

Innova Preparatory School

An Empowered Education

Policies and Procedures Handbook 2026–2027

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Faculty and Staff 2026–2027

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I. Introduction

Right to Amend

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

History

Innova Prep was established in February 2021 as a non-public, special-purpose day school that caters to the needs of exceptional students. The school was founded by Dr. Steven Farrell and Mrs. Wendy Farrell and is currently the only MDE-accredited nonpublic, special-purpose school in Mississippi that serves kindergarten through twelfth-grade students.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a safe, nurturing, co-educational learning environment where students with concurrent talents, gifts, and learning differences receive the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral support they need to thrive in and beyond the classroom.

Vision

Our vision for the future is to help create a world where differences are celebrated and students who fall outside the bounds of the ordinary can gain all the tools they need to become extraordinary.

Philosophy

We believe every student deserves to be taught in the way they best learn. Education should empower students to conquer their anxieties, overcome their challenges, polish their gifts, and reach their full potential. To that end, Innova Prep encourages enthusiastic parent involvement in each child's school life, and is committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships between the school, individual families, and our community as a whole. We extend learning beyond the classroom by exposing students to the rich cultural, historical, and scientific resources within our community and the world, and we help students develop the ability to explore and celebrate their individual differences and contributions alongside those of their fellow classmates.

II. Accreditation and Professional Organizations

Mississippi Department of Education (MDE)

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) is the state agency responsible for overseeing public education across Mississippi, from early childhood through grade 12. MDE sets the academic standards, policies, and regulations that guide all Mississippi schools, including the Mississippi College- and Career-Readiness Standards (MS CCRS), which define what students are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level. MDE also administers state and federal assessments, monitors school performance, and ensures that all students have access to a high-quality education. Innova Prep operates in full alignment with MDE guidelines and requirements, and students are expected to meet all state-mandated academic benchmarks for special purpose schools and graduation requirements as outlined by MDE and communicated through this handbook.

Midsouth Association of Independent Schools (MAIS)

The MidSouth Association of Independent Schools (MAIS) is a regional accrediting organization that serves private and independent schools across Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, and surrounding states. MAIS establishes standards for academic excellence, institutional integrity, and continuous school improvement, and provides member schools with resources, professional development, and accountability structures to support student success. Accreditation through MAIS signifies that a school has met rigorous standards in areas such as curriculum, faculty qualifications, student services, and school governance. Innova Prep is a proud member of the MAIS community and upholds the association's standards as part of its commitment to providing students with a high-quality, accredited educational experience.

Cognia

Cognia is a globally recognized accreditation and school improvement organization that serves over 36,000 institutions across more than 80 countries. Formerly known as AdvancED — formed through the merger of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) — Cognia evaluates schools based on a comprehensive set of performance standards focused on learner outcomes, educator effectiveness, and institutional health. Cognia accreditation is a mark of quality assurance recognized by colleges, universities, and school systems worldwide, ensuring that students attending accredited institutions are receiving an education that meets rigorous, research-based standards. Innova Prep pursues and maintains Cognia accreditation as part of its ongoing commitment to excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement in all aspects of school operation and student learning.

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)

Innova Prep is a proud member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the leading national voice for independent education in the United States. NAIS membership reflects our commitment to the highest standards of educational excellence, ethical leadership, and institutional integrity. As part of this distinguished network of over 1,600 independent schools, Innova Prep benefits from access to cutting-edge research, professional development resources, and best practices that strengthen our programs and support our students' growth.

Association of LD Schools (ALDS)

Innova Prep is a member of the Association of Learning Disability Schools (ALDS), a national network of schools dedicated to serving students with learning disabilities and differences. ALDS membership connects us to a community of educators and institutions that share our belief that students who learn differently deserve specialized, high-quality instruction in an environment built around their needs. Through this affiliation, Innova Prep gains access to professional development, research-based practices, and a collaborative network of schools committed to helping every student reach their full potential. Our ALDS membership reflects our core conviction that with the right support and environment, students with learning differences can thrive academically and beyond.

International Dyslexia Association (IDA)

Innova Prep is a proud member of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA), the leading organization dedicated to the study and treatment of dyslexia and related reading differences. Founded in 1949, IDA is a globally recognized authority on dyslexia research, advocacy, and evidence-based instructional practices. Our membership in IDA reflects our commitment to using structured literacy approaches and scientifically validated methods to support students who struggle with reading, writing, and language processing. Through this affiliation, Innova Prep stays connected to the latest research and professional development opportunities that directly strengthen our instructional practices. IDA membership signals to our families that we take the science of reading seriously and are committed to giving every student the tools they need to become a confident, capable reader.

