THE DISCOVERY SCHOOL

this is learning

PARENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

Updated July 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MISSION **6**
- Our Vision 6
- Our Core Values 6
- Purpose & Outcome Statements 6
  - Portrait of a Graduate 6
  - Characteristics of Professional Excellence 6
- Staffing 7
- Organization 7
- Board of Trustees 8

HISTORY **8**

ACCREDITATIONS **9**

ADMISSIONS **10**
- Admission Policy 10
- Diversity Statement 10
- Expectations for Applicants 11
- Financial Aid 11
- Tuition Insurance 12
- Returning Students 12
- Student Support Services 13
- Academic Support 13
  - Academic Support Coordinator 14
  - Classroom Support 14
  - Intervention 15
  - Accommodations 15
  - Student Support Strategies 15
  - Parent Responsibility 15
- School Counseling Program 16

OUR SCHOOL DAY **17**
- School Hours 17
- Program Hours 17
- Arrival & Dismissal 18
  - Campus Gate & Fence Access 18
  - To ensure the safety of our students and staff, The Discovery School operates a secure, automated fence and gate system. This system is designed to regulate access to the campus during key transition times while maintaining a safe and welcoming environment. 18
  - Starting in the 2025-26 school year, gates will open at 7:30 a.m. 18

Precare Program 18
Toddler 18
Laminated Name Tags 18
Primary and Kindergarten 18
Primary Car Line (for all groups, P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 Car Line) 19
Elementary School 19
Middle School 19
Siblings 20
Aftercare Program 20
ATTENDANCE 20
Attendance Expectations 21
Reporting Absences or Tardies 21
Recognized Absences 21
Attendance Monitoring & Consequences 22
Communication & Support 22
Tardy 22
Emergency Contact Form/Authorized Release 23
Parking 23
Visitors 23
LUNCH AND SNACK GUIDELINES 24
General 24
What should I include in the snack? 24
How much should I bring? 25
How complicated does it have to be? 25
Program Snack Guidelines 25
Toddler Snack 25
Primary Snack 25
Elementary and Middle School Snack 25
Toddler, Primary, Elementary, and Middle School Lunch 26
Allergies 26
Birthdays/Life Celebrations 27
UNIFORM POLICY/DRESS CODE 27
Primary, Elementary, & Middle School Uniforms 27
Colors 28
Clothing items 28
Faded apparel should not be worn to school and needs to be promptly replaced. Apparel with holes will need to be mended or replaced. Clothing should be clean, free of holes, sized to fit appropriately, and worn properly on the body. 28
Additional Guidelines 28

Designated Spirit Dress & Free Days 29
On Designated Spirit Days, students may wear a special Discovery shirt, Discovery athletic shirt, Mad Dash Shirts, and Discovery club shirt, with uniform bottoms. 29
Shoes 29
Physical Education (PE) Days 29
Toddlers 29
Toileting 30
Toddlers 30
Primary 30
COMMUNITIES 31
Toddler Community (18 months through 3 years) 31
Primary Community (3 years through 6 years) 31
Elementary Community (Grades 1 through 6) 32
Middle School Community (Grades 7 and 8) 32
Aftercare Program 33
Afterschool Adventures 33
Enrichment Activities 33
Summer Program 33
ACADEMIC OVERVIEW 34
Student Progress and Parent Conferences 34
Parent Education 35
Referrals 35
Purpose for Assessment 36
How do we structure assessments? 36
How often do we assess? 36
What do we assess? 36
Who is responsible for assessment, and how? 36
How is assessment information recorded? 36
How is assessment information analyzed and reported? 37
How will assessment information be reported to students and parents? 37
Are there any mandatory requirements that must be satisfied? 37
Who will have access to assessment information, and where will it be located? 37
How often will the school review assessment practices? 37
Standardized Tests 37
What is MAP? 38
What is Acadience (DIBELS)? 38
What is ISEE? 38
Privacy of Student Files 38
Update of School Records 39

Requests 39
Transcripts 39
Withdrawal of Child 40
Disclosures without Consent 40
COMMUNICATION 41
Open Door Policy 41
Teacher and Parent Communication 41
Phone Calls 41
Parent Relations 42
Classroom Communications 42
School Directory 42
Notices and Emails 43
Changes in the Home 43
School Calendar 44
PARENT PARTICIPATION 44
Consistency & Continuity 44
Community Agreement 44
Volunteer Opportunities 44
HEALTH & SAFETY 45
Required Medical Records 45
Health and Safety License 45
Force Majeure 45
Emergency Contact Information 46
Illness 46
Communicable Disease 46
Hurricane / Emergency Procedure 47
Receiving texts sent through Finalsite 47
Update Email Spam Filters 47
Caller ID 47
Safety 47
Student and Parent Reunification 47
Classroom Health and Sanitation 48
Toddler Personnel 48
Medication for Students 49
Accidents 49
Emergency Numbers and Evacuation Plan 49
Supervision of Children 49
Outbreaks 50
Fire Alarms & Drills 50

SLP & OT Screenings 50
CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE 51
Philosophy of Discipline 51
Toddler Program 52
Developmentally, we know that toddlers are learning what is acceptable in the classroom and 52
Primary Program 53
Elementary Program 54
Middle School Conduct 55
Expected Behaviors 55
Unacceptable Behaviors 56
Overall Unacceptable Behaviors 57
Public Displays of Affection 58
Acceptable Use of Technology 58
Urgent Action Plan 60
When Standard Interventions Fail 60
Student Disenrollment 61
Personal Technology Policy 61
Academic Honesty Policy 62
Abusive, Degrading or Vulgar Language and Conduct 64
FINANCIAL POLICIES 65
General Information 65
Tuition Payment Plans 65
Scholarships 66
Precare and Aftercare Payments 66
Late Pickup Fee 66
Returned Checks 66
Overdue Payments 66
Financial Gifts 67
Appendix 67
Phone Extensions 67

MISSION

We open our minds and hearts so we can discover the knowledge and ideals to build a better world.

Our Vision

To cultivate an inclusive and vibrant community that promotes knowledge, creativity, independent thinking and mutual respect.

Our Core Values

Academic Excellence: We embrace academic excellence, guiding our children's innate curiosity, and encouraging joy in learning.

Independence and Imagination: We foster independent thinking and spark imagination, inspiring our children to become the leaders of tomorrow.

Peace and Respect: We instill respect for self, respect for one another and respect for our planet, enhancing prospects for peace.

Purpose & Outcome Statements

Portrait of a Graduate

Explorers pursuing their passions
Spirited and reflective risk-takers
Peacemakers
Resourceful and perseverant innovators
Leaders who inspire others to discover and act on what is possible
Responsible, courageous world citizens
Principled decision-makers

Characteristics of Professional Excellence

Discovery School Educators…

- *Model the Portrait of the Graduate*
- *Passionately pursue their own professional growth and development*
- *Unabashedly hold children at the center of all decisions and actions*
- *Cultivate an inclusive and vibrant learning community*
- *Discover and act on what is possible*

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with The Discovery School (TDS) and provide you with information about school routines, procedures, and policies affecting your student. It contains general statements of school policy, which the school reserves the right to apply at its sole discretion based on the facts of individual situations (or in consideration of other factors it deems pertinent) and in preservation of the safety of all students and the best interests of the school.

The Discovery School reserves the right to modify and/or amend the content of the Handbook at any time during the year. If you have any questions about the Handbook or any of its policies, please contact admissions@thediscoveryschool.org

The Discovery School continually strives to maintain excellent communications with all students, families, and stakeholders. The Administrative Office works hard to keep this manual up to date and to keep all families informed as policy changes occur from time to time during the normal course of business. This edition of the handbook replaces and supersedes all prior versions.

Please understand, however, that there may be times when policy will change (at the sole discretion of the Head of School and Board of Trustees, as may apply) before the written document can be revised and distributed to all families. The most recent version can be found online at www.thediscoveryschool.org.

Staffing

The Discovery School is comprised of administrators and educators. All of our Teachers and Associates are trained in Montessori and the International Baccalaureate, depending on which programs they teach. All Discovery faculty and staff are qualified, dedicated, competent, and committed to ongoing professional development.

Organization

The Board of Trustees sets policy, budget, and long-range plans. Administrative responsibility rests with the Head of School. Faculty supervise children's education and care. The Head of School is responsible for the management of the entire school. The Head is the Board's sole employee and is empowered to address all operational matters such as student enrollment, academics, finances, advancement, hiring and termination of personnel, and supervision of administration to carry out the operations of the school.

Board of Trustees

The Discovery School of Jacksonville, Inc. (TDS) is a non-profit corporation governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees comprised of community leaders, parents, and business professionals. The Board meets every other month to review and plan for the following: procedures and policies, school finances, buildings and grounds, future growth and physical expansion, fundraising, all involved in establishing and following the school's Strategic Plan.

Trustees often interact with others within the school community but do not get involved in the daily operation of the school. As a matter of good practice, parents should report and discuss operational concerns to the appropriate teacher or administrator.

HISTORY

The Discovery School, Inc. was founded in 1990 as Discovery Elementary School, Inc., a private, non-profit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to providing children a quality elementary education with Montessori principles. The Toddler Community was added in 1992, and our name was officially changed to Discovery Montessori School, Inc. to reflect our entire student population.

The Primary level was added in 1994 to meet the needs of our growing Montessori community. Due to this growth, Discovery Montessori expanded its 6th Avenue Jacksonville Beach location to include a satellite campus at 102 15th Street South. This new site, dedicated as the Hudson Lane campus, began offering classes to our older students in 1995.

In May of 1998, construction for the Primary building at the Hudson Lane Campus began. Site expansion continued with the elementary building, and finally, the toddler building was completed in 2002.

Discovery now offers programs for toddlers through eighth grade, and the Hudson Lane campus is the school's sole location.

During the 2008-2010 school years, the final phase of the campus was completed with the construction of the Walchle Multipurpose Building. This building housed our Upper Elementary program, library/multimedia facilities, and the After Care program. In addition, the back of campus went through a wetlands mitigation process that resulted in a full-size playing field and the planting of an Edible Schoolyard.

In June of 2014, a dedicated elementary playground was added to the playing field, incorporating a

basketball court and free play area for students.

In June of 2016, the school once again changed its name to reflect program growth, becoming The Discovery School.

In August 2019 The Discovery School opened the I.D.R.E.A.M. Building to provide the space to accommodate the growing elementary program and the addition of the 7th and 8th grade program.

In August 2024 The Discovery School opened The Peter & Jennifer Sleiman Building as the 6th building to the campus. This building allows the Upper Elementary and Middle School programs to continue to grow and expand while also adding a community atrium space to the campus. With the newest building the school will now have four dedicated enrichment spaces as well.

During the summer and fall of 2026, the next phase of the school's master plan will continue. This includes an elementary school playground, turf outdoor spaces, and a new field space. This phase is expected to be completed in the fall of 2026.

ACCREDITATIONS

The Discovery School (TDS) continually strives to maintain an exceptional learning environment for its students. To this end, the school periodically undergoes a stringent accreditation process.

FCIS (Florida Council of Independent Schools)

TDS successfully completed the most recent 6-year re-accreditation by the Florida Council of Independent Schools (FCIS) in 2016. During the 2021-22 school year, faculty and staff wrote an extensive self-study, summarizing all departments of the school, demonstrating excellence in all areas. During the 2022-23 school year, the school welcomed an accreditation committee for re-evaluation with FCIS, and successfully completed the reaccreditation cycle. For more information about the Florida Council of Independent Schools, please visit http://www.fcis.org

AMS (American Montessori Society)

The Discovery School is a member school of the American Montessori Society, the world's leading Montessori network. This membership affords a vital partnership for advancing the professional growth of our educators and Montessori programs on campus. For further information about the American Montessori Society, visit https://amshq.org

IB (International Baccalaureate)

TDS has been an accredited IB World School, offering the Primary Years Programme (PYP) for children aged 3-12 since 2018. Taught in over 97 countries worldwide, the PYP curriculum framework is uniquely adaptable to state and national standards. Guided by six transdisciplinary themes of global significance, students deepen their learning by developing their conceptual understandings and strengthening their knowledge and skills across and beyond subject areas. During the 2022-23 school year, the school successfully completed a re-evaluation by the IBO (International Baccalaureate Organization). More information can be found here: https://www.ibo.org/programmes/primary-years-programme/

ADMISSIONS

Admission Policy

The Discovery School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, disability, gender identity, national origin, or any other protected category. We believe diversity in both the student body and staff contributes to the value of the school experience. Discovery observes a non-discriminatory admission policy for students who are eighteen months through fourteen years of age. It is understood that parents and students agree with the school's policies as stated in this handbook and have an obligation to support them. Discovery reserves the right to refuse admission or re-admission to any student.

Diversity Statement

At The Discovery School, we believe that every individual who enters our community brings unique perspectives, experiences, and contributions that enrich our shared learning environment. We honor and respect all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, religion, physical ability, sexual orientation, family structure, or socioeconomic background.

Guided by our Montessori and IB values, we are committed to cultivating an environment and education where kindness, respect, and empathy are foundational. We acknowledge the existence of inequities and affirm our responsibility to stand with marginalized communities. We believe that every person deserves to be seen, heard, and valued.

As a school community, we do not tolerate racism, bias, hate, or violence in any form. Instead, we seek to nurture a culture of peace, understanding, and justice—preparing our students to be compassionate and courageous global citizens.

