance against loss.

If a student cannot participate in recess and/or physical education due to illness or injury in excess of one day, we must have a note from your physician in order to be excused.

CELL PHONE AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

- **During the School Day:**
 - Cell phones, earbuds, smartwatches, and other non-school-issued electronic devices **may not be brought to school.**
- Teachers **cannot** allow personal phone use, except when **pre-approved by administration** for medical reasons or as part of an IEP/504 plan.

Enforcement and Consequences

- **First Offense:** Warning issued. The device must be turned to silent and placed in the backpack for the remainder of the day.
- **Second Offense:** The phone will be turned in to the office. The parent will be called to pick up the device at the end of the day.
- **Third Offense:** The phone will be turned in to the office. The parent will be notified and required to pick it up at the end of the day. The student will serve a recess detention.
- **Repeated Offenses:** The phone will be turned in to the office. The parent will pick it up at the end of the day. **Students will lose privileges with Dojo/I-Pride parties at school.**

Medical Exceptions

Students with documented medical needs (e.g., diabetes monitoring, seizure tracking) may be granted limited and supervised phone access if:

1. A **parent/guardian request** and a **medical provider's note** are submitted to the school nurse.
2. Administration approves the request.
3. A **phone use plan** is created, specifying times and locations for use.
4. Any unauthorized use outside the approved plan may result in consequences.

Responsibility

The district and school **are not** responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal devices.

STUDENT VALUABLES

Students are encouraged to avoid bringing valuable items such as jewelry, expensive clothing, or electronic devices to school. These items can be tempting targets for theft, and the school cannot be responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen property. We recommend leaving valuable items at home to ensure they stay safe and secure.

Toys, collectible cards (such as Pokémon), and money should be limited. While we understand that students may wish to bring these items for personal enjoyment or trading, we ask for your support in ensuring that they are brought to school in moderation. These items can sometimes cause distractions during class time or lead to conflicts among students. Please help us by reinforcing the following guidelines with your child:

- **Toys and Collectible Cards:** Should be kept at home unless they are part of a special event or classroom activity (prior notification will be given by the teacher).
- **Money:** Should only be brought to school when necessary for school-related purchases (field trip fees, book fairs, etc.). We recommend students do not bring in large sums of money to school.

LOST AND FOUND

Students should check in the lost and found area near the ramp doors and gym doors to recover lost or missing items. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity twice yearly.

SNACKS

Some grade-level classrooms allow snacks during the school day. We ask that snacks be appropriate, healthy, and nutritious. IPS will not provide snacks if they are forgotten.

BIRTHDAY TREATS

Birthdays are special occasions, and we love to celebrate them. However, as a school community, we've seen an increase in various food allergies and dietary restrictions among our students. Many children now require gluten-free options or have other specific dietary needs. Given this reality, we can no longer guarantee the safety and inclusivity of celebrating birthdays with edible treats in a school setting.

Birthdays may be celebrated by sending in non-food items only. Some examples of acceptable non-edible treats include pencils, stickers, temporary tattoos, erasers, silly bands, or any other similar item.

SCHOOL FEES

In accordance with State law, Independence Local Schools charges specific fees for activities and materials used in the course of instruction. These funds are used to purchase the consumable materials used by your child throughout the year, such as journal booklets, monthly news magazines, special composition booklets, art supplies, workbooks, literature books, folders, and other miscellaneous supplies. It is often necessary for all students to have the same type of item for a particular project, thus the importance of ordering in quantity and purchasing items at a lower cost. The supplies and books become the property of the student.

Grade Level Fees, Effective 2026-2027 School Year

A. Grades K-2, 4	\$90
B. Grade 3 (This includes a Music Fee for the recorder)	\$100
C. Instructional Technology Fee (Grades K-4)	\$30

Checks may be made payable to Independence Primary School for the exact amount. Include your child's name in the memo line. Preferably, do not send cash. Payment may be made by credit or debit card online only through the PaySchools Parent Account. To pay online, go to the District website, click on the "Menu" tab, and go to PaySchools. **The school cannot take credit card payments in the office.**

Families with financial hardship may be eligible for school fees to be reduced or waived as well as qualify for free or reduced lunches. Applications should be submitted online annually through LINQ Connect.

