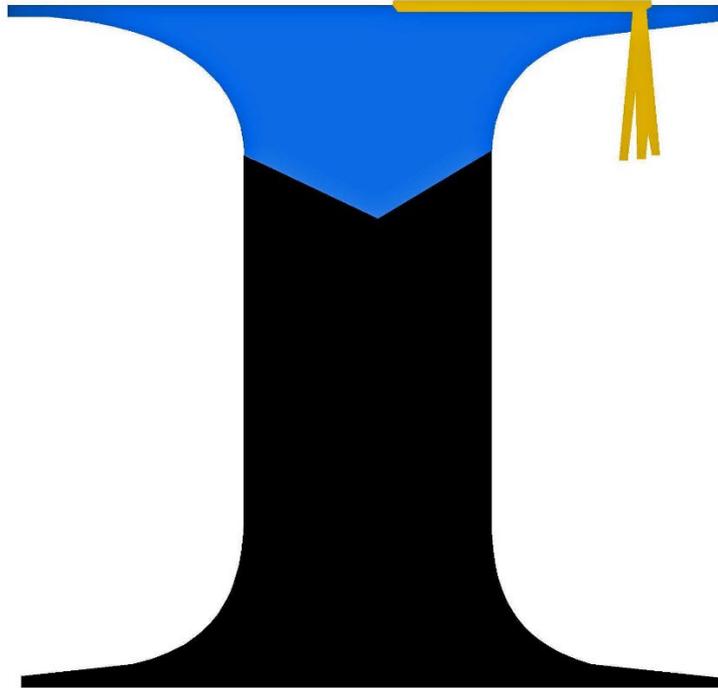


Independence High School Student Handbook

2025 – 2026



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www.independencehighschool.org

It is the policy of the Fulton County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age or disability in any employment practice, educational program, or any other program, activity or service.

One Vision, One Mission, One Goal---Success for All Students.

Mission Statement

Independence High School's mission is to provide an enriching learning environment that will enable students to graduate from high school and become responsible, productive citizens.

Beliefs

We believe....

Caring teachers make a difference.

Students learn differently and at different rates.

Students are accountable for their actions.

The determined student is the successful student.

Student attendance directly affects student progress.

Motto

Attitude + Effort = Success

"To achieve something that you have never achieved before, you must become someone you have never been before."

Les Brown, Motivational Speaker

Every Student, Every Day

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First Semester

July 24 – August 1	Preplanning
August 4	First Day of School
August 7 – October 9	Mini Sem 1
August 18 – 22	EOC Mid-Month Window
September 1	Labor Day (schools closed)
October 9	Mini Sem 1 Ends
October 13 – 17	Fall Break (Schools Closed)
October 20 – December 19	Mini Sem 2
November 3, 5 – 7	EOC Mid-Month Testing Window
November 4	Teacher Workday/Election Day
November 24 – 28	Thanksgiving Holiday
December 15 – 19	EOC Mid-Month Testing Window
December 19	Last Day for students/Mini Sem 2 Ends
December 22 – Jan 2	Winter Break

Second Semester

January 5	Teacher Workday (Students Off)
January 6	First Day of Second Semester
January 7 – March 12	Mini Sem 3
January 19	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
February 9 – 12	EOC Mid-Month Testing Window
February 16	Teacher Workday (Remote)
February 17	Professional Development (Students Off)
March 12	Mini Sem 3 Ends
March 16	Professional Development (Students Off)
March 17 – May 22	Mini Sem 4
April 6 – 10	Spring Break (Schools Closed)
April 27 – May 1	GMAS/EOC Testing Window
May 21	Last Day of School/Mini Sem 4 Ends
May 22	Post Planning/Teacher Workday
May 26	Memorial Day (Schools Closed)

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**Independence High School
Daily Schedule
2025-2026**

Period	Start	End	Length of time
1st	8:00	9:00	60
2nd	9:05	10:05	60
3rd	10:10	11:10	60
Lunch/Advisement	A 11:15 AM	11:45 AM	30
	B 11:45 AM	12:15 PM	30
4th	12:20	1:20	60
5th	1:25	2:25	60
Credit Recovery Enrichment (T, Th)	2:30	3:15	45
Extended Day (M, W)	3:30	5:30	120

Schedule 2025 - 2026

Semester I: August 4 - December 19

Graduation: Friday, December 12th, 2025

Semester II: January 6 - May 21

Graduation: Friday, May 15th, 2026

***Dates are tentative & may be subject to change.**

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General Procedures

Enrollment

Independence High School has enrollment at the beginning of each mini-semester enrollment date. **Mini-semester dates for the 2025-2026 school year are as follows: MS I: August 7th; MS II: October 20th; MS III: January 7th; and MS IV: March 17th.** All students seeking to enroll must make an appointment with the school counselor to begin the intake process.