Expectations for Applicants

The expectation for children seeking admission into the Toddler and Primary programs is that they will complete the 3-year Primary cycle, which includes the Kindergarten year, and continue at Discovery through 8th grade.

Financial Aid

Blackbaud Financial Aid Management is available to current and first-time students. Discovery utilizes a financial aid program called Blackbaud Financial Aid Management. Blackbaud Financial Aid Management provides an objective financial needs assessment directly to TDS administration/governance. A link is available on the Discovery website. The Financial Aid Application deadline is February 1st. Partial scholarships are awarded, based on need, beginning in March and will be offered as part of the annual student enrollment contract process. For more detailed information regarding the Financial Aid policy, please visit our website.

The Discovery School also accepts Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC), Family Empowerment Scholarship for Education Options (FES-EO), and Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA). Discovery also offers access to fixed-rate loans from Your Tuition Solution. Loans are available from $2,000 to $40,000 to cover all educational expenses that are paid directly to the school. These fixed-rate plans are for terms ranging from 24 to 84 months, with low APRs (rates based on the length of the term and the applicant's credit rating). There are no supplemental or application fees and no prepayment penalties. Monthly payments are fixed for the life of the loan. Applications are placed online, and the loan agreement is a simple one-page document that families print themselves. For more information or to calculate monthly payments, please visit tuitionsolution.com.

Tuition Insurance

So that your family's investment in your child's education may be protected, The Discovery School mandates families who have installment payment plans (that extend beyond the start of the school year) to enroll in our Tuition Insurance Plan. Families that have paid tuition in full prior to the start of the school year may elect to purchase tuition insurance to protect their investment. This insurance plan protects your yearly financial obligation under the terms of the Enrollment Agreement by insuring your tuition and fees, in the event of separation, according to the terms of

the policy.

Returning Students

Admission requirements include

1. A classroom observation is recommended for the parents of children moving into a new program.
2. Completion of re-enrollment paperwork, inclusive of the enrollment deposit and a signed enrollment agreement.
3. Satisfactory recommendations from teachers and the administration regarding the student's academic progress, conduct, and work habits from the previous year.
4. All students are required to have a current Florida State Student Health Examination/Certificate of Immunization Form and a recent physical (Forms 3040/680) on file. You will be notified by the office staff approximately one month before your child's forms expire.
5. Current health and immunization forms must be on file, and all tuition deposits and school fees must be paid before your child may attend class.
6. The placement of students in specific classes is an educational decision made by the school's faculty and administration. Parent input is welcomed, but the administration is not always able to accommodate it.

Student Support Services

The Discovery School is committed to nurturing the whole child—academically, socially, and emotionally. Our **Student Support Services Team** works collaboratively to ensure each student receives the care and guidance they need to thrive.

The team is composed of the Director of Student Services & Experience, the Academic Support Coordinator, the School Counselor, and our Program Coordinators/Directors. Together, these professionals form a responsive and caring network dedicated to student growth, ensuring that every child feels supported, valued, and empowered to succeed.

Academic Support

Discovery values diversity and may consider enrolling students with learning differences. Consideration must be based on the current class enrollment and the school's ability to effectively meet the child's needs as well as the needs of the class as a whole. Discovery has one curriculum

for all students and no specific special education program.

As an inclusive school, we may be able to provide accommodations after having received a student's psychoeducational evaluation and determined that we can support the student's needs. The school's Academic Support Coordinator creates an accommodation plan, which summarizes the support/accommodations and ensures that plans are shared with the entire teaching team. The teaching team may collaborate with outside specialists to address evaluations and specific needs.. The full cooperation of the parents is required, and test results/evaluations (if any) need to be submitted or obtained in order to receive accommodations (evaluations are valid for up to 3 years).

Any professional recommendations (tutoring, therapy, a shadow, etc.) must be provided by the parents to ensure the child's success. All evaluations, results, and professional recommendations are at the parent's expense and must be shared with the school.

Note: If, after a period of time (usually 4-6 weeks), or according to the parameters in a student's conditional contract, it is decided by the school that the child has not benefitted from the classroom experience, the school reserves the right to dismiss the child.

The Academic Support Coordinator, a Discovery employee, will be available during the summer months to work exclusively with Discovery students. These sessions will be 1:1 and focused on maintaining academic skills in reading, writing, and math. The hourly rate is $5 per hour.

For the Elementary/Middle School Program:

- As a school, we will not be offering 1:1 intervention.
- Academic tutors are unable to pull students between the hours of 8:00 am - 3:00 pm. We value our core curriculum and believe that all students need to be present during group lessons in their classrooms.
- Occupational Therapy (OT) and Speech Therapy (Speech) must be scheduled during non-school hours.

For students in our Toddler & Primary Program, OT, Speech, and ABA therapists are welcome to work with students at any point during the morning or afternoon work cycle.

Academic Support Coordinator

The Academic Support Coordinator will:

1. Support teachers of students with accommodations.
2. Provide support in ELA (English Language Arts), Reading, Writing, and Math for grades 1-8 in small groups for identified children who are struggling to reach grade-level goals.
3. Provide reading intervention in small groups in grades 1-4 with psychoeducational evaluations that recommend such support

Classroom Support

The Academic Support Coordinator will provide small group support to students that need extra help to meet grade-level expectations. Students in need of small group support will be identified by teachers, informal assessments, and evaluations.

- Students will be provided accommodations on summative/formative assessments, papers, tests, and projects for students with up-to-date psycho-educational evaluations.
- Small Groups: For identified struggling students in word work, comprehension, writing, and math.

Intervention

The Academic Support Coordinator will provide intervention for grades 1-4 in small groups to students identified as at-risk for reaching expectations.

- 1st Grade: UFLI
- 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Grade: Wilson Reading and Spelling Program

Accommodations

Teachers will schedule with the Academic Support Coordinator prior to assignments requiring the following accommodations:

1. 50% extra time on summatives, formatives, and standardized testing.
2. Read-aloud assignments and assessments
3. Voice-to-text when available
4. Audiobooks/Learning Ally
5. Use of a word processor

6. Assignments, not modified, but broken into small increments

Student Support Strategies

General support strategies that are implemented and may vary in each class.

- Assistance with organization
- Frequent check-ins

Parent Responsibility

1. Parents recognize that the Academic Support Coordinator will provide reasonable accommodations for children with formal evaluations. (Please see the above list.)
2. Parents appreciate that teachers will make a reasonable effort to provide students the opportunity to demonstrate learning using: voice-to-text, audiobooks, and manipulatives.
3. Parents provide reading or math intervention privately if their child is identified as needing this extra support. Due to limited space, tutoring before and after school can not take place on campus.
4. If OT or Speech is recommended, parents will connect with off-campus or on-campus providers.

School Counseling Program

At The Discovery School, our counseling department is committed to providing a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate program designed to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of the school community. The school counselor will provide a collaborative and hands-on program to foster the growth of all students. The needs of all students will be met in an age-appropriate and individualized manner through collaboration with parents, teachers, learning specialists, and Administration. Students' needs are addressed through a curriculum that fosters self-awareness, personal growth, mindfulness, responsibility, and respect for others and themselves

The Lower School:

- Works with teachers on implementing a schoolwide wellness program, The Four Pillars of Wellbeing, and a Kindergarten abuse prevention program, Safer, Smarter Kids.
- Provides small group counseling sessions to empower students with social skills and coping skills

- Is a member of the Student Services Team and works closely with the Learning Specialist, Director of Student Services & Experience, and Administration to advocate for students and families.

The Upper School

- Works with teachers on implementing a schoolwide wellness program, The Four Pillars of Wellbeing
- Provides short-term individual counseling and small group counseling for students to support their social and emotional well-being
- Leads classroom lessons on various social and emotional topics
- Provides support to students in crisis and helps the family plan for ongoing support
- Is a member of the Student Services Team and works closely with the Academic Support Coordinator, Director of Student Services & Experience, and Administration to advocate for students and families.

For Parents and Families

- Provides consultations to address questions and concerns related to your child's emotional development.
- Provides referrals for community resources
- Hosts a bimonthly Parenting Book Club to discuss relevant parenting topics
- Hosts various parent education events throughout the year

OUR SCHOOL DAY

School Hours

Our regular business hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The School has an answering machine on at all times. If we are temporarily unable to answer your call, please leave a message on the appropriate extension. Your call will be returned as quickly as possible.

Program Hours

Precare: 7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Toddler Half-Day: 8:40 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Toddler Full Day: 8:40 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Primary 3 & 4 year old Half-Day: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Primary 3 & 4 year old Full Day: 8:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Kindergarten: 8:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Foundational Elementary: 8:00 a.m. - 3:05 p.m.
Lower Elementary: 8:00 a.m. - 3:05 p.m.
Upper Elementary: 8:00 a.m. - 3:05 p.m.
Middle School: 7:45 a.m. - 3:05 p.m.

Aftercare: 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Arrival & Dismissal

Campus Gate & Fence Access

To ensure the safety of our students and staff, The Discovery School operates a **secure, automated fence and gate system**. This system is designed to regulate access to the campus during key transition times while maintaining a safe and welcoming environment.

Starting in the 2026-27 school year, gates will open at 7:25 a.m.

Precare Program

Students may be dropped off beginning at 7:30 a.m. Drop off for the precare program is by program level. Toddler precare is held in Building 3. Please park near the Toddler classrooms and escort your child to the Toddler Community Garden. Primary, Elementary, and Middle School children will be dropped off by car line in front of Walchle Multipurpose Building.

Toddler

The Toddlers start their day by arriving between **8:40 and 9:00 a.m.** and are dismissed from **12:20 to 12:30 p.m.** for half-day, and **2:45 to 3:00 p.m.** for full-day students. Please park near the Toddler classrooms and walk your child to the classroom gate, where a teacher will greet you for arrival and dismissal.

Car Name Tags

All families in Primary, Elementary, and Middle School will be given color-coded pick-up name tags. Please place one prominently on the dash of your windshield. This will expedite the pick-up

process.

Additionally, all families will be given a hanging car tag and window decal to show Discovery faculty which program their children are a part of for the dismissal team to assist in directing traffic and expediting the dismissal process as safely as possible.

For the safety of our community, families without the appropriate carline signage will be asked to wait in the grassy area outside of campus until dismissal has concluded and identification can be verified.

Primary and Kindergarten

Primary and Kindergarten students arrive on campus **between 8:30 and 8:45 a.m.** Parents are asked to drive through the proper car line for their child's classroom.

Primary Car Line (for all groups, P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 Car Line)

Drive south on 15th Street and take a right turn into the main entrance driveway. You will follow the carline around and stop in front of Walchle Multipurpose Building (Building 4) for arrival/drop-off. A teacher will come to the car to greet your child. Please proceed to pull up as far as possible and ensure the back door of the vehicle aligns with the teacher. Please stay in your car in order to keep the car line moving, Please ensure your child sits on the left side of your vehicle (the driver's side) in order to remove them from the vehicle safely. Please make sure that your child waits for one of the teachers to open the door in order to be escorted to the classroom.

At arrival, keep your goodbyes short and cheerful. A long departure can be very difficult for the child.
Dismissals for Primary occur at the same location as the arrival. However, it is required by law for you to get out of your car to secure your child in their car/booster seat. Dismissal for Primary students is 12:30 p.m. for half-day and 2:45 p.m. for Kindergarten and full-day students.

Elementary School

Students in the Elementary School program arrive on campus between 8:00 and 8:15 a.m. and are dismissed at 3:05 p.m. You will follow the carline around and stop in front of the I.D.R.E.A.M. Building (Building 5) for arrival/drop-off. Teachers will be outside to greet the students as they arrive. Please proceed to the drop off and pick up sign and ensure the back door aligns with the teacher.
Dismissal will take place at the same location. Please do not come early and plan on waiting in the driveways. We have staggered our dismissals in order to keep the traffic moving. If you arrive before your child's pick-up time, please pull your car onto the grassy area on 15th Street, lining up for the start of dismissal. As to not interrupt the flow of traffic, please ensure that your entire car is

standing off the road.

Middle School

Middle School students arrive on campus **between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m.** and are dismissed at 3:05 p.m. Primary and Elementary siblings of Middle School students will be allowed to attend Precare at no charge due to the earlier Middle School arrival time. Parents will follow the carline around and stop in front of I.D.R.E.A.M. Building for arrival/drop-off, proceed to the first available red post, and ensure the back door aligns with the teacher.

Middle School dismissal takes place after the dismissal of younger students. Parents should not come early and plan on waiting in the driveways; dismissals are staggered in order to keep traffic moving. If you arrive before your child's pick-up time, please pull your car onto the grassy area on 15th Street, lining up for the start of dismissal. As to not interrupt the flow of traffic, please ensure that your entire car is standing off the road.

Siblings

In order to help accommodate our families with multiple children, we have coordinated arrival and dismissal locations for families with siblings. For all full day students with siblings on campus, you will pick up all of your children at the youngest child's dismissal location. Please reach out to receptionist@thediscoveryschool.org for arrival and dismissal instructions specific to your families needs.

Aftercare Program

The Aftercare Program for Toddlers is held in Building 3. Please park near the Toddler classrooms and walk up to the Toddler 3 classroom.