Please be aware that students are not supposed to participate in clubs, extracurricular activities, or field trips if fees are owed including grade-level fees. All fees and fines should be paid in full by the end of the school year to ensure the receipt of your child's teacher assignment for the upcoming school year. Feel free to contact the principal for any extenuating circumstances.

Academics

GRADING

Standards-Based Report Cards for Grades K-4

B = Beginning

D = Developing

S = Secure

K-4 students will receive a report card that uses a B - D - S rubric reporting system to monitor student progress through:

- Informal/Formal Assessments
- Written Responses
- Multiple Questions
- Other Performance Activities

The standards-based report card provides a quarterly snapshot regarding your child's progress toward mastering the performance-based standards.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are accessible online through ProgressBook at the end of each grading period for grades K-4. Kindergarten report cards will begin in quarter two as the first quarter will focus on learning basic school routines and procedures along with academic skills.

PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICIES

The Independence Board of Education believes in the philosophy that each student is treated individually, and the question of promotion is determined by the following guidelines:

Grades K-2

- Students are assessed on their progress in the academic, social/emotional, and developmental areas. Data is also compiled from assessment tools and teacher observations.
- Determination for advancement into the next grade is made by school personnel.

Grades 3-4

Subjects are considered either Foundation or General Academic courses:

- Foundation courses include math, reading, and language arts.
- General Academic courses include social studies and science.

Third Grade Reading Guarantee

Except for students with special circumstances, third-grade students must meet a minimum score on the state reading test to move on to the fourth grade. This score must be attained either in the fall or spring administration of the state reading test. Parents can agree to promote a student to fourth grade with a recommendation from the team and data to support promotion. The student will also be provided with reading intervention services.

If a student is retained in reading per the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, the school will provide a reading-endorsed teacher and 90 minutes of reading instruction. The student will be promoted to fourth grade for all other subjects.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Communication is an essential part of the educational program. We feel it is very important to keep in close contact with the child's parents concerning their progress.

A scheduled parent-teacher conference time occurs each fall. Other conferences may be scheduled in advance, so a convenient time for all can be established, i.e., before or after school, during teacher planning periods, etc. If a concern arises, parents should first contact the teacher to discuss the situation. If further information is needed, the parent should then contact the building principal.

Furthermore, a fall open house and other special events, which occur on a regular basis, provide multiple opportunities for parents to become familiar with the school environment.

HOMEWORK

Your child may have homework daily. There are several reasons for homework.

1. To provide extra practice on learned skills.
2. To extend further learning in areas covered in the classroom.
3. For students to learn good work habits.
4. To provide opportunity for growth in responsibility.
5. To give you an opportunity to see what your child is studying and how well he/she is doing.

We believe learning is important and that learning should continue after school hours. Daily review is a way to encourage and reinforce learning. Children will improve their study habits by observing the following:

1. Be sure you understand each assignment.
2. Form the habit of using a certain time and place to study.
3. Study conditions should include good lighting, ventilation, and quiet. (No television or electronic devices)
4. Have the necessary materials at hand.
5. Try to develop the skill of working independently.

FIELD TRIPS

Students participate in various field trips throughout their years at the Primary School. Field trips are a teaching and learning tool that support the curriculum and extend classroom instruction. They are an educationally sound and meaningful component of the instructional program at the Primary School.

Parental permission and payment will be obtained before any student participates in a field trip outside the school district/city limits. Field trips within city limits, which may also include trips to Independence High School, Independence Middle School, or the Land Lab, are all approved through FinalForms at the beginning of the year. Please note: If your child is absent on the day of the scheduled field trip, a refund is not possible, as payment is made in advance and field trip venues do not provide refunds.