Attendance

Although Independence is a non-traditional High School, Attendance is expected. Students who are excessively absent can be withdrawn from the class. Students are expected to be prompt for each class. Arriving to class tardy more than 5 times will result in disciplinary consequences and may lead to withdrawal from class. These students may re-enroll during another semester and only once during a school year. Students are required to contact the school office when absent for emergencies and provide official documentation for school record-keeping purposes only. The following are considered emergencies: legal matters, car accidents, hospitalization, and death in family, etc. Excessive absences may result in a Social Worker referral.

Leaving Campus

Students are expected to remain in the building and respective classes as outlined on their class schedule. **Students who leave the building without proper authorization may not return to school for the duration of the school day unless approved by the administration.**

Student Parking

Student parking is available on campus only. Permits must be visibly displayed on rear-view mirrors. Parking permits may be purchased in the Main Office for a fee at each enrollment period. \$10 at each enrollment period or \$40 for the school year. On-campus parking is a privilege and must not be abused. The administration reserves the right to conduct random, unannounced searches of student vehicles at any time.

Supply Fee

Independence High School provides the necessary school materials for every student for a fee of \$30.00. This fee will cover a clear bookbag, notebook paper, folders, binders and any additional materials needed in class. This fee must be paid upon enrollment or by the first week of enrollment.

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Telephone

Use of the main office phone is limited to emergencies during class time with a hall pass from a teacher. The telephone will be available during breaks, lunch and after school. ***The main office does not deliver messages to students except in emergency situations.***

Visitors

All visitors must enter the Main Office. A Visitor's Badge must be displayed at all times.

Classroom Procedures

Attendance

All students are expected to be present and punctual daily and attend each scheduled class for the entire period. Students must remain alert and attentive during all classes.

Log Book

All students must sign in and out of their respective teacher's logbooks in order to maintain accurate attendance records. It is the student's responsibility to sign in for each class, every day. A student may leave class only for emergencies; he/she **must** sign out and get permission and a signed pass from their teacher.

Coursework

Independence offers a variety of instructional models.

- **Blended Learning:** This method provides direct teacher instruction, virtual learning and facilitates individual student mastery.
- **FVS - Fulton Virtual School:**
This method of instruction offers online courses offered by Fulton County Schools.
- **F2F:** This method of instruction allows students to interact with their classroom teachers face-2-face daily in conjunction with other instructional methods.

Enrichment

Each department has a clear policy for providing the additional help a student may need in order to be successful. It is the student's responsibility to seek this assistance from the teacher.

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Academic Probation

Students who do not pass or are in jeopardy of not passing all courses will be placed on academic probation. Students placed on academic probation must attend enrichment sessions during that Semester. If academic improvement is not achieved the student will be withdrawn to return to the home school.

Hall Passes

Students with a Hall Pass must go to the location designated on their pass.

Field Trips

Field Trips are a vital part of the educational program. Students under the age of 18 years must have the written permission of their parent or guardian and all students must have the signature of each teacher. Students will not be allowed to attend unless written permission has been submitted.

Emergency Drills

Emergency Drills will be conducted periodically, not less than once per month. When the alarm sounds and/or an announcement is made, all students and personnel are to follow the assigned routes to evacuate or take cover. All students are to remain with their teacher. Teachers are to report all absences to designated personnel. The administration will notify all people when the drill has ended.

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Graduation Requirements

All students must successfully complete the graduation requirements adopted by the Fulton County Board of Education, in accordance with the Georgia State Statutes and the State Board of Education.

(See your Guidance Counselor for additional information)

Graduation Exit Process

All potential graduates will have to complete the graduate exit process in order to graduate from IHS. Graduates will be provided with all the information needed to complete this process. During this process, they will complete the following:

- Senior Exit Survey
- Diploma Information and final words
- Take cap and gown pictures
- Receive an invitation to the graduation
- Receive the commencement handbook

Graduates will need to report to school on a specific date and time. Students will be notified of any changes.

