

Innova Preparatory School
An Empowered Education

Policies and Procedures Handbook

The Policy and Procedure handbook is provided for use by students, parents, and faculty/staff of Innova Prep.

1000 Broadway, Suite 46, Hattiesburg, MS 39401

Ph: 601-909-6605 FAX: 601-475-2307

Table of Contents

- I. Introduction...pg. 4
- II. Accreditation...pg. 5
- III. Admissions...pg. 6
- IV. General Expectations...pg. 7
- V. Academic Work...pg. 8
- VI. Daily Schedule and Attendance...pg. 13
- VII. Conduct and Discipline...pg. 18
- VIII. School Safety...pg. 28
- IX. Other Policies and Procedures...pg. 33
- X. Appropriate Use of Computers and Technology...pg. 34
- XI. Finances...pg. 34

IPS Faculty/Staff 2025-2026

Dr. Zachary Murphy.....Executive Director/Principal
 Ryan Turner.....Academic Counselor/Band Director
 Jasmine Pearson.....Executive Assistant
 Amberlie Stephens.....Dyslexia Therapist/Psychometrist
 Trichi Murphy.....Director of Advancement/Teacher
 Cassidy Brinson.....Dyslexia Therapist/Teacher
 Kandi Webster.....Dyslexia Therapist/Teacher
 Rick Moreno.....Middle/HS History
 Jonathan Dent.....Middle/HS Science
 Dr. Derrick DeMars.....Middle/HS Math
 Mishi King.....Middle/HS English
 Demisha White.....Elementary Teacher

IPS Policies and Procedures

I. Introduction

A. Right to Amend: The executive director/principal and governing board reserve the right to amend any part of this document to serve the best interests of Innova Prep and the families it serves. If any changes are made, families will be promptly notified.

B. History, Mission, and Vision Statements

1. Innova Prep was established in February 2021 as a non-public, special-purpose day school that caters to the needs of exceptional students. The school was founded by Dr. Steven Farrell and Mrs. Wendy Farrell and is currently the only MDE-accredited nonpublic, special-purpose school in Mississippi that serves first through twelfth-grade students.
2. Our mission is to provide a safe, nurturing, co-educational learning environment where students with concurrent talents, gifts, and learning differences receive the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral support they need to thrive in and beyond the classroom.
3. Our vision for the future is to help create a world where differences are celebrated and students who fall outside the bounds of the ordinary can gain all the tools they need to become extraordinary.

C. Philosophy

1. We believe every student deserves to be taught in the way they best learn. Education should empower students to conquer their anxieties, overcome their challenges, polish their gifts, and reach their full potential.
2. We:
 - a) Encourage enthusiastic parent involvement in their child's school life
 - b) Are committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships between Innova Prep, individual families, and our community as a whole

- c) Extend learning beyond the classroom by exposing students to the rich cultural, historical, and scientific resources within our community and the world
- d) Help students develop the ability to explore and celebrate their individual differences and contributions alongside those of their fellow classmates.

II. Accreditation

A. Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Accreditation: Innova Prep is a MDE-accredited nonpublic, special-purpose school. The following state department requirements will be followed:

1. Innova Prep will operate for 180 days of instruction. When severe weather or other emergencies interfere with operation, the state may waive up to five days, with 175 required for school operation.
2. Half-days (early release) will have a minimum of four hours of instructional time, not including lunch, recess, or breaks. Only two days of early release are planned for the year.
3. Innova Prep follows MDE curriculum standards, including content area frameworks and college/career readiness standards.
4. Each child at Innova Prep will be instructed with an age-appropriate curriculum regarding the detrimental effects of drugs and alcohol.
 - a) Regular school days will consist of at least 330 instructional minutes, excluding breaks and activity periods.
 - b) No student shall be promoted to the next level whose absences exceed twelve days during the school year. The administration and school board may waive this standard if it is determined that the absences resulted from unusual circumstances or extended illness, provided the academic objectives missed during the absences are mastered and that the student's IEP, 504 Plan, or Educational Service Plan has been followed.
5. Innova Prep is also accredited by the Midsouth Association of Independent Schools.

III. Admissions

A. Students applying for admission at Innova Preparatory School will be selected through a process that may include a review of previous school performance and behavior, teacher recommendations, and admissions testing if deemed necessary. If previous school records do not provide a clear assessment of the student's ability to be successful at IPS, the school may require additional testing. Upon acceptance, a nine-week probationary period that will include parent-teacher conference(s), academic evaluations, disciplinary review, and appropriate recommendations will be required. Continued enrollment and dismissal from Innova Preparatory School are at the executive director's and governing board's sole discretion.

B. Priority of admission will be granted to currently enrolled students.

C. Nondiscrimination and Diversity

1. Nondiscrimination

- a) Innova Prep does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability in recruiting or admitting students or in any of the rights, privileges, programs, or activities generally accorded or made available to students or applicants.
- b) This nondiscrimination policy extends to the administration of admission policies, scholarship programs, and all other programs, policies, and activities of Innova Prep.
- c) Additionally, Innova Prep is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability in any employment policy or practice.

2. Diversity

- a) Innova Prep strives to create a diverse and multicultural environment in which all members of our community are respected, valued, and included.
- b) Innova Prep's board, faculty, and staff:

- (1) Are committed to creating and maintaining an academically and socially excellent learning environment.
 - (2) Acknowledge our responsibility to prepare our students to thrive in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world.
 - (3) Believe our students will be better prepared to lead as they expand their perspectives, are able to recognize the quality and value of different ideas and people, and become increasingly competent in understanding the various cultures they encounter throughout life.
- c) While Innova Prep's board, administration, faculty, and staff acknowledge and respect the differences of opinion on the political and social issues typical of our diverse community, we do not tolerate bigotry, harassment, or discrimination related to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, age, or personal beliefs, interests, skills, or learning styles.