The Aftercare Program for Primary children is held in the Library in Building 5, the I.D.R.E.A.M. Building. Dismissal for students will be at the entrance of the breezeway. You need to park your car in an available parking space and enter the breezeway/building to pick up your child. Please remain outside the classrooms while a teacher helps your child get ready and gather all belongings.

The Aftercare Program for Elementary and Middle School is held in the Art Room in Building 5, the I.D.R.E.A.M. Building.

- For Aftercare students: You will need to park in an available space and come to the front right classroom in I.D.R.E.A.M. Building to pick up your child.

- Afterschool Adventures & Music/Band: Please stay in your car following through the carline in front of I.D.R.E.A.M. Building.
- Afterschool Tutoring: You will need to park in an available space and come to the front of Walchle Multipurpose Building to pick up your child.

Never leave your car standing in the carline! Please use available parking spaces.

ATTENDANCE

At The Discovery School, daily, on-time attendance is essential to academic success and meaningful engagement in our learner-centered community. Being present supports student progress, relationships, and full participation in the life of the school. Parents should endeavor to do their best in having students arrive on time, rested, and in good physical health. Regular class attendance indicates parental recognition of the responsibility to obtain maximum experience through attending The Discovery School. Attendance is taken daily, and absences are recorded. Please email the school if you know that your child will be absent: healthandsafety@thediscoveryschool.org and your child's classroom teacher(s). It is not necessary to speak with the teacher; an email is sufficient. Explanations for absences are required for Kindergarten, Elementary, and Middle School-aged students. If the school does not hear from the parent, the Director of Student Services & Experience will be in contact to determine the cause of the absence. Parents whose children have exceeded more than ten absences will be asked to meet with their child's teacher to develop a plan for school participation. Students who exceed more than 15 absences will be required to meet with the Director of Student Services & Experience.

Attendance Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day, arriving on time, well-rested, and healthy
- Be present for all academic classes, Advisory, assemblies, and school events
- Engage consistently and responsibly in their learning

Frequent absences or tardiness—whether excused or unexcused—negatively impact learning and classroom continuity. Families are asked to avoid non-essential absences and consider the broader effect of time missed from school.

Reporting Absences or Tardies

As early as possible, but by **9:00 a.m.** by the latest, parents/guardians must:

- Email: **healthandsafety@thediscoveryschool.org and your child's classroom teacher(s)**

A written explanation (email) is required for all absences in Kindergarten through Middle School. Our Director of Student Services & Experience will follow up on unreported extended absences.

Recognized Absences

Although the school no longer distinguishes between "excused" and "unexcused," the following are recognized as legitimate:

- Participation in school-sponsored events
- Religious holidays
- High School visits (for Middle School students)
- Serious illness or extended medical leave **(a medical note is required after 3 days for continued excused absences)**
- Injury or death of an immediate family member

Vacations or travel during the school year are strongly discouraged and will be considered unexcused, even if reported in advance. If unavoidable, please notify the **Director of Student Services & Experience** and classroom teacher **at least one week in advance**.

Attendance Monitoring & Consequences

- **8+ unrecognized absences in a class per trimester**: May result in a **full letter grade reduction.**
- **Excessive absences**: May result in loss of **extra-curricular privileges.**
- **10 total absences or tardies**: Letter from **Director of Student Services & Experience**; meeting with classroom teacher may be requested.

- **15+ absences**: **Mandatory meeting** with the Director of Student Services & Experience and Head of School.
- **Chronic absenteeism** may result in **denial of re-enrollment or promotion.**
- In the event that a student is out of school for an extended period (10 or more school days) due to medical leave or an unforeseen circumstance, the school reserves the right to request and schedule a re-entry meeting prior to the student's return to campus and resumption of the school year.

Communication & Support

The **Student Services Team** or **Director of Student Services & Experience** will reach out if attendance becomes a concern. We recognize that life circumstances can affect attendance and are committed to working with families to support student success and consistent school engagement.

Tardy

Punctual arrival is important for classroom management and the child's sense of order (this cannot be overemphasized). Children who arrive late often feel awkward and uncomfortable. Late arrivals can disrupt learning activities for the children who are already present and delay classroom involvement for the child who is late. Lateness, especially the chronic variety, has subtle educational costs for the child. In addition, it does not reflect respect on the part of the parents for the school program and is disruptive to both students and teachers.

Teachers will not be available to greet children who are tardy, and for the safety of our students, doors to the buildings are locked at all times. If you arrive past the drop-off time, you must park and go to the Front Desk to sign in your child. We will then accompany your child to class.

Early Pick-Up

To ensure a safe and efficient dismissal process, parents are strongly encouraged to complete early student pick-ups **prior to 2:30 PM**. Due to the period after 2:30 PM being strictly dedicated to afternoon dismissal logistics, main office staff will experience significant delays in retrieving students from classrooms or dismissal lines.

Emergency Contact Form/Authorized Release

We can only dismiss children to persons you have authorized on your student's Emergency Contact Form. Pick-up lists are specific to the family, not just the student. If you authorize pick-up for one child, it will not automatically authorize pick-up for all your children. Parents can make changes by (1) coming into the office and making the change, (2) sending in or emailing a dated note with a signature asking that the office make the change, or (3) updating your Emergency Contact forms via the Parent Portal.

Parents must let the teacher know when they will be sending another authorized person to pick up their child in lieu of following the daily pick-up schedule. This helps the teachers watch for other cars and enables them to advise the child of the change.

Parking

There are moving lines for drop-off and pick-up. If you need to enter a building, please find an appropriate parking space. Please do not park in front of the retirement home sign that is located on the west end of Shetter Avenue.

Parents and other drivers are cautioned to drive slowly and exercise extreme caution when backing up or pulling out of the parking area. Pedestrians, as well as drivers, must exercise extreme care in the lot and at drop-off and pick-up areas.

Please be advised that all parents and visitors to the school must obey all parking laws for the City of Jacksonville Beach. If parking on the street, be aware of all signs and laws when choosing a spot. The Jacksonville Beach Sheriff's Office will issue a ticket. Parking on Shetter Avenue is prohibited, and your car may be towed.

Visitors

There should be no visitors without visitor badges on campus. All visitors must sign in at the Front Desk before going to a classroom. If you are on campus for a conference or meeting, you need to check in with the Front Desk. The Front Desk will contact the appropriate teacher, administrator, or staff member.

There is an expectation that all faculty and staff will approach any visitors they do not recognize (and/or do not have a visitor badge on) and ask them how they can help them. Unbadged visitors

will be escorted to the Front Desk.

LUNCH AND SNACK GUIDELINES

General

Discovery strives to nurture our children's growing bodies, minds, and spirits. While sharing food has traditionally been a way to celebrate and build community, we are also mindful of creating a safe and inclusive environment for all students, including those with allergies or dietary restrictions. With that in mind, we kindly ask that **families no longer bring in food or snack items for birthday celebrations or class activities**. We warmly encourage alternative ways to celebrate, such as reading a favorite book to the class, planning a special classroom activity, or sharing a memorable experience.

For Toddler and Primary classrooms, please follow your child's teacher's advice and recommendations. Food preparation (practical life) will continue for all Montessori classrooms.

We look forward to unique cultural celebrations where food can be shared. These food sharing opportunities will be announced per classroom by your teacher.

As for regular/personal snacks/lunch, please continue to follow our healthy guidelines, including proper labeling and avoiding choking hazards. Thank you for helping us support the well-being of every child.

Please note that **After Care or Afterschool Adventures do not provide snacks**. Please pack your child's lunchbox accordingly.

What should I include in the snack?

Try to purchase organic produce when possible, especially if you are buying apples, peppers, celery, cherries, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, raspberries, spinach, or strawberries. Other items could include food made from whole grains (e.g., bread, crackers, bagels, cereal). Healthy foods that come from a family's cultural traditions (e.g., nori rolls) or that are special (whole grain pancakes) are welcome as well.

Please avoid foods that have trans fats (the label usually lists a "partially hydrogenated oil") and foods that have processed sugar (including corn syrup or high fructose corn syrup and evaporated cane juice). Please do not bring in candy for any occasion. Do not bring in food that might be a choking hazard.

How much should I bring?

Children's appetites vary widely by individual and also by age. Nevertheless, there are some rules of thumb you can apply. Perhaps as a general rule, put in half of what you would put eat as an adult: half an apple, for example, or half a banana or half a sandwich. For broccoli or carrot sticks, put in about half a cup per child. If you are bringing adult-sized muffins, bring half a muffin each.

How complicated does it have to be?

Remember that this is just a snack. It is not meant to be the children's main caloric intake for the day. In certain instances, the final preparation of the snack can be done at school by the children as a good practical life lesson (e.g., slicing bananas in half); please check with your child's teacher about what falls into this category. It is OK to bring in the same snack more than once, even in the same week.

Program Snack Guidelines

Toddler Snack

You will be asked to provide a snack for your child's class, and you will receive a snack calendar before the first of each month. Each family is asked to contribute fruits or vegetables and starch for snacks on a rotating basis. The children will prepare snacks (wash, chop, etc.) as part of their daily work, so there is no need to prepare the snack ahead of time. Please choose starches made from natural ingredients without sugar, chemicals, or hydrogenated oils.

Primary Snack

The children should bring a nutritious snack that is as low in sugar as possible to enjoy as their morning snack. The snack table is available from the beginning of each morning until 10:30 a.m., when group activities begin. This allows the children to monitor their own food needs.

Elementary and Middle School Snack

Children are responsible for their own snacks on a daily basis. Children may eat their snacks during the designated snack time. Please include a snack with your child's name on it in their lunch box each day. Healthy snacks are strongly encouraged, as stated in this handbook. Suggested ideas are crackers, cheese, pretzels, cereal/granola bars, fruit, vegetables, etc.

Toddler, Primary, Elementary, and Middle School Lunch

Please pack a well-balanced lunch daily. We ask that parents not drop off or have lunches delivered to school during the school day. In the event that a lunch is dropped off late, please bring

it to the front office, not directly to your child's classroom.

All foods need to be sent to school ready for the child to eat. We cannot guarantee refrigerator space, so please send a frozen ice bottle with any items that need to be kept cold. Do not include anything that has to be heated in your child's lunch. Please avoid sending glass containers or jars, as they are breakable. We suggest plastic containers that the children can easily open. Be sure to label the lunch box and its contents with your child's name.

Allergies

The Discovery School is committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for all students. We strive to maintain an allergen-aware environment; however, we cannot guarantee that our campus will be completely free of food or environmental allergens that may cause an allergic reaction.

Food Allergy Care Plans and Emergency Preparedness

All parents/guardians are required to complete a Medical Form prior to the start of each school year. If a student has a diagnosed severe food allergy or a history of anaphylaxis, parents/guardians must also provide a current Food Allergy Action Plan or Allergy Care Plan completed by the student's allergist or pediatrician. This documentation enables the school's Health & Safety team to develop an individualized care plan, ensure prescribed emergency medication is available on campus, communicate necessary precautions to appropriate staff, and train designated personnel to recognize the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and administer emergency medication when necessary.

Students with a history of anaphylaxis must have two current epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPen® or equivalent), as prescribed by their physician, available on campus at all times. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring all emergency medications remain current and for replacing expired medications promptly.

To help reduce the risk of allergic reactions, The Discovery School implements the following practices:

Students may not share food, beverages, utensils, or lunch containers.

Students and staff are encouraged to wash their hands before and after meals and snacks.

Tables and eating surfaces are cleaned and sanitized before and after meals and snacks.

Students are taught age-appropriate practices that help create a safe and inclusive environment for classmates with food allergies.

Classroom teachers and assistants are informed of student allergies and emergency procedures and are expected to be familiar with each student's Food Allergy Care Plan.

Allergy alerts may be posted in classrooms or other appropriate locations for staff awareness while respecting student privacy.

Students with life-threatening food allergies should provide a non-perishable substitute snack to be kept at school for use when needed. At the request of the parents/guardians or when deemed appropriate by the school, reasonable accommodations, including alternative seating during meals or snacks, may be implemented to help reduce the risk of allergen exposure.

Discovery respectfully requests that families refrain from sending peanut butter or peanut-containing products to school whenever possible. If a student has a documented severe allergy to a specific food, families in the affected classroom will be notified and asked not to send products containing that allergen into the classroom.

The Discovery School provides annual training for designated staff members in food allergy awareness, recognizing the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction, and administering prescribed emergency medication in accordance with a student's Food Allergy Action Plan.

While every reasonable effort will be made to minimize exposure to known allergens, The Discovery School cannot guarantee a completely allergen-free environment.

Birthdays/Life Celebrations

Birthdays are celebrated at school with a special ceremony during our community time. Parents are invited to join in this celebration if desired. Celebrations vary between levels, and every lead teacher has their own special way of recognizing children on their birthday. Please contact your child's teacher directly to make arrangements for your child's birthday celebration.

Because Discovery is concerned with the development of a positive self-image for all students, unless all the children are invited to non-school parties, invitations should not be sent to school. We do not want hurt feelings caused by being "left out" to occur at school. In addition, please do not send in gifts for children to take to parties they will be attending after school.

Parents of Primary and Toddler students will be invited into the classroom for your child's Celebration of Life.

UNIFORM POLICY/DRESS CODE

Primary, Elementary, & Middle School Uniforms

Uniforms encourage independence in dressing by allowing the child to mix and match items and know they are dressed appropriately. Wearing "school clothes" helps children be in a school mindset. They also aid focus in the classroom when children are less distracted by the clothing of others. It is our expectation that children's uniforms are clean and look neat on a daily basis.