Hope Scholarship Information

HOPE Scholarship Rigor Requirements

New academic requirements are included in the HOPE legislation. These changes will impact students graduating from high school on or after May 1, 2014. In order to qualify for the HOPE Scholarship, students must meet the following academic requirements.

STUDENTS MUST RECEIVE CREDIT IN THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF COURSES

High School Graduating Students must complete (2) of the following courses:

- 1) Advanced math, such as Advanced Algebra and Trigonometry, Math III, or an equivalent or higher course taken at an eligible high school or taken for degree level credit at an eligible postsecondary institution;
- 2) Advanced Science, such as Chemistry, Physics, Biology II, or an equivalent or higher course taken at an eligible high school or taken for degree level credit at an eligible postsecondary institution.

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- 3) Advanced placement courses in core subjects;
- 4) International baccalaureate courses in core subjects;
- 5) Courses taken at a unit of the University System of Georgia in core subjects where such courses are not remedial and developmental courses; or
- 6) Advanced foreign language courses taken at an eligible high school or taken for degree level credit at an eligible postsecondary institution.

High School Graduating Students must complete (3) of the following courses:

- 1) Advanced math, such as Advanced Algebra and Trigonometry, Math III, or an equivalent or higher course taken at an eligible high school or taken for degree level credit at an eligible postsecondary institution;
- 2) Advanced Science, such as Chemistry, Physics, Biology II, or an equivalent or higher course taken at an eligible high school or taken for degree level credit at an eligible postsecondary institution;
- 3) Advanced placement courses in core subjects;
- 4) International baccalaureate courses in core subjects;
- 5) Courses taken at a unit of the University System of Georgia in core subjects where such courses are not remedial and developmental courses; or
- 6) Advanced foreign language courses taken at an eligible high school or taken for degree level credit at an eligible postsecondary institution.

High School Graduating Students and beyond must complete (4) of the following courses:

- 1) Advanced math, such as Advanced Algebra and Trigonometry, Math III, or an equivalent or higher course taken at an eligible high school or taken for degree level credit at an eligible postsecondary institution;
- 2) Advanced Science, such as Chemistry, Physics, Biology II, or an equivalent or higher course taken at an eligible high school or taken for degree level credit at an eligible postsecondary institution;
- 3) Advanced placement courses in core subjects;

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- 4) International baccalaureate courses in core subjects;
- 5) Courses taken at a unit of the University System of Georgia in core subjects where such courses are not remedial and developmental courses; or
- 6) Advanced foreign language courses taken at an eligible high school or taken for degree level credit at an eligible postsecondary institution.

House Bill 1325 changed the standard for determining high school graduate eligibility for the HOPE scholarship. The changes to the HOPE Program will impact all students who enroll in post-secondary education programs after May 1, 2007. The following changes may affect Fulton County School students in their post-secondary endeavors. The changes, designed to ensure greater equity and fairness when determining HOPE eligibility, are described below. Some key points include:

- Schools will no longer be responsible for calculating grade point averages for HOPE eligibility.
- Schools will be responsible for transmitting transcript data for all graduating seniors to the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC).
- All reported grades will be converted by the Georgia Student Finance Commission on a 4.0 scale.
- All grades- including F's-earned in core academic courses will be used when calculating grade point average.

Hope Grant Information

Georgia residents who are attending a Georgia Public Technical College to earn a certificate or diploma are eligible for a HOPE Grant regardless of high school graduation date or grade average. You may receive the Hope Grant for an unlimited number of programs that qualify under the guidelines. Full-time enrollment is not required, but you must be making satisfactory academic progress to maintain eligibility.

Georgia Milestones Assessment (EOC)

The state of Georgia mandates that students take an assessment at the end of the following courses: United States History, Biology, American Literature and Composition, and Algebra I. **Beginning in the Winter of 2024, the Math EOC will be Algebra: Concepts and Connections. These assessments count as the final exam and are 10% of the student's final grade in the course.** Students will not receive a final grade in these courses without a score on the Georgia Milestones Assessment.

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Diplomas

Students who enroll at IHS may choose to earn a diploma from their home school if attended for 2 years or a diploma from IHS. Students must indicate this choice during the graduate exit process. Students receiving a diploma will pick up their diploma from the IHS Counseling Office approximately 6-8 weeks after their completion date.