IV. General Expectations

- A. Innova Preparatory School seeks to provide a safe, orderly climate conducive to teaching and learning. Students and staff share the responsibility for creating and supporting a positive school climate. The degree to which each student and parent/guardian accepts his or her responsibility to create such a learning environment has a definite effect on their academic achievement.
- B. The general expectations at Innova Prep are:
 1. Work to the best of one's ability
 2. Be respectful of the rights and property of others and of the school.
 3. Be safe
 4. Be responsible
 5. Treat others politely and respectfully
- C. To help students meet these expectations, staff, teachers, counselors and administrators develop specific procedures and rules while school is in session.

- D. The first few days of school each year are used to teach the rules, procedures, and consequences to all students. Every student and parent receives a hard copy of the handbook, which includes Innova Prep's discipline plan.
 - E. Parents and students must sign a form acknowledging that they have received and reviewed the policies and procedures outlined in this document.
- V. Academic Work
- A. A student learns to develop their intellectual skills consistently and responsibly. Excellence in academic work is expected.
 - B. Parents have access to their students' grades through the Blackbaud Parent Portal. They are encouraged to monitor their children's academic progress and are responsible for it.
 - C. Conferences will be held at designated dates on Innova Prep calendar to discuss progress/concerns. Other parent conferences may be scheduled by contacting the IPS Professional School Counselor.
 - D. Academic Honor Code
 - 1. Innova Prep is an academic community based on trust. Honesty in the execution and presentation of graded work is vital for real learning and fair evaluation. Cheating, facilitating cheating, and plagiarism impede learning and creativity, undermine meaningful and just grading, and subvert trust between students and faculty.
 - 2. Each faculty member has the responsibility to clearly delineate to students what types of work and assignments they should complete without assistance and what citations are appropriate.
 - E. A Note About Artificial Intelligence: To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.

F. Grading

1. Report cards are given out after each nine weeks.
2. Grading scale: IPS follows the grading scale of the public school system of Mississippi

(a) 90-100%	A
(b) 80-89%	B
(c) 70-79%	C
(d) 60-69%	D
(e) Below 60%	F
3. Calculating Averages:
 - a) Minor Grades (at least two per week) = 40%
 Major Grades (at least 4 per term) = 45%
 End of term comprehensive exams = 15%
 - b) **Minor grades** include bell-ringers, exit tickets, skills practice, and other daily assignments. These can be averaged in any combination to yield at least two minor grades per week.
 - c) **Major grades** include tests, presentations, projects, longer written assignments, and other assignments requiring significant academic investment.
 - d) **End of term exams** will be comprehensive, covering content presented during the entire 9 weeks. Projects, presentations, and written assignments may be substituted for the end of term exam, provided it reflects mastery of all content for the full term.

G. Homework

1. Beyond studying for tests and project preparation, homework will be limited in consideration of the unique challenges faced by IPS students.
2. Skills practice will be limited to assignments that can be achieved within supported academic time.
3. When homework must be assigned, the teacher will encourage students to document in student folders to support the student's success.

H. Late Assignments

1. Teachers may progressively subtract points from the total grade when an assignment is turned in late but must document that this has been communicated with the student and parent.
2. All teachers include participation in grading, so absences may be reflected in grades.

I. Progress Reports and Report Cards

1. Progress reports will be distributed at the halfway point of each term.
2. Report cards will be distributed upon the completion of end of term exams.
3. Parents can also monitor the progress of their students through their Blackbaud parent portal.

J. Failure Policies

1. Seventh and Eighth Grade

- a) Failure of two or more subjects at the end of the first, second, or third nine weeks will place the student on academic probation. Significant academic progress must be shown to be considered to return the following year.
- b) Failure of more than two subjects for the year may result in a student not being allowed to return to Innova Prep for the following year.

2. Ninth through Twelfth Grade

- a) Failure of four or more subjects after the first and/or third nine weeks will result in academic probation. Significant academic progress must be considered before returning the following year.
- b) Failure of five subjects at mid-term may result in a student being asked to leave Innova Prep.

K. Enrollment at Innova Prep does not guarantee that a student will receive a high school diploma. If at any point it is determined that gaps in a student's academic and behavioral performance are too wide to bridge given the resources available at Innova Prep, parents will be notified and advised on the appropriate steps to

take for their child's continuing education elsewhere. The presentation of a student's academic and behavioral data over time as proof for these gaps should be expected during this process.

- L. Withdrawal Procedure: Parents should notify the school in writing at least one day before withdrawal from IPS to allow time for paperwork to be completed. Before the release of records, all fees and/or fines must be paid and all books (curriculum, library, etc.) and school-issued technology must be returned. Failure to meet any of these financial obligations may result in a referral to a third party collection agency.

M. Placement

1. As a Mississippi Department of Education-accredited school, Innova Prep follows Mississippi public school graduation standards.
2. Upon admission, a student's grade placement will be determined by members of the IPS admissions team with reference to:
 - a) Their educational history
 - b) Their diagnoses and accommodation plan
 - c) Data from benchmark testing administered by the Innova Prep staff.
 - d) Their current stage of social-emotional development and age range.

N. Psychoeducational Evaluations of Students

1. Innova Prep reserves the right to perform in-house psychoeducational evaluations and academic benchmark testing when updated or supplementary information is needed. Parents will be notified if such testing is necessary.
2. These assessments will:
 - a) Help gather more information concerning a student's specific difficulties.
 - b) Help ensure that Innova Prep is providing the most appropriate services.