I-PRIDE CHARACTER PROGRAM

The Primary School has implemented an I-Pride Character Program, which is based on positive behavior intervention support. Students earn tokens for making a positive difference in all school settings.

Student Recognition

There are many and varied ways that students receive recognition for a job well done, improvement, or good citizenship. In addition to the classroom teachers, the principal, counselor, and other specialists recognize the efforts and behavior of our students throughout the year:

High Five

is an award given quarterly by our building specialists to recognize one student in art, music, design technology, and physical education. This award recognizes a student who “stands out” in that given category.

I-Pride Character Program

Each month, students are awarded tokens for making a difference in the classroom, on the bus, in the cafeteria, on the playground, and in all school settings.

Student of the Month

recognizes one student from each of the grades (K-4) each month for outstanding citizenship.

Some specific awards are given at the Fourth Grade end-of-year promotion assembly:

The President's GOLD Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence

recognizes 4th grade students who earned an “Advanced” score on their Reading AND Math Ohio Next Generation Assessment given in 3rd grade.

The President's SILVER Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement

recognizes students with outstanding educational growth, commitment, or improvement and earned an "Advanced" rating on either Math or Reading Ohio Next Generation Assessment given in 3rd grade and an "Accomplishment" rating on the other.

The TOP Award (Totally Outstanding Progress)

recognizes one fourth grade student per subject area who has shown the most academic improvement for the first three quarters of the school year.

Student Conduct

The Board of Education acknowledges that conduct is closely related to learning. An effective instructional program requires an orderly school environment, and the effectiveness of the educational program is, in part, reflected in the behavior of students.

The Board shall require each student of this District to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct/Student Discipline Code adopted by the Board and to submit to such disciplinary measures as are appropriately assigned for infraction of those rules. **The District Handbook provides a complete Student Code of Conduct and Student Discipline Code and should be reviewed by every student and parent.**

PLAYGROUND RULES

- Use equipment correctly.
- Stay in assigned areas.
- Always walk on the mulch.
- Dress appropriately for the playground.
- Return equipment.
- Listen and respond to the whistle.
- Level 0 in line.
- Include everyone.
- Be fair and kind.
- Share equipment.

Playground Behavior Consequences:

1st offense: Warning with reminder of positive behavior.

2nd offense: 5-minute work-it out with aide/guidance.

3rd offense: Intervention/parent notified/recess detention.

CAFETERIA RULES

In order to make the Lunch Room a pleasant place for everyone, we ask that you follow these rules:

- Always walk.
- Stay in your seat, hands & feet to self, & keep all food on the table.
- Eat your own food.
- Wash hands after eating peanut butter.
- Level 2 voices in the food line and cafeteria.
- Remember your napkin, straw, and silverware.
- Eat politely and leave your area clean.
- Follow adult directions.
- Say “please” and “thank you.”

Cafeteria Behavior Consequences:

1st offense: Warning with reminder of positive behavior.

2nd offense: 5-minute work-it out with aide/guidance.

3rd offense: Intervention/parent notified/recess detention.

BUS RULES

- Stay in the assigned seat properly.
- Use points of safety.
- Save all food for when you are off the bus.
- Follow bus drivers’ directions and hand signals.
- Greet your driver.
- Keep hands, feet, and belongings to yourself.
- Use level 2 voices.
- Use kind words and please and thank you.

Any misbehavior, which distracts the driver, can jeopardize the safety of all passengers. If your child is reported for any violation, the principal can take the following disciplinary action. The following serves only as a guideline and may be altered depending upon the severity of the violation.

First Offense: A warning to the student, with a report to the parents. Possible bus suspension or other action as deemed appropriate by the school principal. Parents are asked to help prevent a recurrence.

Second Offense: Bus suspension or other action as deemed appropriate by the school principal. The offense will be reported to the parents.