National Business Officer Association (NBOA)

Innova Prep is a member of the National Business Officers Association (NBOA), the premier national organization dedicated to supporting the business and financial operations of independent schools. For our families, this membership means that the people managing Innova Prep's finances and operations are held to the highest standards of professional practice in independent education. NBOA equips our administrative team with best-practice guidance in financial management, transparency, and institutional planning — so that tuition dollars are stewarded responsibly and our school remains on a strong, sustainable footing. Families can take confidence in knowing that Innova Prep is connected to a national network that holds us accountable to sound, ethical business practices that ultimately serve the students and families at the heart of everything we do.

III. Admissions

Application and Enrollment

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

Nondiscrimination

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

Diversity

Innova Prep strives to create a diverse and multicultural environment in which all members of our community are respected, valued, and included. The board, faculty, and staff are committed to creating and maintaining an academically and socially excellent learning environment, and acknowledge their responsibility to prepare students to thrive in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. Students will be better prepared to lead as they expand their perspectives, recognize the quality and value of different ideas and people, and become increasingly competent in understanding the various cultures they encounter throughout life. While Innova Prep acknowledges and respects differences of opinion on political and social issues typical of our diverse community, bigotry, harassment, or discrimination related to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, age, or personal beliefs, interests, skills, or learning styles will not be tolerated.

Placement

As an MDE-accredited school, Innova Prep follows Mississippi public school graduation standards. Upon admission, a student's grade placement is determined by members of the IPS admissions team with reference to the student's educational history, diagnoses and accommodation plan, data from benchmark testing administered by Innova Prep staff, and their current stage of social-emotional development and age range.

Psychoeducational Evaluations

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

most appropriate services. All reports are confidential and kept in a secure location in the appropriate administrator's office.

Withdrawal Procedure

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

IV. General Expectations

Innova Preparatory School seeks to provide a safe, orderly climate conducive to teaching and learning. Students and staff share the responsibility for creating and supporting a positive school climate, and the degree to which each student and parent or guardian accepts that responsibility has a definite effect on academic achievement.

The general expectations at Innova Prep are that every member of the school community works to the best of their ability, is respectful of the rights and property of others and of the school, acts safely and responsibly, and treats others politely and with genuine respect. To help students meet these expectations, staff, teachers, counselors, and administrators develop specific procedures and rules while school is in session. The first few days of each school year are used to teach these rules, procedures, and consequences to all students. Every student and parent receives a hard copy of the handbook and must sign a form acknowledging that they have received and reviewed the policies and procedures outlined in this document.

V. Academic Work

Academic Standards and Monitoring

A student learns to develop their intellectual skills consistently and responsibly, and excellence in academic work is expected. Parents have access to their students' grades through the Gradelink Parent Portal and are encouraged to monitor their children's academic progress. Conferences are held at designated dates on the Innova Prep calendar to discuss progress and concerns, and additional conferences may be scheduled by contacting the IPS Professional School Counselor.

Academic Honor Code

Innova Prep is an academic community based on trust. Honesty in the execution and presentation of graded work is vital for real learning and fair evaluation. Cheating, facilitating cheating, and plagiarism impede learning and creativity, undermine meaningful and just grading, and subvert trust between students and faculty. Each faculty member has the responsibility to clearly communicate to students what types of work and assignments they should complete without assistance and what citations are appropriate. Cheating, facilitating cheating, or plagiarism while completing assignments will result in the student being required to resubmit the assignment, and continued cheating or plagiarism may result in a failing grade for the quarter.

Artificial Intelligence

To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools for specific goals; however, these tools should be used only with explicit and clear permission from each instructor and only in the ways the instructor allows. Use of generative AI tools to complete assignments without the express permission of the instructor will result in the student being required to resubmit the assignment, and continued use of generative AI may result in a failing grade for the quarter.

Grading

Report cards are issued after each nine-week term. Innova Prep follows the grading scale of the Mississippi public school system:

- 90–100% / A / 4.0 GPA
- 80–89% / B / 3.0 GPA
- 70–79% / C / 2.0 GPA
- 60–69% / D / 1.0 GPA
- 0–60% / F / 0.0 GPA

Quarterly Averages

The following categories and weights are used to calculate a quarterly average in class at Innova Prep:

- Minor grades
 - 40% of quarterly grade
 - At least 2 per week
 - Includes quizzes, bell-ringers, participation, and other daily assignments.