3. Reports are confidential and kept in a secure location in the appropriate administrator's office.
- O. Exemption policy: Students in grades 9-12 who meet these established criteria will have the following opportunities to be exempt from exams.
1. Second semester eligibility- Students who meet the following criteria may be exempted from taking an exam:
 - a) An average of 90 or higher for the first three terms;
 - b) Have been absent 5 days or fewer during the second semester;
 - c) Have been tardy 5 times or fewer during the second semester;
 - d) Have not served an extended work detail or have been suspended during the second semester.
- P. Graduation Honors Recognition
1. A Valedictorian and a Salutatorian will be named from the graduating class. The Val/Sal will be chosen based on the highest and second-highest numerical average from all academic courses with Carnegie unit credit attached from grade 7 through the end of the 3rd nine-week grading period of the senior year. Students considered for Val/Sal must be in attendance at IPS for at least their junior and senior years and must have taken their final 12 credits toward graduation from IPS.
 2. Students may earn additional endorsements on their diplomas based on outstanding academic performance. The counselor will notify all students of the requirements for these endorsements at the beginning of the school year. These endorsements include the:
 - a) Academic Endorsement
 - b) Distinguished Academic Endorsement
 - c) Mississippi Scholars Endorsement
- Q. Textbooks
1. All non-consumable books are rented to students. The rental fee is included in tuition.
 2. If a student loses or damages a book, the parent will be required to purchase a new one.

VI. Daily Schedule and Attendance

A. Hours: 7:45 AM – 3:15 PM

B. Arrival

1. Students should be dropped off at IPS between 7:45 AM and 8:10 AM.
2. Students arriving after 8:10 AM must be signed in by a parent.

C. Departure

1. Elementary students, except those who have middle school DT Maintenance during seventh period, are released at 2:15 PM
2. Middle and high school students are dismissed at 3:15 PM.
3. Parents are responsible for picking up their students at this time.
4. If an emergency should arise, parents are to contact the office to notify IPS faculty that they will be late.
5. Additional fees may be imposed if a parent routinely fails to pick up their student by 3:30 PM.

D. Signing in and out: Students entering or leaving school between the hours of 8:10 AM and 3:15 PM must report to the Innova Prep office with the parent, who will sign the child in or out as appropriate. A form of identification will be required for a child to be signed out of school during the school day.

E. Illness at school:

1. Fever Policy

- a) Students with a fever of 100.0 or higher should go home as soon as possible and should not return until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without medication.

2. Sickness Policy

- a) Should a child begin vomiting or diarrhea while at school, parents will be contacted to take the student home. A child should be symptom-free for at least 24 hours without medication to return to school.
- b) Students who test positive for COVID or live in a household in which a family member tests positive for COVID will be required to isolate themselves for five days before returning to school.

- F. P.E./Recess excuse: A student may be excused from P.E. or kept inside from recess at parents' request due to health or safety issues. A note from the parent or a call to the office is required for a student to sit out of P.E. or recess.
- G. Supervision of Students
1. All students must be supervised by a designated adult while on Innova Prep's campus. Faculty are assigned to student supervision between 7:45 AM and 3:15 PM. No supervision is guaranteed outside of these times.
 2. A student should NEVER be left at Innova Prep in the morning before 7:45 AM.
 3. At no time will a student be allowed to leave the grounds unless accompanied by an adult documented on the student's "permission to release" form or by other arrangements made by the parent with the office. If a parent arranges for a substitute driver to pick up his/her child, photo identification of that driver is required. Parents must email or call the office to make these arrangements. Verification of parent identity will be required for student safety.
 4. Students who drive themselves must obtain approval by contacting the executive director. Other students will NOT be allowed to ride home with a student driver without both students' parents' written consent.
- H. Court Documents: If a parent has a custody issue with their child's other parent, the custodial parent must provide the office a copy of applicable court documents stating to whom their child may be released and with whom educational information may be discussed.
- I. Absences
1. In compliance with Mississippi Department of Education requirements, **students may have no more than twelve unexcused absences during the school year**. Excused absences are also disruptive to the student's learning and should be kept to a minimum.
 2. Excused Absences
 - a) Illness of student
 - b) Illness of parent, preventing transportation

- c) Death in the family
 - d) Appointments with doctors, dentists, orthodontists, speech/language pathologists, counselors, psychologists, and other related professionals.
 - e) Situations related to a student's disability or challenge when documented in their Individual Education Plan (IEP), 504 plan, or IPS Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
 - f) Religious holidays
 - g) Court proceedings
 - h) Attendance at school-organized activities
3. Note: Family vacations are NOT considered excused absences. Please check Innova Prep's annual calendar before making vacation plans.
4. Absence from Exams, Tests, and Quizzes
- a) An unexcused absence from any test, quiz, or exam will result in the student receiving an incomplete (I).
 - b) The student is responsible for making up all work missed if the absence is excused. The student must make up the missing work within one week of their return to school unless otherwise arranged with the teacher and approved by the principal.
 - c) Students and parents can check the status of missing assignments in the Blackbaud Parent Portal.
 - d) Without proper communication and student support, students will receive a zero for any assignment, minor, major, or comprehensive.
 - e) If the student does not complete the assignment within the agreed-upon time, then the teacher may progressively subtract points from the total grade for the assignment. Ongoing communication with students and parents will be documented.
 - f) When the student does not comply with approved arrangements, then a zero will be awarded.
5. Acceptable forms of written excuse
- a) Excuse from the office of the doctor or other professional