Third Offense: Suspension of riding privileges (the length of time will be determined by the seriousness of the infraction). A report will be sent to the parents.

DETENTIONS

Students are to serve their detentions on the assigned date. Detentions are scheduled during recess/lunch periods, immediately before or after school, or on a Saturday, as determined by the teacher or principal. If detentions are held before or after school or on a Saturday, parents will be given 24-hour notice.

Activities

Art Club

Fourth grade students will have the opportunity to join Art Club. The children will complete projects ranging from a mixture of mediums and techniques. This club will be held before school. The fee is \$50 per student.

Drone Club

The fourth grade Drone Club introduces students to the basics of drone operation, safety, and flight skills through hands-on activities. Members learn to navigate drones through obstacle courses while developing problem-solving, teamwork, and technology skills. The fee is \$60 per student, per session.

IPS Choir

is an activity available to all students in grades 3 and 4 who enjoy singing and making music. There is no audition requirement. Choir meets September through May, once a week before school from 7:30-8:15 a.m. in the music room, and performs two concerts during the school year with the opportunity for other community-related performances and/or sporting event performances.

IPS PTO Drama Club

Students have the opportunity to work with a professional director and choreographer that the IPS PTO brings in specifically for this club. It has been a great success for the school and a great opportunity for our young children to explore the dramatic arts. A fee will be charged by the PTO.

IPS Sewing Club

This 6-week hands-on, after school sewing club, sponsored by Indy Sewing Studio, is open to students in grades 3 and 4. Students will explore fun, skill-building projects, while learning techniques like button sewing, hand sewing, and machine sewing. Each session offers a creative opportunity for students to design, sew, and take home their own unique creations. The cost of each session will be advertised.

K-Kids

In partnership with the Independence Kiwanis Club, we offer a K-Kids Program. The purpose of K-Kids is to: provide opportunities for working together in service to the school and Independence community; develop leadership potential; foster the development of strong moral character; and encourage loyalty to school, community, and nation. The date and times will be determined.

Running Club

is open to students in grades 2-4. In this extracurricular activity sponsored by PTO, they will participate in sessions of outdoor training using the "Kids Run The Nation" curriculum. Students will learn the fundamentals of running, enjoy team-building exercises, and, most of all...have fun!

Snapology

During Snapology classes, children engage in interactive, hands-on learning and building with LEGO bricks. We introduce engineering concepts and teach children about simple machines and the design process. Snapology is run by a third party that utilizes the IPS facility. The cost for an 8-week class will be advertised before each session.

Student Council

will provide opportunities for our third and fourth graders to promote citizenship and fundraising activities for our school and community. This club oversees various programs that develop leadership and school spirit among the student body.

Tadpoles (Jr. Biology Club)

Open to 4th grade students, the IPS Tadpoles meet during recess and are dedicated to observing and learning about the natural world. With a shared passion for nature, members focus on caring for the environment and building lifelong habits of environmental stewardship. Through hands-on activities, students support sustainability at IPS by participating in recycling and composting, maintaining the courtyard, greenhouse, rain barrels, and garden beds, and creating animal habitats such as bird feeders. Students also take part in outdoor hikes and environmental awareness projects that connect learning to real-world care for the environment.

Wrestling Club

is open to students in grades K-4. These clubs are an introduction to wrestling. Various activities, along with calisthenics and conditioning, will be taught. The cost is \$25.

Special Services

TUTOR – READING SUPPORT

This program addresses the needs of the student who may need additional instruction and practice to master the skills needed at their grade level. The students are screened in September and are recommended by school personnel to qualify for intervention.

Research-based strategies are incorporated by the Tutor to strengthen skills for the student to become a successful and independent learner. A small group environment enables the student to have specific needs addressed in conjunction with the classroom curriculum.