In designing the item and color list, we attempted to make it easy and flexible for parents and comfortable for children. Children who are not dressed in the appropriate uniform top or bottom may be asked to change. In the event a child is asked to change, a parent will need to return to school with the school-approved clothing item.

Students enrolled in the Primary, Elementary & Middle School programs are required to wear uniforms.

- All tops (shirts, blouses, cardigans, sweaters, jackets, even dresses) must display the school logo.
- Bottoms (shorts, pants, and skirts) may be bought from anywhere as long as they are approved school colors.
- Uniforms may be purchased from Lands' End using school number 900064593. Once you enter the school number, all approved items will be displayed for you to order.
- You may also request the school logo (admissions@thediscoveryschool.org) and add embroidery to tops you purchase.

Guidelines

- School colors for polo shirts are Navy, Blue, White, Maize, and Gray.
- School colors for pants, shorts, skirts, jumpers, etc. are Khaki, Navy, and gray.
- Outer garments such as jackets, sweaters, or sweatshirts that are worn in the classroom must be school colors. Any non-Discovery logo on the apparel must be smaller than a business card.
- We strongly encourage you to label your child's attire with their first name and last initial.

Colors

Polo colors include White, Blue, Maize, and Heather Gray. Rapid Dry Polo colors include Blue,

Soapstone, and White. The colors for bottoms are navy, white, khaki, and grey. This includes tights and leggings. All tops, shirts, jumpers, etc., must have the Discovery logo on them. Logo items may be purchased through Lands' End (preferred school #900064593). Bottoms or non-logoed items may be purchased from any store as long as they adhere to the dress code and school colors.

Clothing items

Polo-style collared shirts (short and long sleeve), cotton t-shirts, long pants, shorts, skirts, skorts, jumpers, blouses, and sweaters are acceptable. Students wearing dresses or skirts must wear shorts underneath. The shorts underneath the dress or skirt do not have to be a uniform color as long as they are not visible when the child is standing. Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be at least mid-thigh length.

Students in 1st -8th grade may wear leggings or tights in addition to shorts, dresses, or skirts. Leggings or tights may not be worn as pants on their own.

Accessories such as socks, shoes, and hair pieces are all at the family's discretion as long as they do not distract the student or their peers from learning.

Faded apparel should not be worn to school and needs to be promptly replaced. Apparel with holes will need to be mended or replaced. Clothing should be clean, free of holes, sized to fit appropriately, and worn properly on the body.

Outerwear

Outer garments such as sweaters or sweatshirts worn in the classroom must have the school logo. In cold weather, students may wear coats and jackets with no large logos, advertising, or denim. Options are available from the Lands End Store.

Additional Guidelines

No hats, caps, hoods, sunglasses, or outerwear may be worn in classrooms or buildings. Sweatpants, joggers, yoga pants, gym shorts, and jeans are not permitted.

Sweatshirts, sweaters, and hoodies must be plain white, navy, or grey or have a Discovery logo on them. Only Discovery sweatshirts may be worn.

Bare midriffs are not allowed, and undergarments must not be visible.

Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be mid-thigh in length. These items must reach or extend beyond the fingertips at a normal stance.

Designated Spirit Dress & Free Days

On Designated Spirit Days, students may wear a special Discovery shirt, Discovery athletic shirt, Mad Dash/Coach Chad's Chase Shirts, and Discovery club shirt, with uniform bottoms.

On indicated Free Dress Days, usually the last Friday of each month, the children may wear clothes of their choice to school. Revealing clothing, pajamas, and lingerie are not acceptable. Yoga pants and leggings may be worn as long as they are paired with a top that provides adequate coverage. Underwear must not be exposed. Tops and shirts must cover the entire shoulder and be modest, not revealing or distracting. Midriff or "cut-out" dresses and "cut-out" tops may not be worn. Extremely short skirts are not allowed.

Shoes

We encourage soft-soled shoes in the classroom to reduce noise levels. These should be worn with socks and either tie or Velcro snugly. Dress shoes, boots, loafers, or slip-on shoes are discouraged, as they are not safe on outdoor climbing equipment. All shoes must have a closed toe and cover the foot: no flip-flops, thongs, jellies, or sandals. Children may be asked to bring in weatherproof boots for the Eco-Discovery Pathway.

Physical Education (PE) Days

Please wear appropriate clothing for PE days. Dress in comfortable pants/shorts that are appropriate for physical exertion. Sneakers should be the shoes of choice. Dri-fit shirts can be purchased through Lands' End. However, they are not mandatory.

Toddlers

Our school uniform policy does not apply to Toddlers. Self-care is important as our Toddlers move toward independence. Help your child choose clothing that is loose and manageable with fasteners that can be handled by the child. Onesies and overalls with shoulder buckles are difficult for most Toddlers to handle. As your child moves toward self-toileting, it will be helpful to provide underpants, shorts, and/or pants with loose elastic waistbands. Please avoid the use of "pull-ups," as these actually slow the progress toward independent toileting. Although we provide aprons for messier work, keep in mind that young children love to play and experiment!

Toileting

Issues related to toileting include a change of clothing, using precise language about body parts and functions, and maintaining positive and matter-of-fact attitudes concerning the process. As a

daily routine, we invite all children to assist in removing their clothes and diaper and to use the potty or toilet. The child's assistance is again requested in getting dressed, then both adult and child wash their hands together.

We supply a cubby for each child's belongings. Please bring an extra set of clothing and several diapers and/or underpants. Clothes/diapers must be clearly marked with your child's name. In the event of an accident, the wet clothes will be placed in a bag and sent home, along with a reminder to send replacement items.

Toddlers

When assisting your child, remember that self-toileting happens naturally and in its own time. It is important to maintain a positive attitude and to be observant of your child's cues of readiness. Some common signs include:

- Child tells you that he/she has urinated or needs to urinate
- Diapers stay dry for longer periods of time (about two hours)
- Your child demonstrates independence in dressing
- The child is able to get on and off the toilet
- The child asks for a potty, or the toilet

Primary

All children entering Discovery's Primary programs must be self-toileting. While we recognize a young child may have a few accidents initially, we reserve the right to ask parents to keep a child at home until they have more control over their bodily functions if deemed necessary by the staff.

Because we have water activities in the classroom, we ask that each child bring a complete set of extra clothing. Please include an extra top, bottom, pair of underpants, and socks, all well-labeled with your child's name. These clothes need not conform to our uniform policy. Classrooms supply a container for each child's belongings. In the event of an accident, the wet clothes will be placed in a bag and sent home, along with a reminder to send replacement items the very next day.

COMMUNITIES

Toddler Community (18 months through 3 years)

Dr. Montessori's discovery of the child's absorbent mind from birth through six years was a vital contribution to education. She realized that the child's mind unconsciously absorbs impressions from the environment. In this way, the children accumulate the material which will later build up

their conscious life.

In the Toddler Community, the major task of the adult is to help the child towards functional independence: physical, emotional, and intellectual. As the adult enables the child to recognize himself as separate from the adult, the child begins to gain a clearer sense of self. Through activities that help the child develop control, the child gains greater self-confidence.

The child at this age is especially sensitive to the acquisition of their language and culture. Lessons involving stories, books, songs, picture cards, objects, and contact with the natural world are all incorporated into the curriculum to help develop the child's oral language. Since this is usually the child's first contact with other children, this is also a time for them to learn how to participate cooperatively in a group. Social harmony is achieved by helping the children learn how to move purposefully, put materials away, and not interfere with another's activity.

Primary Community (3 years through 6 years)

It is between the ages of three to six when the child most easily learns the ground rules of human behavior. These years should be constructively devoted to freeing the child through the acquisition of good manners and habits to allow him a place in society. The child who has had these opportunities in the Montessori environment is better prepared to devote more effort to the development of their intellectual faculties.

In an established Montessori class for three to six-year-olds, there are no timetables to regiment activities or a fixed syllabus to cramp the expansion of the mind. Here, in an orderly atmosphere of freedom, the children work independently at chosen tasks, working at their own pace and rhythm for as long as they wish in order to fulfill their needs. From the foundation of sensorial experiences, the child builds their mind in the world of abstract ideas.

The Primary years are filled with a wide range of factual materials. The whole world of culture embracing subject areas such as geography, history, science, music, art, language, and mathematics, is open to the child. It is these early experiences that will form a basis for the wide fields of inquiry and research during the Elementary and Middle School years.

Elementary Community (Grades 1 through 6)

By the age of 6 or 7, children's emerging powers of reason and imagination enable them to explore and discover on a more abstract level. Children are therefore encouraged to research the answers to their own questions. Their research is not limited to the classroom but also includes

opportunities for "going out" on field trips to the library, bank, stores, beach, offices, etc. They develop a better understanding of human life through this direct experience and begin to better appreciate the community in which they live.

Elementary studies include geography, history, biology, language, mathematics (including algebra and geometry), science (including principles of physics and chemistry), library science, technology applications, music, and art. The entire curriculum is integrated, meaning that all subjects are viewed as related. For example, when students study Africa in world history, they will also read African folk tales in world literature, create African masks in art, sing Swahili songs in music, make hieroglyphic calendars in math, and study African animals in zoology.

Homework is viewed as an extension of the work at school. Typically homework involves some reading, math, research, and writing. The Elementary program also includes Physical Education, Library, Spanish, Japanese, Music, Art, Eco-Discovery, and STEM.

Middle School Community (Grades 7 and 8)

The Middle School program at The Discovery School is designed to extend what has existed in the school since its inception while continuing to be cognizant of the needs of young adolescents. The Middle School program prioritizes student agency, interests, collaboration, social-emotional learning, and self-management skills while ensuring a rigorous academic focus that prepares our students for the next stage of their academic careers. Middle School students at The Discovery School will be part of a culture that allows them to be thinkers, leaders, and inquirers who pose questions, take intellectual risks, apply their passions, and ultimately change the world around them.

Aftercare Program

Discovery's Aftercare Program provides care for Toddlers through Middle School children from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, when school is in session for full days. On some early dismissal days, aftercare will not be available. These days are noted on the Key Dates document. Aftercare was developed to serve the needs of our community and in response to parents' requests for an aftercare program that is warm and relaxed while in keeping with Discovery's philosophy.

The basic Montessori concepts of a prepared environment, respect for the child, freedom within limits, and the fostering of independence through choice prevail in this program. Although the

program allows for flexible arrival and departure times, there is a consistent schedule of activities, indoors and outdoors, both structured and unstructured. This format provides children with ample time to socialize, develop both fine motor and gross motor skills, and participate in various group learning activities.

The same rules of grace and courtesy which are instilled in children during our Montessori and IB program are also expected of children staying in our after-school programs.

Afterschool Adventures

The Discovery School offers a wide variety of after-school enrichment programs throughout the school year. These programs serve to enrich our already robust curriculum by offering additional opportunities for academic growth. These classes run throughout the course of the school year and are offered in some capacity for all students. You must register for these programs through our website. Some examples of our programs include Art, Chess, Athletics, STEM, Robotics, Yoga, and Theater.

Enrichment Activities

To enhance your child's educational experience at Discovery, we offer specialized enrichment classes. From Kindergarten through Middle School, children will have lessons in World Language, Music, STEM, Library, PE, Eco-Discovery, and Art. All students will participate in all classroom enrichment activities unless indicated otherwise by individualized Plans of Care.

Summer Program

The school usually offers a summer transitional program for Toddlers (18 months to 3 years) and Primary children (3-6 years) for 6-8 weeks. A variety of camps are offered for students ages 3 to 14 years old during the duration of the summer. The summer program for our Toddler & Primary children is designed to help introduce Discovery's curriculum and school procedures to children planning on entering school in the fall for the first time, as well as reinforce previously gained knowledge for younger children currently enrolled. Registration takes place in the spring. In addition, a variety of summer enrichment camps may be offered, including, but not limited to, fine arts, yoga, music, STEM, and more.

Student Progress and Parent Conferences

The purpose of The Discovery School's progress report is to communicate with parents and students about the achievement of specific learning goals. Progress reports are prepared three times a year. Attendance and tardiness are also documented. A valuable tool in the evaluation of each child's progress is the formal scheduled Parent Conferences, which are held twice each year by the Lead Teacher(s), to coincide with the release of the Progress Report. These conferences provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss the child's progress at school and concerns at home. We ask that parents attend these conferences without their children (except for Elementary and Middle School Student-Led Conferences in the Spring). Childcare is available on parent-teacher conference day for Discovery students while parents are attending conferences.

Prior to the conferences, all written reports are submitted to the Head of School for review and then sent home to the parents. The Head of School will be notified of any impending conference where a significant concern is to be discussed. Parents are strongly encouraged to make attendance at their student's assigned conference time a priority.

Lead Teachers are responsible for maintaining a running record of each student's academic and social progress based on classroom observations.

If a student is at risk for retention or possible dismissal from the school, a conference between the teacher, parent, and the relevant administrator(s) will take place. This may be one or more members of the team, including but not limited to the Director of Lower or Upper School, the Dean of Students, the School Counselor, the Academic Support Coordinator, and the Head of School. At this time, the team will have documented any difficulties, strengths, and weaknesses throughout the school year.