- b) Handwritten note from the parent (up to five absences only). After five absences, parent-written notes are NOT acceptable without consent from an Innova Prep administrator and unless related to the student's disability or challenge.
6. Minimizing Disruption to Students' Learning
- a) If parents are aware in advance that a student will be absent, they are encouraged to contact the Innova Prep office in advance. Assignments can be given to the parents for the times that the child/children are absent.
 - b) If a parent knows a family vacation is planned during school time, Innova Prep must be notified to arrange make-up work. These missed days will still count as absences.
7. Excessive Absences
- a) Regular attendance is mandatory at Innova Prep. If your child is absent for an excessive amount of days (i.e. more than twelve) during the school year, admission for the next school year may not be granted
 - b) Truancy: To maintain our accreditation with Mississippi Department of Education as a nonpublic school, Innova Prep complies with MDE attendance policies. No student whose unexcused absences during a single year exceeds twelve days shall be promoted to the next grade.
 - (1) Truant: a student that has accumulated five or more unlawful absences in a school year, excluding suspension and expulsion days.
 - (a) After five unexcused absences, Innova Prep will refer the student to MDE by making a report to the Compulsory Attendance Officer.
 - (b) Parental contact by IPS administrators will occur via email or parent conference.

(c) The Compulsory Attendance Officer will contact parents via letter, phone call, and/or home visit.

(2) Habitual Truancy: a student who has accumulated twelve or more unlawful absences, excluding suspension and expulsion days, in a school year, will result in the filing of a petition in a court of competent jurisdiction by the Innova Prep attendance officer.

(a) After 10 unexcused absences, Innova Prep will again refer students to the MDE Compulsory Attendance Officer.

(b) After 12 unexcused absences, Innova Prep will again refer the student to the MDE Compulsory Attendance Officer.

(c) Petition filed by attendance officer in a court of competent jurisdiction, which may lead to an informal hearing with a judge.

8. Tardiness

- a) Habitual late arrival at school is not permissible. Parents will be called if tardiness becomes a serious concern.
- b) Homeroom will begin in the student's first period classroom at 8:15 AM each morning, and students arriving after 8:10 AM are considered tardy.
- c) When a student arrives after 8:10 AM, the student, or a parent/guardian must come into the office and sign in the student.
- d) Students who arrive at school any time after 8:10 or students who are late to class must sign in at the office and receive a pass to class from the office.
- e) If a faculty or staff member causes the student to be tardy, then that faculty/staff member must send a note with the student, who will then present that note to the next teacher. If a student is less than

five minutes late to class, the teacher should simply mark “T” for tardy in Blackbaud.

9. Early Release—Per MDE, seniors are eligible for early release if:
 - a) They obtain an English subscore of 17 and a math subscore of 19 on the ACT, or
 - b) They:
 - (1) Have at least a 2.5 GPA
 - (2) Are on track to meet all diploma requirements
 - (3) Are enrolled in Essentials for College Math or Essentials of College Literacy OR SREB Math Ready or SREB Literacy Ready.

VII. Conduct and Discipline

- A. The classroom teachers handle any discipline matters first. If a student engages in behavior that is contrary to the expectations set forth here, appropriate responses should be expected.
- B. However, more serious and chronic concerns will be brought to the attention of the principal. Except for minor incidents, parents will be informed.
- C. General Rules
 1. Students must remain at school until the customary dismissal time (3:15 PM) except when approved by parents and administrators.
 2. Conversations are not to infringe on the rights of others, and they are to relate constructively to time and place—especially in the classroom.
 3. Conversations, private or public, are expected to be positive, constructive, and respectful. Foul or suggestive language or stories, gossip, suggestive sign language, degrading names, putting others down, and even doing it in fun are examples of conduct that is unacceptable at IPS.
 4. Unnecessary and abusive bodily contact is not acceptable conduct at school.
 5. Possession or use of tobacco products, vapes, alcohol, drugs, firearms, knives, martial art supplies, or fireworks is prohibited.

6. All property, personal or other, is to be treated with due respect. Damaged or destroyed property belonging to others is to be replaced by the student or students responsible.
7. To promote the school's goals and purpose, students are asked to leave all electronic devices, games, questionable books or magazines, and weapons of any kind at home.
8. Public display of affection on school grounds is prohibited. Students who disregard the “hand off” policy will be subject to disciplinary action.
9. All cellular phones and other digital devices must be turned off and turned into the front office during the school day unless specified by a school official.
10. Hats and other headgear should be removed inside the school unless the student purchases a hat pass.
11. Any other behavior that is sufficiently disruptive to the learning environment may be considered a violation of the rules of conduct.

D. IPS Courtesy Code:

1. Display school spirit by taking pride in one’s appearance and by being courteous to staff, family members, and students.
2. Demonstrate good sportsmanship as a player or spectator at all school events.
3. Be polite and respectful towards others.
4. Honor our families and friends by exhibiting appropriate behavior.
5. Once a collective decision is made, accept it.

E. Classroom Expectations

1. Each teacher will set expectations for their classrooms. Students will be expected to follow these expectations while under their supervision.
2. Failure to follow classroom expectations will first be addressed through redirection with increasingly severe consequences for continued defiance.