READING IMPROVEMENT MONITORING PLAN (RIMP)

The ODE Third Grade Reading Guarantee mandates that a Reading Improvement Monitoring Plan be utilized by students who are not on track for reading. All students will participate in a reading diagnostic screener and benchmark testing at specific intervals throughout the school year. An evaluation will be made after each benchmark for every student at the Primary School to determine which students would benefit from additional assistance in meeting benchmark goals. After parental notification, certified teachers will provide intensive intervention for the identified students. Progress reports will be made available along with the quarterly report cards.

GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

Our school offers gifted education services for identified students in grades two through four. Students may receive services from their classroom teacher who has received ongoing training in gifted intervention and/or directly from the school gifted intervention specialist. The gifted intervention specialist will act as a resource for classroom teachers to support academic content areas. For more information regarding gifted identification and service delivery, please refer to the most current ILS Policy and Plan for the Identification and Service of Children who are Gifted, available on our district website at independence.k12.oh.us/page/gifted-services.

GUIDANCE

The school counseling program at IPS is designed to support the academic, social, emotional, and personal growth of all students. As an integral part of the total educational experience, the comprehensive guidance program is responsive to the developmental needs of every child and helps create a positive, supportive school environment where students can learn and thrive.

Through classroom guidance lessons, small group and individual support, and consultation/collaboration with families and staff, the school counselor works to help students build important life skills such as problem-solving, self-awareness, emotional regulation, friendship skills, and responsible decision-making. The counselor partners with students, parents, teachers, and school personnel to promote student success, strengthen school connectedness, and support the overall well-being of every child.

Our goal is to help all students reach their fullest potential academically, socially, and emotionally while developing the confidence and skills needed to become respectful, responsible, and contributing members of their community.

INTERVENTION

Special Education instruction is offered by the Intervention Specialists. Students in this program have been tested and identified under IDEA (Individuals With Disabilities Education Act). An IEP (Individualized Education Plan) is developed by the educational team, including the parents. A child's referral for this program is made by school personnel and/or the parent.

OUTSIDE TUTORING

Throughout the year, parents often inquire about sources of independent tutoring services. If you are interested in outside tutoring support for your child, please contact your homeroom teacher or school counselor's office.

PSYCHOLOGICAL/COUNSELING SERVICES - SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

The school psychologist is trained in both education and psychology and is prepared to assist the child, parent, and school personnel in developing the optimum environment for success.

The role of the school psychologist includes educational and psychological assessment, consulting with school personnel to design and implement individualized educational programs, acting as a liaison between community agencies and school/home, and exploring means by which the parents and school can more effectively cooperate toward the goal of a healthy and successful individual.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

The process of providing interventions to students who are at risk for academic or behavioral problems is known as RTI (Response to Intervention). RTI is a process designed to help schools focus on high-quality, scientifically-based instruction and interventions matched to student needs and monitored on a frequent basis. The information gained from the RTI process is used by school personnel and parents to adapt instruction and make decisions regarding the student's educational program. Perhaps the greatest benefit of a RTI approach is it eliminates a "wait to fail" situation. Once assessment data indicates a problem area for a student or group of students, interventions are put into place to address concerns.

The RTI system is divided into three tiers:

- Tier 1 Core Curriculum – 80-90% (for all students in the class)
- Tier 2 Small Group Interventions – 5-10% (for some students at-risk)
- Tier 3 Intense Interventions – 1-5% (for a very small number of students)

RELATED SERVICES

Independence Primary School offers an IEP-driven program for children with multiple disabilities. The resulting adjusted curriculum is supported by such related services as speech-language pathology, augmentative communication, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychological services, and special education and is guided by researched "best practices." This infused curriculum is delivered in

a continuum of school environments determined most appropriate by the child's educational team to achieve student success.

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST

The speech-language therapist provides speech and language screenings and diagnostic testing for students. Individual or small group therapy is conducted with eligible school-aged students in the areas of articulation, auditory skills, fluency, and voice and language development.

Referral for screening can be by parents, school, or school personnel. Speech intervention programs are available to students who have mild speech sound difficulties.