Both parents and teachers are encouraged to request conferences throughout the year as needed. The Lead Teacher is the first person you should contact if a concern arises since they will be the ones most knowledgeable about your child. "Drop-in" conferences are discouraged because they do not allow adequate preparation time and often disrupt routine duties or distract the teacher from student-related responsibilities.

Parent Education

Parent education events are coordinated across campus, and events will be shared via Discovery updates and social media. The more knowledge parents have about the Montessori philosophy and IB process, along with the school's policies, the more consistent a child's environment will be, and the more effective our work will be. In addition, parental support is imperative to the success of a child's education and to the school's growth and development. Parent Education nights and/or Lesson Showcases provide a method for all of us to learn more about each other and how to best support the child. In addition, Discovery has many parent resources available.

Referrals

If a team member feels a child may need additional help, they will consult with or inform the Director of Lower School (for Toddler and Primary), Director of Elementary School , or Director of Upper School prior to recommending a more extensive academic, medical, or behavioral evaluation. The Academic Support Coordinator and/or the School Counselor will be part of the conversation and a Support Plan, if needed. Most complex assessment needs will be referred to local providers. All external recommendations for evaluations or support are funded by parents, and Discovery is sensitive to the individualization of this process.

ASSESSMENT & REPORTING

Each teacher is required to keep a system for tracking the progress of each child, recording lessons presented and skills mastered. Ongoing assessment and observation is a fundamental component of the appropriate and accurate implementation of the Montessori Method and the IB PYP. Students in Kindergarten through grade eight will be assessed regularly through a variety of methods.

Purpose for Assessment

The teachers at The Discovery School believe that in order to best meet the needs of the students, it is vital to have a variety of assessment tools. Assessment is a means for teachers to better understand how to meet students' needs. To provide a challenging and nurturing academic environment, teachers need to best understand each child as an individual learner.

We assess to

- know if students are progressing in a developmentally-appropriate manner.
- gauge the effectiveness of the implementation of our curriculum.

- gather data to communicate student progress to parents and the greater community.
- determine how effectively we are teaching the curriculum.
- observe students' ability to apply acquired knowledge and skills to novel tasks.
- gain feedback on the learning process.

How do we structure assessments?

Assessments are an ongoing process that can range from informal observational records to formalized standardized tests. In keeping with the Montessori philosophy, teachers spend a great deal of time observing students in order to gain a holistic picture of how the student is working and progressing through the curriculum.

How often do we assess?

We see assessments as an ongoing process that happens on a daily basis to inform instruction. Formal assessments are completed periodically throughout the year; the beginning of the year to gain benchmarks, progress monitoring as needed, mid-year assessment to monitor progress, and end-of-year assessments to determine overall progress.

What do we assess?

Each individual assessment can target various areas in the curriculum. Many of the more formalized assessments are designed to specifically examine the areas of math, reading, and language.

Who is responsible for assessment, and how?

Classroom teachers are responsible for conducting assessments, analyzing data, and determining further action plans.

How is assessment information recorded?

A variety of methods are used by teachers to record assessment data. Observational data and formal assessments are recorded using the appropriate means: teacher records and the Learning Management System (Learner-Centered Collaborative).

How is assessment information analyzed and reported?

Teachers are able to analyze assessment information independently. Collaborative discussions are valuable in working on analyzing data. Teachers share data with one another in order to better understand their students. All data should be reported as needed depending on how it is recorded.

How will assessment information be reported to students and parents?

Students should actively be engaged in the assessment process. Students should understand that

assessments better help both teachers and students to know how they work together for their success. Parents will be informed regarding assessments as needed.

Are there any mandatory requirements that must be satisfied?

No state-mandated tests must be taken or administered. Eighth-grade students matriculating to a public school will receive guidance on taking necessary End-of-Course Assessments.

Who will have access to assessment information, and where will it be located?

All classroom teachers will be provided with the assessment data. Teachers may organize their assessment information as they see fit for their classrooms. For assessments that students actively participate in, some data may be stored with the students' personal items. This allows students to monitor their individual progress independently from the teacher.

How often will the school review assessment practices?

The assessment practices are formally reviewed annually. Program level teams discuss concerns, questions, and ideas that arise around assessments and make decisions collaboratively.

Standardized Tests

Standardized tests are intended to prepare students for other academic settings that they are bound to encounter in their academic careers. Discovery wants to provide an environment that will effectively prepare students to take standardized tests and perform well on them. With this in mind, Discovery wants to ensure that students are appropriately prepared for these tests since they are outside of a typical Montessori or IB setting. By providing a variety of test-taking strategies and skills, students are carefully suited to take on a standardized test. The results of standardized tests may be shared with parents. These results should be thoroughly reviewed by the teachers prior to distribution. It is important for parents to understand the intent of the tests and how the data will be used. Standardized tests should not impede the mission and philosophy of the school as a Montessori school implementing the IB Primary Years Programme.

Standardized tests measure a small slice of what is being taught in a Montessori/IB classroom.

What is MAP?

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth interim assessments provide essential information about a student's continuum of learning and growth trajectory. MAP Growth is a tool to help identify strengths and opportunities and focus instructional practices on the areas of greatest need.

What is Acadience (DIBELS)?

Acadience Learning manages Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and is a set of short, standardized assessments administered and assessed by our K-6 classroom teachers for benchmarking and progress monitoring purposes. Despite the widely-known name, these are assessments for both reading and math.

What is ISEE?

The Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE) is a widely accepted, accurate, standardized test that provides advanced insights to both schools and students to help guide instruction as well as data for the admissions process. Discovery may host ISEE test dates throughout the year. ISEE is also offered on multiple dates throughout Jacksonville. Applicants for grades 7 and 8 are required to take the Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE – school code 571379). Applicants for grades 5 and 6 must also show evidence of current standardized test scores, indicating that the student is making appropriate grade-level progress commensurate with Discovery's expectations. Acceptable standardized test scores include current FSA, ERBs, MAP, Stanford (SAT10), IOWA Assessments, and CTPs. Other standardized tests will be considered.

Privacy of Student Files

Student files are confidential records and are kept secure from unauthorized access. Parents or guardians may have access to the child's file by written request to the office at least 24 hours in advance. The file must be viewed in the presence of a TDS staff member.

Officials of the State or County Health Department, the State Department of Education, officials from the Florida Council of Independent Schools, and the Department of Children and Families may have the right to review student files without the parents' or guardians' permission. However, with a written court order, other government officials may inspect the contents of a student's file without the permission of the student or parent/guardian.

A copy of the student's file may be sent to an outside professional, such as a psychologist or educational diagnostician, if requested in writing by the parent(s), guardian(s), or student if he/she has attained the age of majority, with the notation of pertinent papers to be sent.

Update of School Records

The most important documents TDS has in its possession to safeguard your child are their "school records." It is from these records that we obtain the information necessary to contact you in case of an emergency or provide the necessary care and/or protection of your child.

Therefore, the school office must be notified immediately regarding any change which affects the accuracy of this information recorded in our student records. This includes parents' addresses, home, and work numbers, parent employment, emergency contacts, physician's name and/or phone number, and parent custodial rights. Changes in your child's physical condition or medical needs must also be reported as soon as possible.

Discovery will maintain confidential records of each child. These records will be made available to the Department of Children and Families for review. Health and immunization forms will be released to parents or designated schools only upon written request from the parents. Transcript information will be provided to transferring institutions only upon written parental request and only when the student's financial accounts are up-to-date.

Requests

All requests to access student records by parents shall be submitted to the Head of School or designee in writing. If a parent disagrees with any information in their children's record and requests a change be made, the request shall be submitted in writing. The Head of School will investigate the information in question. After such an investigation, if the information in the student's record is deemed incorrect, the Head of School will make the appropriate change to the record. If the information is deemed correct, the Head of School will provide the parent with a written statement explaining and justifying such a decision.

Transcripts

By written request, the parent/guardian or, upon attaining the age of majority, the student may ask that a photocopy of the student's file, along with completed recommendation forms, be issued to another school. Copies sent directly are marked "Official Transcript" and are noted in the file. Progress reports and transcripts cannot be issued if a student has an outstanding balance on their account that is more than sixty days past due. They will be forwarded once the account has been brought up to date.

Withdrawal of Child

The School believes that a positive and constructive working relationship between the School and parent is essential to the fulfillment of the School's mission, educational purpose, and responsibilities to its students. When students enter The Discovery School, it is understood that both they and their parents agree to support all rules of the school as outlined in the Parent Handbook. In situations involving repeated violations of school rules, or if at any time a student's influence is considered harmful or their presence in the school is regarded as undesirable, the school reserves the right to require withdrawal. Every effort will be made to avoid terminating a

child's enrollment in the school. If, for any reason, it is in the best interest of the School, the School also reserves the right to withdraw an offer of enrollment or re-enrollment at any time and to nullify an executed Enrollment Contract.

Please refer to your enrollment contract with regard to withdrawals before the end of the school year.

Disclosures without Consent

Disclosures without consent can be made to school officials with legitimate educational interests.

- A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill their professional responsibility.
- A school official is a person employed by TDS as one of the following: an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff; a person serving on the school board; a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing their professional responsibility.
- Under certain prescribed situations, disclosure can be made to state and local officers of the juvenile justice system.
- Notification of the existence of a subpoena from a federal grand jury is not required for parents and eligible students.
- If a court or other issuing agency issues a subpoena for a law enforcement purpose and orders the school not to disclose the existence or contents of the subpoena to the parent or student, the school shall not be required to notify prior to compliance with the subpoena.

COMMUNICATION

Open Door Policy

As a school community, we strive to resolve issues directly between the individuals concerned wherever possible, modeling respect for each other. As a means of support to Discovery families, the door of all administrators is always open to assist in the process of resolving issues or to talk over questions or concerns you may have about the school and its policies. The Head of School welcomes comments, complaints, or compliments.

*As information filtered through multiple sources is likely less precise or reliable, we encourage parents to seek direct communication with those best informed about or able to address a situation.

Teacher and Parent Communication

Montessori and IB programs represent not only educational theory and teaching methods but an attitude toward the life of the child. It is important for parents to become familiar with the approach. With a shared understanding, teachers and parents can support one another for the greatest benefit of the child.

Both the school and parents must respect the proper channels of communication and classroom authority. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's progress with the Lead Teacher(s).

When there is something you would like us to know about your child's evening or morning, please let us know via a written note or email. At departure, we are very general and positive about your child's day. If either teacher or parent has concerns at that time, we can communicate by way of telephone or email later in the day.

Since misunderstandings or problems are usually the result of a lack of communication between those involved and ultimately affect the child, Discovery's desire is to remedy the situation as soon as possible. The best time to handle problems is while the concern is small. Therefore, parents who are concerned about a classroom-related problem should make an appointment with the appropriate teacher. Discovery's faculty and administration are committed to the academic and personal growth of our children. We believe in working closely with every family to ensure that each child's experience is as productive as possible. All parent-initiated no contact, including phone messages and emails, will be responded to within 24 business hours.

Phone Calls

During school hours, teachers are unable to leave the children to receive calls. If you would like to have a teacher call you, please email the teacher. If it is an emergency, please contact the office, and staff will get a message to your child's teacher.

Parent and Student Communications

As a responsible community, we acknowledge that cell phones, smart watches and similar devices pose disruptions to focus, attention, and the social-emotional and academic learning environment. We recommend to not send your child to school with either device.

Any Discovery School student who brings an electronic communication device (cellphone, smart watch, etc.) to school must silence it and leave devices either in their backpack (elementary) or designated classroom area (MS) throughout the day on campus. Parents may contact teachers via email or the front office if a message needs to be communicated to their child during the day.

Parents and Students may not use smartwatches to communicate during the school day.

**Students who are required to carry a device for medical reasons must provide a note to the school stating the purpose of the device.

School personnel may confiscate a device if there is reason to believe that school policies or expectations have been violated.

Parent Relations

Discovery encourages nurturing and positive relationships between teachers and parents. Our goal is academic excellence in a best-practice Montessori & IB prepared environment. At no time will parent concerns be taken lightly. We will listen and respond with intelligent action and informed reasoning. No phone calls or emails go unanswered. Discovery cares for your children, and we take parent and student concerns seriously. If you have a concern that has not been handled to your satisfaction, please contact the Head of School immediately.

Classroom Communications

Classroom teachers will be communicating on a regular basis through the Toddle App/platform. During the 2026-27 school year, the school will use Toddle, https://www.toddleapp.com/ Families will receive more information and login data at the start of the school year. This is a wonderful way to stay connected with what is happening in the classroom.

School Directory

A school directory is available online via the Parent Portal on Blackbaud. This directory is intended solely for the convenience of the parents and school staff in arranging school and social affairs. It is not to be shared or distributed to non-Discovery families, nor is it to be used for any solicitation or commercial purposes of any kind.

Notices and Emails

Discovery will send a Discovery Update by email through Constant Contact every week. This update includes school upcoming events, policy reminders, and/or a change in schedule. Please make sure the office has the current email(s) of each parent.

Parents are requested to read Toddle updates and School-related communications in order to keep abreast of policies, educational issues, school programs, special events, and other pertinent issues regarding their child's involvement at Discovery. Please also visit the school's website for additional information: www.thediscoveryschool.org.