F. Parental Partnership and Responsibilities

1. The parent or guardian of a student enrolled at Innova Prep shall be responsible financially for their child's destructive acts against school, property, or persons.
2. A parent or guardian of a student enrolled at Innova Prep may be requested to appear at school by the executive director or designee for a conference regarding the actions of their child.
3. Any parent or guardian of a student enrolled in Innova Prep who refuses or willfully fails to attend such a discipline conference may be summoned by proper notification by the executive director or designee.
4. Any parent or guardian of a student enrolled in Innova Prep shall be responsible for any criminal fines brought against their child for unlawful activity occurring on school grounds.
5. Parental actions toward the board, administration, faculty, staff, and/or other families of Innova Prep that break the rules set forth in this document will be considered when determining their child's continued placement at Innova Prep. Abusive behaviors by students or their families will be grounds for immediate dismissal.
6. Innova Prep reserves the right to monitor and regulate any of its public platforms (e.g. the school website, Facebook page, etc). The use of those platforms to damage the school's mission and standing in the community or to damage a staff member's professional or personal reputation is strictly prohibited. Abusive behaviors by students or their families will be grounds for immediate dismissal.

G. Harassment/Bullying

1. Innova Prep does not tolerate harassment or bullying by or toward students, parents, or faculty, will take appropriate actions to stop bullying events, and will assign appropriate punishments proportional to the severity of the situation.
 - a) Bullying is defined by three necessary characteristics:
 - (1) Targeted and repeated abusive behaviors toward a victim to fulfill a psychological need of the bully.

(2) A clear intention to cause physical or emotional harm

(3) An uneven power dynamic between a victim and the bully.

b) Kinds of bullying:

(1) Physical: violence, unwanted contact, damage to personal property, etc.

(2) Emotional: name calling, offensive gestures, harmful gossip, intentional exclusion, use of discriminatory slurs, rude artwork etc.

(3) Amatory: harassment based on gender, sexual preference etc.

(4) Virtual: transmission of disrespectful text messages, emails, photographs, social media posts, etc.

c) Bullying is not:

(1) Conflicts between students

(2) Episodes of spite or annoyance

(3) Random acts of aggression

(4) Mutual disagreements

d) Sexual harassment is considered a major rule violation to be dealt with through school disciplinary channels but can result in reports to external agencies as well.

e) Students, faculty, and staff who are concerned about any perceived bullying or harassment should immediately notify either the executive director or another trusted adult. A bully's most powerful ally is their victim's silence.

2. Discretion and Sensitivity

a) Students are expected to behave in a manner that exhibits respect for others.

b) Friendliness, helpfulness, courtesy, and sensitivity to the struggles of others are a reflection of students' moral development and denote growth in empathy for their fellows.

- c) The use of foul words or racial, misogynistic, heterosexist, and xenophobic language in student or parent interactions will not be tolerated.

H. Consequences

1. Consequences for both positive and negative behavior are a part of the Innova Prep school discipline plan.
2. Rewards and Reinforcements
 - a) Innova Prep implements a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system that focuses on rewarding good behavior.
 - b) Students earn points—called Talons—that can be used to purchase food, drinks, and toys in the Owl’s Nest, the Innova Prep school store.
 - c) Students may also lose points as a consequence of negative behaviors.
3. Disciplinary Process
 - a) When a student violates the codes of conduct with minor infractions, teachers, counselors, and administrators will first redirect the student toward positive behavior and issue a warning.
 - b) Minor infractions: any negative behavior that can be reasonably addressed within the confines of the school.
 - (1) Insubordination, disobedience, disrespect to teachers, administrators, or staff
 - (2) Insulting or obscene language, behavior, and/or gestures
 - (3) Accumulation of detentions or refusal to serve detentions
 - (4) Failure to report to a teacher as directed
 - (5) Inappropriate display of affection
 - (6) Excessive tardiness
 - (7) Any action that seriously or regularly disrupts the learning environment
 - (8) Any action which is deemed as rumor or talk of a personal, sensational, or intimate nature about another student or

staff member through any medium, such as gossip, text, email, pictures, or writing.

- c) Major infractions: negative behaviors that may necessitate both internal and external consequences. When considering these consequences, contextual factors, students' needs, and the overall impact on the learning environment will be considered.
- (1) Fighting: aggressive contact toward or between students
 - (2) Harassment (e.g. intimidation, threats, sexual, bullying, etc)
 - (3) Chronic truancy
 - (4) Possession/use of matches, lighters, tobacco, cigarettes, or electronic cigarettes
 - (5) Stealing/possession/selling of stolen property
 - (6) Possession/use/transferring of weapons and/or ammunition
 - (7) Possession/use/transferring of any prohibited substance
 - (8) Possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia
 - (9) Vandalism/graffiti (costs will be assigned to the parent/guardian for misuse/damages of school property and/or equipment/building)
 - (10) Indecent exposure
 - (11) Possession of pornographic material
 - (12) Possession or detonation of fireworks in or near Innova Prep's facility
 - (13) Gambling/possession of gambling paraphernalia
 - (14) Any threat, real or perceived, to a student, teacher, administrator, counselor, or staff member. Proper authorities will be notified and charges filed as appropriate. This includes threats made outside of school hours and off school property that include threats of harm at school.
- d) Demerits:
- (1) When efforts to redirect negative behaviors fail, students can be issued a demerit. These forms serve as a means to

notify parents of problematic student behaviors and are recorded in a student's yearly file.

(2) Demerits carry the following consequences:

(a) First demerit: office referral, loss of 20 talons, possible teacher consequence, and parent notification

(b) Second demerit: office referral, loss of 40 talons, lunch detention, and parent notification

(c) Third demerit: office referral, loss of 60 talons, conference set up with parent/guardian

(d) Fourth demerit: loss of breaks for three days; at home suspension; conference set up with parent/guardian

(e) Fifth demerit: at home suspension.