Grading Scale

Fulton County's grading scale is as follows:

- A 90-above**
- B 80-89**
- C 70-79**
- F below 70**

Grade Placement/Classification Status

Students are classified according to the number of credits they have earned.

0-4.99	9th grade
5.0-10.99	10th grade
11.0-16.99	11th grade
17.0 & above	12th grade

***Students must earn a total of 23 credits in order to receive a High School Diploma.**

Transcripts

Students may order transcripts by visiting parchment.com/register. Please see your Counselor/Records Clerk for details.

Student Support Services

Office of Student Services

All students are assigned a Professional School Counselor. Our counselor monitors students from the time students are admitted to our school through their graduation. Services include but are not limited to the following:

1. Enrollment screening
2. Career planning/scholarship information
3. Small Groups
4. Individual Counseling
5. Classroom Guidance

Parents may call the Office of Student Services to schedule a conference.

Change of Address and Phone Number

For emergency purposes, we must have updated information on each student. Please notify the Records Clerk (located in the Office of Student Services) of any changes of address, phone numbers or emails. Required documentation must be provided.

Media Center

The Media Center is located on the 2nd floor and is staffed by a Media Paraprofessional. The center supports the curriculum and provides instruction and opportunities for students to become independent learners. Resources include books, virtual sources, videos, periodicals, and a daily newspaper.

Destiny is our computerized catalog and circulation system capable of electronically browsing and locating the holdings of the collection.

School Police Officer

A Fulton County Schools Police Officer is staffed at Independence High School to enforce Fulton County school rules and regulations as well as Georgia state laws.

Social Worker

The role of the social worker at Independence High School is to assist students and parents in breaking down the barriers that prevent regular school attendance. The social worker uses the following interventions:

- Counseling with students and/or their families.
- Group Counseling
- Assisting families in accessing community resources.
- Attendance Monitoring
- Liaison between the school and the Juvenile Court
- Reporting cases of suspected child abuse.

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Student Code of Conduct

**A copy of the Student Code of Conduct & Discipline Handbook is located in each classroom*

Smoking

The use of tobacco products/paraphernalia of any kind is prohibited on Fulton County School property.

Drugs

In keeping with the philosophy of Fulton County's Drug-Free School Program, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, sale or use of illegal drugs and alcohol on school premises is strictly prohibited.

Physical or Verbal Assault

Students are not permitted to verbally or physically assault any person.

Harassment

Students must treat all others with respect and fairness. Sexual, gender, ethnic, religious and racial harassment will not be tolerated.

Bullying

- Willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or
- Intentionally exhibiting a display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or
- Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass or intimidate will not be tolerated.

Honor Code

Students must be honest and submit his/her own work. Cheating, plagiarism, and other Honor Code Violations are strictly prohibited.

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Electronics

Students are not permitted to use cell phones or any other electronic devices during school hours unless required for classroom activity or with the permission of the classroom teacher or an administrator. Items will be confiscated from violators.

Weapons

To ensure the safety of all students and staff, book bags, backpacks and tote bags are subject to unannounced searches as necessary. Weapons are strictly prohibited on school property. Under Fulton County Schools' disciplinary rules, any and all types of defense sprays (mace, pepper spray, etc.) or mechanisms (razors, box cutters, razor blades, knives, brass knuckles, pistols, etc.) are deemed as weapons.

Technology

Students have access to a wide variety of state-of-the-art technological resources. The Independence High School Technology User Agreement governs the use of technology resources. All students upon enrollment sign this agreement. Violations are handled in accordance with Independence High School, Fulton County Board of Education, and Georgia Penal Code disciplinary processes.

Food and Beverages

Food and beverages are NOT permitted in any classroom. The cafeteria is available for consumption of these items.

Lunch

Students cannot leave the building during the lunch period. Students may bring their lunch. Lunch may not be delivered from surrounding restaurants.

Cafeteria Services

The Fulton County School System and IHS is a participant in the Federal Lunch and Milk Program and abide by its rules and regulations. Free and reduced lunch applications can be picked up from the cafeteria staff, completed and returned to a cafeteria employee. Thus, allowing qualified students to purchase lunch at a reasonable cost. Students may bring a bag lunch. Lunch may not be delivered to students from outside restaurants. All students are to abide by the following regulations:

1. All food must be eaten within designated areas.
2. All papers and other refuse are to be deposited in the waste containers.
3. Students are to remain in the Cafeteria or Media Center until the end of the lunch period.