If you are not receiving these emails or have an address or email change, please email

admissions@thediscoveryschool.org so we can update our records and ensure the correct email address is in our system. Check the spam folder in your email files and ensure The Discovery School is noted as a trusted contact.

Changes in the Home

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please consider informing the teacher as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential. We accept your judgment as to the kinds of changes that may affect your child's behavior, security, and general well-being.

Common causes of distress include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Either one or both parents being away from home for any reason for an extended time
- A new person living in the home
- Houseguest and relatives coming to visit
- Illness or hospitalization within the family
- Accident or death within the family
- A new caretaker

Child custody decrees must be on file in the office. Any court-approved custody or visitation agreements must be in the student's file. Discovery is required to allow parents access to student records and to the child unless court documents indicate otherwise. The Parents agree to provide School a copy of any court-issued custody or adoption papers at the time of enrollment and to promptly provide updated copies of petitions or motions concerning custody, visitation, or transfer of custody pertaining to the Student. Custodial and noncustodial biological or adoptive parents will be sent all school-related mailings and will have access to educational records regarding their child unless the School has been provided a copy of court-issued custody or adoption papers that restrict or prohibit the noncustodial parent from exercising their parental rights or financial obligations.

School Calendar

Important dates are posted on our school calendars via an interactive Google format. Days that school will not be in session are noted. There are several Early Release days included in the calendar to allow for greater professional collaboration among our educators. *Afterschool Programs & Aftercare will not be available on these days, please make your plans accordingly.* TDS reserves the right to change this calendar as needed during the school year. Please check the school website (www.thediscoveryschool.org) for the most up-to-date information.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Consistency & Continuity

Consistency and continuity between home and school are probably the greatest support parents can offer children in a Montessori - IB school experience. Since families choosing Montessori generally share values, goals, and attitudes compatible with the Montessori philosophy, families, and the School can build a growing relationship to enhance the child's development. Mutual education and communication are the primary components of such progress. Similar home and school expectations, responses, and goals help children to thrive in a Montessori - IB educational setting. Teachers share information about the classroom via Altitude Learning, and we encourage parents to check Altitude Learning to learn more about what is happening in the classroom.

Community Agreement

As a member of the Discovery Community, I put children at the center of all I do and say by modeling our mission, vision, and core values. I value diverse perspectives, shared experiences and uphold the dignity of every member of our global community. I will demonstrate mutual respect in all interactions and treat all members of the community with grace, courtesy, and civility.

Volunteer Opportunities

Faculty, staff, and parents share a commitment to the academic and personal growth of our children. Through involvement on the Board of Trustees, school committees, special events, fundraising campaigns, and class projects, parents give generously of their personal and financial resources to ensure that their children receive the highest quality education possible. There are a wide variety of volunteer opportunities available through the Discovery Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).

The purpose of the PTO is to enhance and support the educational experience at Discovery, to develop a closer connection between school and home by encouraging parental involvement, to educate parents on the Montessori Method and the IBO, and to improve the environment at Discovery through volunteer and financial support.

All parents with children attending The Discovery School are automatically members of the Discovery PTO, and we look forward to everyone's participation. Some of the PTO events are

Movie Nights, Game Night, Fall Festival, and Teacher Appreciation.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Required Medical Records

Florida state law mandates that no child is permitted to attend school unless a health form and a record of immunization are on file within 30 days of enrollment. These forms are only available at your physician's office. The health and safety of our employees, students, and visitors are of utmost concern to our staff.

Health and Safety License

The campus of The Discovery School is licensed by the Department of Children and Families, license number C04DU0128 and follows DCF guidelines for health and safety issues in all buildings, playgrounds, and personnel. The school is inspected at regular intervals by the Department of Children and Families officials. Discovery is also inspected regularly by the Duval County Health Department. In addition, all TDS faculty, staff, and volunteers are required to file a background check with the FBI and FDLE (Level 2).

Force Majeure

The School shall not be liable for any failure or delay in the performance of its duties or obligations to the extent such failure or delay is caused by a force majeure or an event beyond the School's reasonable control. This includes but is not limited to a fire, flood, Act of God, war, government action, an act of terrorism, epidemic, pandemic, natural disaster, or other major upheavals which renders performance impractical, illegal, impossible, or otherwise inadvisable. In such an event, the School's duties and obligations shall be suspended until such time as the School, in its sole discretion, determines that it may safely and ably resume performance. The School shall provide notification of such a suspension by a reasonable time and method. During such a suspension, Parents shall make all payments due to the School, and there will be no refund of Tuition, Fees, or other payments previously made. The School may elect to operate on a remote-learning basis, may choose to extend its School Year, and may adopt an alternative schedule to complete its School Year curriculum.

Emergency Contact Information

Each child is required to have an Emergency Contact authorization form for emergency medical

and surgical treatment on file. In case of a medical emergency, every effort will be made to reach the parent, the designated emergency contact, or the child's physician. If no one can be reached, or if time is of the essence, 911 will be called, and/or the nearest emergency facility or hospital will be contacted. It is the parents' responsibility to notify the school of any changes in the designated emergency contact information, either by email, in person, or online via the Parent Portal.

Illness

Your child must be kept home if he/she has a communicable disease, has had a fever, or has vomited/had diarrhea within the previous 24 hours. Please do not send your child to school if he/she is ill (i.e., fever, lethargy, or a cough that is making the child uncomfortable, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle aches, new loss of taste or smell, congestion, runny nose, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting). Please be considerate of the health of other students and families. We cannot accept sick children. It is paramount that children who are feeling unwell are kept home. If you know your child will not be coming to school, please email Health & Safety (healthandsafety@thediscoveryschool.org).

Communicable Disease

When you have verification of the fact that your child has a communicable disease, please call the School immediately so that we may inform other parents. According to the Department of Children and Families' regulations, ALL communicable diseases, including head lice, must be reported at once to school officials. Examples of communicable diseases include but are not limited to, strep throat, influenza A or B, novel coronavirus, pinworms, head lice, hand foot, and mouth, and chickenpox.

When a child becomes ill at school, the child will rest in the classroom on a mat or in a quiet area. Parents, or the designated emergency contact, will be called to take the child home as soon as possible. A child may not remain at school if they are sick. The school reserves the right to request any child to be sent home if he/she is listless or unhappy because of poor health.

Hurricane / Emergency Procedure

Keeping you informed is a top priority at The Discovery School. That is why we have adopted the Finalsite Notification Service, which will allow us to send a text and e-mail message to you providing important information about school events or emergencies. We use Finalsite to notify you of school delays or cancellations due to inclement weather or other emergency situations. In the event of an emergency at school, Discovery will exercise its prerogative to make decisions regarding the safety of your children in times of emergencies due to inclement weather, hurricanes, fire, gas line breaks, flooding, etc. Generally, if the public schools close, we will also

close. TDS will use every available precaution to protect children from injury, and you can have peace of mind knowing that you will be informed immediately by phone.

Receiving texts sent through Finalsite

Update Email Spam Filters

Please set your spam filters to allow email messages from The Discovery School.
thediscoveryschool.ccsend.com

Caller ID

Caller ID will display an 877 number if you are receiving a text from the school. The text messages will be used to provide school reminders as well as any emergency updates in the event of school closures, etc.

Update the office with contact changes as soon as possible. The successful delivery of information is dependent upon accurate contact information for each student, so please make certain that we have your most current phone numbers (including Nannies or Grandparents involved with drop-off or pick-up). If this information changes during the year, please let the office know immediately.

Safety

The employees' first priority at Discovery is the safety of the children. All staff members are expected to bear this in mind at all times. The preparation of a safe environment in and outside the building is a responsibility shared by all staff and faculty.

Student and Parent Reunification

In the event students cannot return back to their classrooms, they will do the following: walk safely along 15th Street South into Wingate Park. Each Academic Program will have an enclosed holding place waiting for parent pick-up. Parents should come through the main entrance of Wingate Park and check in with the Director of Lower School & Student Experience.

Classroom Health and Sanitation

Practicing and encouraging good health habits are continuous processes for both staff and students. A clean, sanitary environment is a basic necessity for promoting good health. Each employee is responsible for the daily and ongoing cleaning of their own "workspace."

This includes

- Daily cleaning of classroom kitchens (more frequently if needed).

- Cleaning and sanitizing diapering areas, and kitchen utensils after each use.
- Continuous maintenance, cleaning, and sanitizing of all furniture, equipment, and materials in the classroom's indoor and outdoor environments as needed.
- All bathrooms, floors, glass doors, and countertops are cleaned daily by our professional cleaning service.

Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit which includes soap, Band-Aids (or equivalent), cotton balls or applicators, sterile gauze squares and rolls, adhesive tape, thermometer, tweezers, and scissors. A list of Department of Children and Families-required items is attached to the inside of each kit. Each kit is checked regularly and items are replenished as needed. Knowledge of good health practices is necessary for promoting good health habits.

The school adheres to all Department of Children and Families background, screening, and training requirements for the faculty and staff. All employees have up-to-date CPR/AED/First Aid certification.

All employees and substitutes are required to sign an acknowledgment that they have read the Department of Children and Families Abuse and Neglect pamphlet for child care workers. Any employee who suspects child abuse or neglect is required by law to report all relevant information to the state.

Toddler Personnel

Each employee uses sanitary practices during the diapering and toileting processes. Staff members wear gloves when diapering or assisting a child with toileting. Hands are washed before and after glove use. In the toddler diaper changing areas, toilets and potties are sanitized with a bleach/water solution after each use. The staff will also assist the child with handwashing after the diapering or toileting process.

Medication for Students

Teachers can administer medication (over-the-counter or prescribed). Prescription medication must be in its original container with specific instructions from the doctor. Additionally, the **MEDICATION RECORD / PARENT AUTHORIZATION** packet of forms must be completed prior to any medication being administered. This paperwork can be found and completed in the Walchle Multipurpose Building office. Teachers are responsible for filling out the Medication Administration Log every time they administer the medication.

Accidents

Although we are dedicated to providing a safe environment at all times, staff members recognize that accidents can occur. At least one staff member with current first aid and CPR certification is required to be on-premises at all times when children are present. In the event of an injury, staff members will use basic first aid techniques unless it is judged that professional assistance is required, at which time 911 will be called. The emergency contact is notified immediately.

All accidents occurring on the school premises are documented by the teacher. A Department of Children and Families Accident/Incident Report Form will be sent home and must be signed and returned for the student files (Office).

For all but the most minor situations, the parents of the student will be notified in person before the child goes home. If bleeding occurs, universal precautions will be used by teachers including, but not limited to, gloves for the hands, and the washing of hands before and after contact with the injured student.

In the event that a child is removed from the school by anyone other than a parent (e.g. ambulance, paramedics) it is the Director of Lower School & Student Experience who accompanies and stays with that child. The Director of Lower School & Student Experience will take the child's emergency contact form with them.

Emergency Numbers and Evacuation Plan

Emergency numbers including 911 and Poison Control Center are posted near all facility phones. An evacuation plan, including a diagram of safe routes, is posted in each classroom.

Supervision of Children

Each teacher is responsible for ensuring that children are under the direct supervision of one or more teachers at all times. When indoors, teachers are watching or directing the children's activities within the proximity of the same room. When outdoors, children are in sight of their teacher and designated play area. When more than one teacher is supervising outdoors, teachers are in separate areas of the playground to maximize the view of the children and ensure their safety.

Outbreaks

School operators are required to notify the local county health department immediately upon any suspected outbreak of communicable disease in accordance with Chapter 64D-3, F.A.C., and Communicable Disease Control. A suspected outbreak occurs when two (2) or more children or

employees have the onset of similar signs or symptoms, as outlined in subparagraphs (1)1. – 10., F.A.C., above, within a 72-hour period or when a case of serious or reportable communicable disease is diagnosed or suspected in a child or employee. In the event of a flu outbreak or other pandemic issued by the state of Florida, the Federal Government, CDC, or WHO, The Discovery School will follow policy guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Fire Alarms & Drills

The school is required to have a minimum of one fire drill monthly. The school is also required to practice each code drill listed in its Emergency Operations Plan. The teacher is responsible for instructing the children on the fire drill procedures. All students are required to leave their building through the designated fire exit (posted in each classroom) in an orderly manner upon the sounding of the fire alarm. Students, accompanied by teachers, must remain at a safe distance (as outlined by the local fire department) from any building, and beyond school driveways and access roads.

All staff and students are prohibited from re-entering any school building until directed by the Director of Facilities, the Dean of Students, and the Fire Marshal, or other senior administrative officials supervising the evacuation. Each time the alarm goes off, it must be treated as a possible emergency. Teachers will remain with their class at all times.

SLP & OT Screenings

A certified Speech and Language Pathologist and Occupational Therapist is available for testing at Discovery. If you wish to have your child tested, the school requires parental permission and a nominal fee may be charged by the clinician providing the service.

CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE

Philosophy of Discipline

The Montessori philosophy is holistic in its approach to serving the needs of the child. The Discovery School supports our children's development as well-rounded, articulate, emotionally/socially adept, and caring human beings. Montessori staff prepares the environment so that each child will feel safe, secure, and respected. When the child first becomes intensely absorbed in their work, they have taken the initial step toward genuine self-discipline. In the words of Maria Montessori, "A child who can control himself is free to learn."