(3) **NOTE:** Displays of aggressive or destructive behavior will earn an immediate demerit. This includes verbal and physical aggression.

(4) **NOTE:** The number of demerits received in a classroom shall be a consideration in determining the student's conduct grade.

(5) **NOTE:** Failure to return a signed demerit form can result in a continuation of punishments and the issuing of additional demerits.

e) Lunch Detention:

(1) Upon receiving a second demerit, administrators may issue supervised detentions to be served during a student's lunch period.

(a) Students will be allowed to eat their lunch, but any time remaining in their lunch period will be used at the discretion of the detention supervisor.

- (b) Students will serve this detention on the same day the student received the demerit or as soon as the teacher or principal makes the necessary arrangements.
 - (c) Students who do not report to their designated supervisor for lunch detention will be issued another demerit.
 - (d) The only permitted activities in detention shall be:
 - (i) Homework/Studying
 - (ii) Completion of oral or written presentations reflecting upon
 - (a) How the student's choices violated IPS policies and procedures and disrupted the learning environment
 - (b) Possible choices of behavior in similar situations in the future.
 - (2) A detention record will be kept in the IPS office and in Blackbaud for parental review.
- f) Suspension
- (1) The principal shall have the power to suspend any student from school for good cause (MS code 37-9-71).
 - (2) The Innova Prep School Board shall have the power, authority and duty (MS Code of 1972, Section 37-7-301) to suspend or to expel a pupil for misconduct in the school, or on school property, on the road to and from school, or at any school-related activity or event, or for conduct occurring on property other than school property or other than at a school-related activity or even when such conduct by a pupil, in the determination of the executive director or principal, renders that pupil's presence in the classroom or school environment a disruption to the educational

environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the pupils of such class as a whole.

(3) After a student has been assigned to lunch detention six times in a semester, they will be suspended thereafter each time they receive additional demerit.

(4) Length of time:

(a) First suspension = 1 day

(b) Second suspension = 2 days

(c) Third suspension = 3 days

(d) Fourth suspension = 4 days

(e) Fifth suspension = 5 days

(f) Sixth suspension = assignment to home-based instruction or expulsion, depending on the needs of the student and the nature of the infractions.

g) Expulsions

(1) Expulsion of students shall be according to law, and such action requires the recommendation of the Executive Director and approval of the Innova Prep School Board in all cases. According to MS Code Annotated 37-7-301(c), the Innova Prep School Board has the power, authority, and duty to suspend or to expel a pupil for misconduct in Innova Prep or on school property, on the road to and from school, or at any school-related activity or event, or for conduct occurring on property other than school property or other than at a school-related activity or event when such conduct by a pupil, in the determination of the Executive Director or Principal, renders that pupil's presence in the classroom a disruption to the educational environment of Innova Prep or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the pupils of such class as a whole, and to delegate such authority to the appropriate officials of the school district.

(2) Upon written parent request, the student shall be provided a private due process hearing before action upon expulsion of a student.

- (a) Individuals' constitutional rights assure the protection of due process of law; therefore, a system of constitutionally and legally sound procedures has been developed for administering discipline.
- (b) The following procedural guidelines will govern an expulsion due process hearing:
 - (i) Written notice of charges against a student shall be supplied to the student and parents/guardians.
 - (ii) The parent shall be present at the hearing.
 - (iii) The student/parent may be represented by legal counsel at their expense.
 - (iv) The student shall be allowed to give their version of the facts and their implications. The student shall be allowed to offer the testimony of other witnesses and other evidence if it qualifies as a new finding.
 - (v) The students shall be allowed to observe all evidence offered against them.
 - (vi) The hearing shall be conducted impartially, and the determination shall be solely upon the evidence presented at the hearing.
 - (vii) A record shall be kept of the hearing.
 - (viii) Within a reasonable time after the hearing, the committee shall make findings as to whether the student is guilty of the conduct charged and its decision as to disciplinary action.

- (ix) The findings shall be reduced to writing and sent to the student and their parents/guardians.
- (x) The student and their parents/guardians shall be made aware of their right to appeal the decision to the executive director and, ultimately, to the School Board.
- (xi) If an appeal is taken, the Executive Director and/or School Board will act only upon the record from the hearing.

h) Home-based Placement

- (1) Home-based placement will be assigned only when the student's presence in the school is disruptive to the educational environment and detrimental to the wellbeing of the other students, when referral to another private or public school system is not appropriate for the student, and when Innova Prep's services can be reasonably and effectively provided to the student through the learning management system in place.
- (2) Upon written parent request, the student shall be provided a private due process hearing prior to action upon assignment of home-based placement. Due process will follow the process outlined in Section VI.H.3.g.

VIII. School Safety

A. Loss of Phone Communication

- 1. The school operates via VOIP. In cases of loss of internet, administrative cellular phones will act as the primary method of communication between city agencies and parents.
- 2. Teacher and staff cellular phones will be the primary method of communication with the parents of the students in their homerooms.

B. Loss of Electricity

1. In the event of an electrical outage, all technology-dependent services will cease to function. The building does not have back-up power, but all hallways have emergency lighting.
2. In the event of a long-term power outage, parents will be notified by the administrative phone service about the dismissal of students

C. Fire Emergency

1. In the event of a fire emergency, students and staff will use the following procedures:
 - a) During a fire drill, students will leave their backpacks and other personal belongings in the classroom.
 - b) Each teacher will take their phone to access student rosters and shut the classroom door.
 - c) Teachers will grab their emergency packs near their classroom door after arriving in their safe place in case phone service is down.
 - d) Students and teachers will walk quietly to their preassigned safe space on the outside of the building.
 - e) Teachers will take attendance and send via GroupMe an “all here” or “missing students” to the principal.
 - f) When the “all clear” alarm sounds, students and teachers will walk quietly into the building and back to their classrooms.