Trespassing and Loitering

There will be no loitering on the school premises. Anyone who is not a student currently scheduled for classes and has not registered in the main office is considered trespassing. If a student has been given authorization to sign out from the main office for an emergency, he or she must promptly exit the building and leave campus. All students must leave campus at dismissal.

Dress Code

Acceptable Attire:

1. Pants must be worn **at the waist.**
2. Shirts must have sleeves.
3. Leggings/Jeggings must be covered by a thigh-length top.

Unacceptable Attire:

1. Any clothing which is too tight, too short or too revealing
2. Low rider or hip hugger jeans which reveal midriffs
3. Any shirt or top which reveals midriffs (front or back)
4. Shirt or tops with low necklines; visible cleavage
5. Muscle shirts, tank tops, sleeveless jerseys, and spaghetti straps
6. Pajamas, bedroom slippers, shower shoes, and slipper socks
7. Sunglasses, headbands, hats, hoods, scarves, headdress or any other such items
8. Clothing that displays any illegal substances, profanity, or sexually suggestive, racially demeaning, or gang related messages
9. Shirt with double meaning, crude phrases, alcoholic messages or promoting substance abuse
10. Necklaces which promote or display illegal substance
11. Running shorts/short shorts/or boxer shorts
12. Torn Clothing

Disciplinary Action

Independence High School follows the discipline procedures of Fulton County Board of Education. A student may be withdrawn at any time for lack of attendance, performance and/or failure to adhere to the school's expectations at the discretion of the administration. In addition, any student given out-of-school suspension may not be on school grounds for any reason.

Common Offenses which may result in Suspension:

- Use of tobacco products on campus
- Disregarding school rules
- Insubordination/failure to comply with a school official's requests
- Leaving campus without permission/authorization
- Illegally parking on campus without a permit
- Using profanity or flagrant disrespect to staff member
- Possession, use or attempt to sell drugs or illegal substances, alcohol or drug paraphernalia
- Fighting or provoking a fight
- Threatening or bullying (direct or cyber)

For every action, there is a reaction, and every decision comes with a consequence. Make wise decisions!

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Independence High School
Student/Code of Conduct Handbook
2025-2026

This form verifies that the student whose signature appears at the bottom of this page reviewed the Student Handbook for Independence High School. The student agrees to ask for clarification about any information that is unclear.

(Student's Signature)

(Date)

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**Independence High School
Student Expectations Acknowledgment
2025–2026 School Year**

Each student is required to initial next to each policy statement, indicating they have read, understood, and agree to comply with the stated expectations. Please return the completed form to the designated faculty or staff.

1. AI Usage Policy

Responsible AI Use Encouraged with Teacher Permission

Students are encouraged to use AI tools responsibly in this course **with teacher permission** to assist with learning and assignments. AI can serve as an aid to enhance understanding and engagement with course content, within the boundaries of **academic integrity**.

- All AI-generated content **must be cited** properly.
- Students are responsible for verifying the accuracy and appropriateness of AI-assisted content.
- Use of generative AI **without citation** is considered a **violation** of the Fulton County Schools Code of Conduct and may result in **disciplinary action**.

Student Initials: _____

2. Attendance Expectations

- Students who miss **2 or more days in a week** must report to school on **Friday**, unless otherwise approved by the administration.
- Students **will not** be permitted to complete missed assignments or tests until they report on the assigned Friday(s).
- Failure or refusal to report on assigned Friday(s) will result in a required **administrative meeting**.
- Students with **unexcused or unapproved absences** may only make up missed work **on Friday**—not during instructional time—unless approved.
- Students who are **failing a class** must report on Fridays until the grade improves to a **passing level**.

Student Initials: _____

3. Cell Phone Expectations

Electronic Communications Policy Update

In accordance with **Georgia House Bill 340: The Distraction-Free Education Act**:

- Use of **cell phones is not permitted** during instructional time.
- All devices must be placed in the **designated storage area** upon entering the classroom.
- Violations of this policy may result in **disciplinary consequences** in accordance with the Fulton County Schools Code of Conduct.

Student Initials: _____

Student Signature:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date: _____