Every child has the right to express their feelings; anger, hurt, frustration, etc. When aggressive

behavior occurs, the children involved are taken aside by a teacher. The teacher will try to help them express their feelings verbally. The Elementary and Middle School classrooms offer community meetings as a forum for conflict resolution and community building. The Primary classrooms offer a thinking chair and/or peace table to assist students in resolving conflict. With younger children, a teacher assists by giving them the language to communicate their feelings. At no time will excessive discipline measures ever be used, such as corporal punishment or verbal abuse.

Typically, Montessorians describe three levels of discipline. At the first level, discipline means that children obey the rules as the result of adult direction - if they do not obey certain hard and fast rules, then they can expect logical consequences, such as losing the privilege of freely using the classroom, the playground, or the materials. The second level occurs when children obey the rules out of love and respect for their parents or teachers. The third and final level - the level where inner discipline takes hold - occurs when children do things for the benefit of a higher good; in other words, they do something because it is the right thing to do. In an effort to help children internalize values about conduct and social interactions, our program emphasizes the development of clear behavior expectations. The goal is to promote good decision-making habits. We also recognize that while the freedoms and unique structure of the Montessori classroom are suitable for many children, they do not serve all children. Sometimes other settings would be more helpful for the child or the school.

As children progress through the Toddler and Primary Programs and into Elementary and Middle School the foundations of Montessori education are continued in the classroom. The Elementary and Middle School Programs use Responsive Classroom and International Baccalaureate philosophies to build classroom communities that are caring, thoughtful, and respectful.

Scope of Authority

Student Conversations and Guidance

We believe in maintaining open lines of communication with families. In the course of daily school life, administrators, deans, counselors, and faculty members may need to speak with students directly regarding school matters to provide guidance or resolve day-to-day situations efficiently. While we always aim to partner closely with parents, these conversations may take place without prior notice. During these times, students remain

under the care, direction, and supervision of our dedicated school staff and authorized chaperones.

Maintaining a Safe & Secure Environment

To support the safety and well-being of our entire school community, Discovery School reserves the right to search a student's person, personal belongings, locker, school-assigned property, or electronic devices if there is a reasonable baseline of concern that school policies or safety guidelines have been compromised. To ensure the student's comfort and dignity, searches of a student's person will be conducted by an administrator of the same gender and always in the presence of an additional school administrator, whenever practicable.

Toddler Program

Developmentally, we know that toddlers are learning what is acceptable in the classroom and while interacting with peers. Teachers will ensure that they are redirecting toddler behavior in a positive manner so that they are able to learn acceptable behaviors.

Behavioral disruptions: Hitting, scratching, biting, throwing things at others, pulling hair, kicking, pinching, tantrums, and other consistent behaviors that inflict harm and/or significant classroom disruption that occupies a teacher(s) and results in teacher(s) attention not being on the other children for a significant length of time.
Possible intervention strategies: Give attention to positive behavior; redirect the child to another activity; give appropriate choices; elicit the assistance of the child demonstrating aggressive behavior in treatment and recovery of the victim; provide predictable routines; speak to students respectfully on their level while making eye contact; offer hand-over-hand when following through; direct child to sit down until they are ready to model the desired behavior peacefully.
Zero-tolerance behaviors: Repetitive pattern of non-compliance associated with physical behavior that poses self-harm or harm to others.
Repeated Behavior Policy:

1. Teachers consistently fill out incident reports. If repeated zero-tolerance behavior happens at school, teachers will make a phone call home and/or request to meet with parents/caregivers. Together they will discuss the observed behavior and provide a redirection plan, appropriate and consistent language, and the importance of following

through. Within the first week following the phone call/meeting, the teacher will keep the parents, Program Coordinator, and Head of School informed of the child's behavior/implementation of plans.

2. If repeated undesired behavior continues: Teachers and caregivers will discuss the potential need for additional guidance in supporting the student, such as participating in a speech or occupational therapy screening to meet the child's needs. Teachers will let parents know moving forward, because of the frequency of the behavior, if it happens more than twice in a day, they will be notified immediately and the expectation is that the child is picked up within an hour.
3. If undesired behavior continues within a week, they may be required to not attend school for a period of time. The teacher (and Program Coordinator based on availability) will meet and create a plan for the next steps.
4. If undesired behavior continues past this point, they may be removed from the Toddler Program for the remainder of the school year.

Primary Program

Students in the Primary Program are expected to be more familiar with the proper ways to interact with peers and adults at school. Teachers in Primary will work with students to redirect behavior that disrupts the classroom in a positive and productive manner. As students move through the Primary Program, they will be expected to need fewer reminders about how to appropriately behave in the classroom. Kindergarten students will understand that they are responsible for keeping their bodies safe at all times whether in the classroom or on the playground, while a three-year-old might need more reminders.

Minor Behavioral Offenses:

- All forms of physical aggression (including hitting, spitting, kicking, and throwing items)
- Accidental destruction of or damage to others' property
- Non-compliant behavior
- Name-calling, deliberate teasing, or taunting of peers
- Disregard of safety rules
- Temper tantrums
- Consistent failure to finish work
- Repeated inappropriate silliness

Possible intervention strategies: Verbal redirection; isolate child to a safe place, informal parental

feedback; elicit the assistance of child demonstrating aggressive behavior in treatment and recovery of the "victim"; logical consequences such as restitution, classroom chores, etc.; assigned seating or assigned activity; daily encouragement first thing in the morning; attention for positive behavior.

Major Behavioral Offenses:

- Repetitive pattern of defiance of and non-compliance with adult authority
- Repetitive pattern of non-accidental physical violence
- Intentional destruction or damage to others' property

Major Offense Consequences: Early dismissal from school; parent/teacher/administrator conference; development and implementation of an Urgent Action Plan.

Elementary Program

Elementary school students are expected to demonstrate kindness and respect for their classmates, teachers, and the classroom environment. At the start of each school year, each class will develop its own essential agreement that will be signed by each student. This agreement will remind students of the promises that they have made to each other and to themselves.

Minor Behavioral Offences:

- Verbal aggression (as defined by a pattern of teasing, name-calling, cursing peers, taunting such as put-downs, starting rumors, excluding peers, intimidation, verbal threatening, hate speech)
- Disrespect for teachers, other students, or property (as indicated by ignoring instructions, arguing in a loud manner, harming property, etc.)
- Repeated non-compliance; repeated inappropriate silliness
- Overly rough play
- Inappropriate use of technology
- Behaviors that are contrary to safety rules
- Unsportsmanlike behavior
- Temper tantrums
- Refusal to do work or follow directions
- Consistent failure to finish work
- Unintentional property damage or vandalism (0n- or off-campus; school related events)

Possible intervention strategies: Informal parental feedback; appropriate and logical restitution; negotiated contracts for specific negative behaviors; creation of a Success Plan.

Major Behavior Offences:

- Any intentional physical violence (e.g., biting, hitting, scratching, spitting)
- Repeated instances of bullying behavior
- Threatening physical violence against peers
- Bringing weapons to school or using school objects as weapons to hurt others
- Repeated overly rough play
- Stealing
- All forms of sexually inappropriate behavior
- Possession, use, or sharing of illegal substances, including alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and related paraphernalia
- Use of abusive, degrading or vulgar language (as described below).
- Repetitive patterns of defiance of or noncompliance with adult authority.
- Intentional property damage or vandalism (0n or off-campus; school related events)

Major Offense Consequences: Early dismissal from school; parent/teacher/administrator conference; development and implementation of an Urgent Action Plan.

Middle School Conduct

Middle School students are leaders on The Discovery School campus. As such, we hold them to the highest standards of conduct; however, we also realize that they are adolescents who are constantly learning and growing. Instilling a sense of empathy for others is a primary goal of Middle School teachers. To that end, incidents involving inappropriate or questionable behavior are viewed primarily through the lens of perception as "teachable moments," and judicious decision-making is consistently emphasized.

A respectful, caring community is built on a shared sense of what constitutes appropriate behavior. Middle School students are, therefore, responsible and accountable for their actions at all times, regardless of which adult is supervising an activity (i.e. during Community Time).

Expected Behaviors

A Discovery Middle School student is able to:

- Work independently.
- Concentrate in the midst of moderate distraction.
- Participate cooperatively in small-group work.
- Engage meaningfully in whole-class or small-group discussions.
- Demonstrate respect for the classroom environment and for classroom agreements.
- Follow directions.
- Accept constructive feedback.
- Practice self-control.
- Express frustration appropriately.
- Avoid violence towards people, things, or animals.
- Utilize appropriate language.
- Negotiate conflict with adult supervision if necessary.
- Demonstrate patience.
- Understand consequences.

Unacceptable Behaviors

The Discovery School places a premium on the values of respect and peace. Behavior is unacceptable when it is in direct opposition to positive behavior standards. When disrespect is shown to another or the environment, inappropriate language or tone of voice is used, directions are disregarded, or directives are not appropriately followed, students will be clearly told that their behavior is unacceptable.

Bullying and harassment, whether verbal, physical, or online, will not be tolerated. According to StopBullying.gov, *bullying* is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and hurts, harms, or humiliates another. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. It may be obvious or covert, and it may occur in person or virtually through various platforms.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, leering, grabbing, pinching, unwanted comments and jokes, and implied threats.

In Middle School, perception is emphasized when dealing with reports of bullying. Teachers talk a great deal about intent, perception, and the psychological impacts of bullying in an effort to teach students what bullying looks like, how to avoid it, and how to report it if it occurs.

Minor Behavioral Offences:

- Verbal aggression (as defined by a pattern of teasing, name-calling, cursing peers, taunting such as put-downs, starting rumors, excluding peers, intimidation, verbal threatening, hate speech)
- Disrespect for teachers, other students, or property (as indicated by ignoring instructions, arguing in a loud manner, harming property, "back locking" lockers, etc.)
- Repeated noncompliance; repeated inappropriate silliness
- Overly rough play
- Inappropriate use of technology
- Behaviors that are contrary to safety rules
- Unsportsmanlike behavior
- Temper tantrums
- Refusal to do work or follow directions
- Consistent failure to finish work

Possible intervention strategies: Informal parental feedback; appropriate and logical restitution; negotiated contracts for specific negative behaviors; creation of a Success Plan.

Major Behavior Offences:

- Any intentional physical violence (e.g., biting, hitting, scratching, spitting)
- Repeated instances of bullying behavior
- Bringing weapons to school or using school objects as weapons to hurt others
- Overly rough play
- Stealing
- Threatening physical violence against peers
- All forms of sexually inappropriate behavior
- Possession, use, or sharing of illegal substances, including alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and related paraphernalia
- Use of abusive, degrading or vulgar language (as described below)
- Repetitive patterns of defiance of or noncompliance with adult authority
- Intentional property damage or vandalism (0n- or off-campus; during school related

events)

Major Offense Consequences: Early dismissal from school; parent/teacher/administrator conference; development and implementation of an Urgent Action Plan.

Overall Unacceptable Behaviors

Behavior is unacceptable when it is in direct opposition to any of the positive behavior standards. When disrespect is shown to another, the environment or the wise use of time, inappropriate language or tone of voice, directions are disregarded, or directives are not appropriately responded to, children will be clearly told that behavior is unacceptable.

Discuss your expectations with your child. Help him/her make a plan for making positive choices. You may want to reinforce the plan with family privileges to be earned or lost, as these are motivating for some children.

Severe Behavior Clause - When a student severely misbehaves s/he will immediately be sent to the Dean of Students.

Possible Parent Responses-While there is no one response that is always successful in curbing inappropriate school behavior, we have found that the following parent interventions provide the student with a consistent message of expected standards of conduct.

1. Discuss inappropriate behavior and how to avoid similar situations in the future.
2. Remind the child every morning on the way to school how to avoid troubling situations.
3. After consultation with the teacher, and if parents and teachers agree, loss of privilege(s) at home.
4. Give verbal encouragement and periodic incentives for appropriate, pro-social behaviors at school.
5. Respond to phone calls from school in a timely manner.
6. If asked to pick a child up from school, comply within the hour.
7. Seek outside professional help.

Public Displays of Affection

The Discovery School community values respect, kindness, and professionalism. This policy on Public Displays of Affection (PDA) ensures a positive environment for all. Students and adults are

expected to be mindful and considerate of others, maintaining modest behavior that is conducive to learning and personal growth. Brief hugs are acceptable, but more intimate behaviors should be reserved for private moments outside school. On-campus, PDA should be minimal and respectful, especially in classrooms and common areas. The same standards apply during off-campus school events. We encourage healthy, respectful relationships, with resources available for guidance on appropriate boundaries.

Acceptable Use of Technology

Computer technologies and the Internet are important tools for education and provide excellent opportunities for learning. As The Discovery School continues to incorporate computer technology into the school, it becomes necessary to establish a set of rules and agreements, which are required in order to use them safely and appropriately. Each student is expected to read and sign this agreement before they may use a computer and/or Internet technologies. Purposeful and/or negligent behavior will result in the student losing technology-use privileges.

We have recently installed new security features to ensure compliance with the Acceptable Use of Technology policy on all school-owned Chromebooks. The new security features seamlessly integrate Chromebooks onto a secure network that is being used to keep students safe while online.