D. Bomb Threats

1. In the event of a bomb threat, the school will use the fire emergency protocol. The school administrator or designee will call 911 for assistance.

E. Weather Emergency

1. Innova Preparatory School administration monitors severe weather watches and warnings and maintains contact with the Forest County Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service during severe weather threats.
2. If the National Weather Service issues a tornado warning for the school, all students will follow “Weather” protocol and report to their safe place.

Students will remain in the building and be released when the warning has been lifted.

3. If parents are in the campus parking lot when a warning is issued, they will be encouraged to come into the building where they will be directed to a safe area.
4. If a tornado warning occurs during dismissal, students will remain in designated safe areas.
5. Innova Preparatory School will use the School Status text alert system to notify parents of any changes in dismissal or after-school activities due to severe weather warnings. In the event of a power outage, the school will follow its communication protocols.

F. Threats to Geographical Area

1. Innova Prep's response to threats to the geographical area (internal/external hazardous materials) such as train and highway tanker spills will depend on the local advice of local emergency management.
2. Depending on the situation and the advice of local authorities, lockdown procedures may be initiated.

G. Earthquake

1. In the unlikely event of an earthquake, students will:
 - a) Drop to the ground. Students who are physically unable to drop to the ground should remain seated and cover their heads with their arms and hands.
 - b) Take cover under or near desks, tables, or chairs in a kneeling position with their backs to the windows.
 - c) Hold on to table or chair legs. Remain in the drop position until ground movement ends.
2. Teachers will:
 - a) Assess their surroundings for severe structural damage, fires, toxic chemicals, and student injuries.
 - b) Evacuate the classroom if necessary and proceed to the evacuation assembly area used for fire evacuation.

- c) Check roll, report any missing students, and remain with the class unless given an alternative assignment.
- d) Upon receiving the all clear signal, students and staff will return to their classrooms.

H. Active shooter: Students and faculty will use the following procedures in the event of an active shooter situation.

1. RUN: Evacuate If Possible

- a) If there is a considerable distance between you and the gunfire/armed person, quickly move away from the sound of the gunfire/armed person. If the gunfire/armed person is in your building and it is safe to do so, run out of the building and move far away until you are in a secure place to hide.
- b) Leave your belongings behind.
- c) Keep your hands visible to law enforcement.
- d) Take others with you, but do not stay behind because others will not go.
- e) Call 911 when it is safe to do so. Do not assume that someone else has reported the incident. The information that you are able to provide law enforcement may be critical, e.g. number of shooters, physical description and identification, number and type(s) of weapons, and location of the shooter.

2. HIDE: Hide silently in as safe a place as possible

- a) If the shooter is in close proximity and you cannot evacuate safely, hide in an area out of the armed person's view.
- b) Choose a hiding place with thicker walls and fewer windows, if possible.
- c) Lock doors and barricade with furniture, if possible.
- d) Turn off lights
- e) Silence phones and turn off other electronics.
- f) Close windows, shades and blinds, and avoid being seen from outside the room, if possible.

- g) If you are outdoors and cannot RUN safely, find a place to hide that will provide protection from gunfire such as a brick wall, large trees or buildings.
 - h) Remain in place until you receive an “all clear” signal from School Status.
3. FIGHT: Take action to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter
- a) As a last resort, fight. If you cannot evacuate or hide safely and only when your life is in imminent danger, take action.
 - b) Attempt to incapacitate or disrupt the actions of the shooter.
 - c) Act with physical aggression toward the shooter.
 - d) Use items in your area such as fire extinguishers or chairs.
 - e) Throw items at the shooter if possible.
 - f) Call 911 when it is safe to do so.
4. Immediately after an incident:
- a) Wait for Local Law Enforcement officers to assist you out of the building, if inside.
 - b) When law enforcement arrives, students and employees must display empty hands with open palms.
5. Note:
- a) Understand that gunfire may sound artificial. Assume that any popping sound is gunfire.
 - b) If there are two or more persons in the same place when a violent incident begins, you should spread out in the room to avoid offering the aggressor an easy target.
 - c) Be mindful that violent attacks can involve any type of weapon, not just a gun. Knives, blunt objects, physical force or explosives can be just as deadly as a gun. The suggested actions provided here are applicable in any violent encounter.
 - d) Plan ahead: Visualize possible escape routes, including physically accessible routes for students and staff with disabilities and others with limited mobility.

IX. Other Policies and Procedures

- A. School lunches: Students must bring their lunch and a drink each day. Microwaves are available to warm food, but parents must send food that can be heated in a microwave quickly so others have time to warm their food and to eat. Additionally, students are encouraged to bring a reusable water bottle to keep with them during the day.
- B. Birthday celebrations: Parents who want to celebrate their child's birthday at school may bring enough cookies or cupcakes to share with their child's class. Students may enjoy birthday treats during their lunchtime.
- C. Dress Requirements: Innova Prep has a comfortable dress code to support student learning. Clothing should be clean, neat, and properly fitting. Students and faculty will follow the dress code during the school day and at any Innova Prep-sponsored activity. Parents will be informed by phone when an outfit is considered inappropriate and requested to bring a change of clothes for the student.
1. Clothing must be free of profanity, sexual language or images, political references, or drugs/alcohol-related content.
 2. Pants must be size-appropriate (no "sagging" and not overly tight)
 3. Yoga pants/leggings may be worn **only** with another article of clothing that extends easily to the top of the knee.
 4. Skorts, Skirts, and shorts must be no shorter than three inches from the top of the kneecap. They must also be loose-fitting enough to fall naturally upon standing to meet the three-inch requirement.
 5. Tank tops and muscle shirts are not allowed.
 6. Hats and hoodies may not be worn inside the building unless the student purchases a hat pass from the Owl's Nest.
 7. Shirts must fully cover a student's torso. No crop tops.