1. School computers are to be used for learning purposes only; they are not toys for entertainment. Students should use school technology to research, seek answers to academic questions, and complete school-directed assignments.
2. Computer use is a privilege. Inappropriate use can lead to loss of privileges. Use of school technology resources, including networks, computers, or mobile devices, and the Internet is a privilege, which may be denied, revoked, or restricted at any time for misuse or abusive conduct.
3. Follow the directions of teachers regarding how and when to use the school's computers and/or Internet technologies.
4. Respect the work and intellectual property rights of others, and not intentionally change, copy, damage, delete, read, or otherwise access another user's work. Properly cite sources when using someone's information, pictures, media, or other work in projects and assignments. Do not change, copy, delete, read, or otherwise access files that are not yours. Do not alter any configuration, desktop, or preference settings.
5. Do not install, upload, or download any files or software programs onto school computers without the direct permission of the teacher.

6. E-mail must be approved by the teacher and directly related to a class assignment.
7. Online learning spaces and communication and collaboration tools should be treated as classroom spaces, and language and behavior that is not appropriate in the physical classroom are not appropriate in online spaces, no matter what time of day those spaces are accessed.
8. Use of chat rooms and instant messaging by students is prohibited. Do not respond to any messages without the direct permission of the teacher.
9. Never give out anything personal, including name, address, phone number, picture(s), passwords, e-mail address, school's name, parents' name, location, etc. without the direct permission of the teacher.
10. When using the Internet, stay on recommended sites. If in doubt, ask before clicking. Get help from the teacher immediately if you get to a wrong site, or come across information that is mean, dirty, or makes you feel uncomfortable.
11. Teachers and staff may monitor and access school-provided student accounts, devices, and communications for review purposes and to ensure students are using the computer technology responsibly and safely.
12. Individuals are responsible for damages and shall reimburse The Discovery School for any repair or replacement of the School's property that is lost, stolen, damaged, or vandalized while it is in the student's possession.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use

This policy aims to promote the responsible and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies among Discovery School students while fostering critical thinking and principled decision-making.

Technology should be used to support students' learning, not supplant it. Any part of coursework generated by any AI must be acknowledged and cited appropriately.

Students may use AI tools to assist in research tasks and problem-solving**.** Students may also engage with AI-based assistive technologies to facilitate their learning experience. T**hese technologies should be used only with teacher guidance.**
Prohibited uses of AI include, but are not limited to, cheating or plagiarism, passing off AI-generated ideas as your own, unethical surveillance, invasion of privacy, or any use that engages in cyberbullying, harassment, or other harmful activities.

Students found to be in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Urgent Action Plan

An Urgent Action Plan is created when our standard behavior interventions do not bring about a positive change in a student's behavior. It is individualized to meet the particular needs of the student, is created by the Dean of Students and reviewed by the Head of School.

From the date of the plan's initiation to the end of the school year, the consequences of violations of particular school rules would be as follows: First Offense: Early dismissal from school; Second Offense: Three-day suspension; Third Offense: Expulsion

When Standard Interventions Fail

Our staff is encouraged to use any of the following intervention strategies when the more typical methods of behavior management have been ineffective. Central to our goal is to notify parents quickly when their child's behaviors are problematic and to have a clear plan of action in the event that stronger efforts are needed. Depending on the situation, some of these strategies may be skipped or others may be substituted.

1. Documentation of misbehaviors and consequences
2. Parent/teacher meeting followed by a parent/teacher/Dean of Students conference
3. Requirement for a "shadow" to accompany child at school
4. Recommendation of psychological consultation for parents and teaching staff
5. Early dismissal from school
6. Development and Implementation of an Urgent Action Plan

Student Disenrollment

When students enter The Discovery School, it is understood that both they and their parents agree to support all rules of the school as outlined in this Parent Handbook. In situations involving repeated violations of school rules, or if at any time a student's influence is considered harmful or their presence in the school is regarded as undesirable, the school reserves the right to require withdrawal.

Every effort will be made to avoid terminating a child's enrollment in the school. The following are grounds for disenrollment.

1. Failure of the parents to cooperate with the school's policies
2. Failure by the parents to provide health forms and other paperwork required for enrollment
3. Excessive biting

4. Uncontrolled hitting
5. Physical or emotional problems that require excessive one-on-one attention
6. Ongoing behavioral problems that are disruptive to the classroom atmosphere and other students
7. Parents' refusal to seek professional help when suggested as being in the child's best interests
8. The inability of the school to meet the apparent needs of the child, as determined by teaching staff consensus
9. Parents' disrespectful behavior toward other parents, children, teachers, administrators, or any other staff

Personal Technology Policy

Students must silence their cell phones and Smart Watches when they arrive on campus each morning and store them in a teacher-monitored location in the classroom. Students may ask a teacher if they need to use their phone or watch to contact a parent during the school day or if they need to use their phone for educational purposes. Parents should contact teachers via email or the front office (904) 247-4577 if there is a message that needs to be communicated to their child during the day.

At dismissal, cell phones and watches should remain in silent mode and be placed in a student's pocket or backpack until the student has left campus for the day. If a teacher sees a student on their phones during dismissal, the teacher will hold onto the phone until the child gets into a parent's car.

Students are prohibited from taking photos of other students or teachers during the school day.

Digital watches and step trackers are permitted in the classrooms. We recognize that there are benefits to children tracking their activity and being aware of the passage of time.

Students who are required to carry a device for medical reasons must provide a note to the school stating the purpose of the device.

Academic Honesty Policy

In order to fulfill our vision of cultivating an inclusive and vibrant community that promotes knowledge, creativity, independent thinking, and mutual respect, we must instill the values of honesty, personal integrity, and trustworthiness and hold students to the highest academic standards. Academic honesty is expected of all Discovery School students. Growth, however, is a

learning process, and mistakes will be made along the way. The following Academic Honesty Policy outlines the responsibilities of teachers, students, parents, and administrators in adhering to a shared set of expectations regarding academic integrity.

The Discovery School community believes that dishonesty in any form devalues the vision of the school, tarnishes the character of its students, and undermines the integrity of the educational process.

Academic dishonesty is defined as any attempt to gain an unfair academic advantage or to assist others in doing so. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, duplication, intentional misrepresentation of facts, and claiming work that is not one's own.

Examples of these offenses include but are not limited to:

- Copying another person's words, work, or data, either intentionally or unwittingly, and claiming the work as his own, i.e. cutting and pasting from an online document without proper citation
- Allowing one's work to be copied and submitted by another
- Submitting written work that was not created or composed by the individual claiming the work, i.e. submitting work written by a tutor, parent, or sibling
- Forging a parent or guardian's signature
- Copying from a source directly without appropriately citing the source
- Sharing answers to assessment questions
- Using unauthorized materials or assistance on an assessment
- Misconduct during an assessment, such as talking to a classmate or using unauthorized resources
- Misrepresenting oneself to your teacher in any way, such as saying that an assignment was turned in when in fact it was not
- Missing class in order to avoid turning in an assignment
- Using online language translators unless specified by a teacher
- Inappropriate use of technology

In order to uphold the Academic Honesty Policy,
Teachers will:

- Review the Academic Honesty Policy each trimester, model ethical practices, and provide examples for discussion as necessary
- Establish a climate of care that emphasizes mastery over performance

- Provide expectations for assigned work
- Specify how outside sources should be used and properly documented
- Indicate when collaboration is allowed and when it is unacceptable and what "collaboration" means in terms of a particular assignment
- Monitor student work for violations of the policy and document accordingly

Students will:

- Avoid situations which might result in academic dishonesty and accept responsibility should a violation of the policy occur
- Document use of outside sources appropriately
- Assume responsibility for ensuring that all academic work, whether completed at home or at school, is the student's own
- Ask for clarification if they are unsure whether or not an action constitutes a violation of the policy
- Report observed academic dishonesty to a teacher or staff member

Parents will:

- Familiarize themselves with the Academic Honesty Policy
- Support students in adhering to the spirit and letter of the policy and teachers and administrators in enforcing it
- Reinforce the values of honesty, personal integrity, and trustworthiness that the policy strives to uphold
- Encourage learners to demonstrate their own learning and thinking
- Direct questions to their child's teacher if they are unsure whether or not an action constitutes a violation of the policy

Administrators will:

- Ensure that all constituents have access to the Academic Honesty Policy via the school website
- Foster a schoolwide atmosphere that emphasizes the importance of academic honesty
- Facilitate ongoing discussions regarding the importance of academic honesty throughout the school year
- Support teachers in upholding the policy in the classroom
- Review and update the policy as needed

At the start of each school year, teachers and students in Upper Elementary and Middle School will come together to develop consequences for students who violate the Academic Honesty Policy.

Those consequences will be added to this handbook, and be sent home to families once they have been drafted. As a school, we believe that it is important for students to have agency when determining consequences that damage our classroom community.

Abusive, Degrading or Vulgar Language and Conduct

The Discovery School holds a strong stance against any derogatory words being used towards another student, parent, staff member, or family member based on their race, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity, language, religion, physical ability, sexual orientation, family structure, and/or socioeconomic background.

If a student uses a derogatory term towards another student the following actions will be taken:

1st Offense: Immediately removed from campus for the remainder of the school day and a mandatory meeting with the student, their parents or guardians, a teacher from their program, the Dean of Students, the Head of School, and others specific to the situation. Based on the severity of the offense, a plan to right the offense will be created together. This will be documented in the student folder and will be considered the first offense.

2nd Offense: Immediately removed from campus for the remainder of the school day and the student stays home for an additional two school days. There will be a mandatory meeting with the student, their parents or guardians, a teacher from their program, the Dean of Students, the Head of School, and others specific to the situation before the student can return to school. This will be the last offense before the student is permanently suspended from The Discovery School.

3rd Offense: Permanent suspension from The Discovery School.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

General Information

- You may pay your tuition through our online Smart Tuition system. You will receive an email notification that you have an invoice. Please make sure we have your correct email address on file.
- All fees and tuition payments are due on the dates indicated on the enrollment agreement.
- There is a $40.00 late fee if your payment is 8 days past due.
- Payment of the initial admission application fee is a one-time event and remains valid until the child is dis-enrolled.
- Program fees are payable yearly. All deposits, application fees, and program fees are

non-refundable.

- All tuition payments must be by check, money order, ACH, debit, or credit card.
- If you would like to pay via debit or credit card or ACH debit, please utilize the online portal. Please be aware that if you choose to use a debit or credit card, you will be charged an additional processing fee of up to 3%.
- If you choose to drop off a check to the administration office, please make checks payable to "The Discovery School."

Tuition Payment Plans

- Annual Payment - payment in full due March, June, or July
- 2 Payment Plan - two equal payments due June and October
- 4 Payment Plan - four equal payments due June, August, October, and December
- 6 Payment Plan-six equal payments due March-August OR June -November
- 8 Payment Plan - eight equal payments due May - December
- 10 Payment Plan - ten equal payments due March - December
- 12 Payment Plan- twelve equal payments due March - February

Scholarships

A limited number of need-based, partial scholarship funds available for students. Scholarships are based on financial need which is determined by the School and Blackbaud Financial Aid Management (please see Admissions Process for details).

Precare and Aftercare Payments

Payments for extended day programs can be made through the Active registration system. The fee will be based on the scheduled enrolled hours, regardless of the child's absence due to illness or vacation. Any reduction in scheduled hours (for billing purposes) will become effective on the first of the following month. If the actual hours exceed the scheduled hours, the excess will be billed at the appropriate hourly rate.

Late Pickup Fee

Parents/guardians are expected to pick up their child by the designated Aftercare dismissal time. Timely pick-up is essential to ensure proper staffing, program operations, and the well-being of students and staff.

A late pick-up fee will be assessed each time a child is picked up after the designated dismissal time. The fee schedule is as follows:

1st Late Pick-Up: $25
2nd Late Pick-Up: $50
3rd Late Pick-Up: $75
4th Late Pick-Up: $100
Each subsequent late pick-up will continue to increase by $25 per occurrence.
Late pick-up fees will be charged to the family's account and must be paid promptly.

Repeated late pick-ups demonstrate an inability to comply with program expectations and place an undue burden on staff. Families who accumulate multiple late pick-ups may be subject to a meeting with the Aftercare Coordinator and may be considered for removal from the Aftercare Program.

The Discovery School reserves the right to revoke a family's Aftercare enrollment privileges due to excessive or recurring late pick-ups. If a student is removed from the program for this reason, any prepaid tuition for future months of care not yet provided may be refunded according to school policies.

Returned Checks

If a check is returned "Non-Sufficient Funds" or "Uncollected Funds," the family will be assessed a penalty fee of $25.00. In the event of two or more checks returned NSF or UF, future payments must be made by bank check, money order, or credit card.

Overdue Payments

Parents are responsible for knowing when their payments are due. The payment plan selected on the enrollment agreement has the due dates. Prior to the start of the school program (i.e. Summer Camp, Primary school, etc.), all fees and tuition payments must be current. No child will be allowed to start their school program if fees or tuition payments are not up to date.

In the event that it becomes necessary or proper for TDS to bring any action for the collection of tuition, after-school fees, other fees, etc., or to consult or place your account with an attorney concerning the payment of money owed, the parent agrees in each and any such case to pay Discovery's fees for collection, including, but not limited to, reasonable attorney's fees (whether incurred out of court in the collection, in court, or appeal, etc.), court costs, interest, and any fees charged by third parties.

Financial Gifts

Discovery gratefully accepts all financial contributions. The Discovery School is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, and, as such, all contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law. Receipts are cheerfully given!

Appendix

Phone Extensions

Please refer to the annual Family Guidebook.