X. Appropriate use of Computers and Technology

- A. Innova Preparatory School provides access to the technology necessary to complete assignments.
- B. Students and parents will sign a technology agreement at the beginning of each school year outlining the rules for the acceptable use of school technology. Additionally, parents will be expected to replace lost, stolen, or damaged technology.

XI. Finances

A. Tuition and Fees

- 1. Tuition: \$12,000 yearly per student, arranged as follows
 - a) Full payment of \$12,000 paid by June 15, 2025
 - b) Two payments of ½ tuition (\$6,000) paid June 15, 2025, and (\$6000) January 15, 2026
 - c) Twelve monthly installments of \$1000 paid on either the first or the fifteenth of each month from June 2025 till May 2026.
 - 2. One-Time Application Fee: \$50 for all applicants
 - 3. Annual Registration Fee: \$600 per student
 - 4. Building Fee: \$300 per family
 - 5. Active Dyslexia Fee: \$150 for students in active dyslexia therapy. This fee does not apply to students in dyslexia therapy maintenance.
 - 6. Blackbaud Administration Fee: \$56
 - 7. Late Fee: \$40 per occurrence
 - 8. ACH payment through Blackbaud will be the only accepted method for tuition payments. Blackbaud assesses a \$2.50 fee for each ACH transaction.
 - 9. Any account that becomes one month past due and then misses a second consecutive payment will result in a student being unable to attend until the account is brought current.
- B. Blackbaud Tuition Management: Innova Prep partners with Blackbaud Tuition Management System to safeguard financial transactions between families and the school.

C. Education Scholarship Account (ESA): a MDE program designed to give those parents with special needs children the option of withdrawing their child from the public school system and receiving a designated amount of funds to help defray the cost of private school tuition or other specific allowable activities to educate their child (https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/esa_flyer_9.7.22.pdf)

1. Eligibility

- a) Must be a resident of the State of Mississippi
- b) Must have an active Individualized Education Program (IEP) within three (3) years from the date of application. An “active IEP” is developed by a public school district where the student was enrolled and received special education or related services outlined in the IEP.

2. Parental responsibilities

- a) Provide an organized, appropriate educational program with measurable annual goals and provide an education for the student in at least the subjects of reading, grammar, mathematics, social studies, and science
- b) Document the participating student’s disability every three (3) years after initial enrollment in the program
- c) Not enroll the participating student in a public school and to acknowledge that the eligible school has provided clear notice that the student has no individual entitlement to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) from the home school district, including special education and related services, for as long as the student is participating in the ESA program
- d) Not to file for the participating student a certificate of enrollment indicating participation in a home instruction program under Section 37-13-19, Mississippi Code of 1972
- e) Not to participate in the Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship for Students with Dyslexia Program or the Mississippi Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship for Students with

Speech-Language Impairments Program while participating in the ESA program

- f) Notify the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) immediately upon a change in status that causes one or more of the above items to no longer be met
 - g) Provide the MDE Office of Special Education (OSE), ESA division pre- and post-assessments by June of the awarded school year.
 - h) Participate and share the pre- and post-assessments administered by the school the student is attending.
3. Applications are time and date stamped upon receipt, reviewed, and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until 50% of the annual enrollment limits are reached. The remaining ESAs will then be chosen using a random selection process. A mid-year lottery may be held in the event additional scholarships become available.
 4. Scholarship Award: The amount is calculated annually each spring and may vary based on the availability of funds.
 5. Apply for ESA at www.mdek12.org/OSE/ESA.
- D. Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship (<https://www.mdek12.org/OAE/OEER/Dyslexia>)
1. Mississippi has the nation's only school choice program created exclusively for students with dyslexia. The program allows children with dyslexia to receive vouchers to attend accredited private and public schools that provide dyslexia therapy (<https://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/programs/mississippi-dyslexia-therapy-scholarship-for-students-with-dyslexia-program/>)
 2. Rules and Regulations
 - a) Income Limit: None
 - b) Prior Year Public School Requirement: Yes, with exceptions
 - c) Geographic Limit: Statewide
 - d) Enrollment Cap: None
 - e) Voucher Cap: \$9614

- f) Testing Mandates: None
 - g) Limited to students with special needs.
3. The Office of Student Intervention Services coordinates and manages:
- a) The review and award of student dyslexia scholarships,
 - b) The RFP process for the award of dyslexia grants to districts
 - c) The selection process of a State Board of Education approved list of dyslexia screeners
 - d) Professional development and technical assistance related to dyslexia to parents, teachers, and administrators on the following topics:
 - (1) Understanding Dyslexia
 - (2) Identification of Students with Dyslexia
 - (3) Effective Instruction and Interventions for Dyslexic Students
4. The Office of Intervention Services is responsible for assisting parents who are pursuing a scholarship or transfer under the dyslexia therapy scholarship program.
- E. Financial Aid: Families may apply for school-based financial assistance through the Blackbaud Financial Aid System in the spring of each year for returning students. However, there is no guarantee that financial aid will be awarded.
- F. If a data-driven evaluation of a student's yearly progress demonstrates that state funds are not benefiting them, Innova Prep may recommend discontinuing those funds as a matter of fiduciary responsibility.