- Major grades
 - 45% of the quarterly grade
 - At least 4 per quarter
 - Includes tests, presentations, projects, longer written assignments, and other assignments requiring significant academic investment
- End-of-term Exam
 - 15% of the quarterly grade
 - End-of-term exams are comprehensive, covering all content presented during the entire nine weeks. Projects, presentations, and written assignments may be substituted for the end-of-term exam, provided they reflect mastery of all content for the full term.

Semester and Final Averages

Innova Prep uses the following formulas to calculate semester and final averages:

- $(Q1 \text{ avg} + Q2 \text{ avg}) / 2 = S1 \text{ Avg}$
- $(Q3 \text{ avg} + Q4 \text{ avg}) / 2 = S2 \text{ Avg}$
- $(S1 \text{ avg} + S2 \text{ avg}) / 2 = \text{Final Avg}$

Credits are awarded at the end of the course (semester or year-long courses) and reflected on the student's transcript

Progress Reports and Report Cards

Progress reports are distributed at the halfway point of each term, and report cards are distributed upon the completion of end-of-term exams. Parents are required to sign and return progress reports and report cards the day after they are released. Parents can also monitor the progress of their students at any time through the Gradelink Parent Portal.

Failure Policies

For students in seventh and eighth grade, failure of two or more subjects at the end of the first, second, or third nine weeks will place the student on academic probation, and significant academic progress must be shown to be considered for return the following year. Failure of more than two subjects for the year may result in the student not being allowed to return to Innova Prep.

For students in ninth through twelfth grade, failure of four or more subjects after the first and/or third nine weeks will result in academic probation, and significant academic progress must be demonstrated before returning the following year. Failure of five subjects at mid-term may result in a student being asked to leave Innova Prep.

Homework

Beyond studying for tests and project preparation, homework will be limited in consideration of the unique challenges faced by IPS students. Skills practice will be limited to assignments that can be achieved within supported academic time. When homework must be assigned, teachers will encourage students to document it in their student folders to support their success. The exemption from homework does not apply to students participating in Advanced Placement or Honors classes.

Test Retake Policy

Students who receive a failing grade on a test will be permitted one opportunity to retake the assessment. Upon completion of the retake, the grade earned during the second attempt will be averaged with the grade from the initial attempt, and the resulting average will be recorded in the gradebook. Students are expected to coordinate with their instructors to arrange a suitable time for their retake.

Extended Time

Students with the extended time accommodation will be allowed an additional class period to complete assessments. The extended time accommodation applies exclusively to in-class assessments. All other assignments must be submitted by the deadline established by the instructor.

Late Assignments

All due dates must be adhered to. Assignments submitted after the deadline, without prior authorization or a documented excused absence approved by the instructor, will be subject to a one-letter grade deduction before being graded. Assignments missed due to excused or unexcused absences must be completed within a timeframe equivalent to the number of days the student was absent.

An unexcused absence from any test, quiz, or exam will result in the student receiving an incomplete. Parents and students can check the status of missing assignments in the Gradelink Parent Portal. Without proper communication and student support, students will receive a zero for any missing assignment.

Exemption Policy

Students in grades 7–12 who meet established criteria may be exempt from second-semester exams.

Requirements:

- Maintain a 90 or above average in a course
- Have no more than 7 unexcused absences in a course
- Have no more than 9 unexcused tardies in a course
- Have no suspensions from school during the school year

Advanced Placement (AP) Program

Innova Prep offers Advanced Placement (AP) courses to students who seek college-level academic challenge and the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school. AP courses are rigorous by design, and enrollment in an AP course carries expectations that differ from standard coursework.

Homework and Out-of-Class Study

AP courses will regularly require homework and independent study outside of the school day. The depth and pace of AP curriculum demand that students engage with course material beyond classroom instruction. Students and families should expect consistent homework assignments and should plan accordingly when considering enrollment in one or more AP courses.

Weighted GPA

To reflect the increased rigor of AP coursework, grades earned in AP courses are calculated using a weighted GPA scale. Students enrolled in an AP course will receive one (1) additional quality point added to their grade when computing their weighted GPA. For example, a grade that would earn 4.0 quality points in a standard course will earn 5.0 quality points in an AP course under the weighted scale. Weighted GPA is used for class rank and academic recognition purposes. Unweighted GPA may be reported separately on transcripts as required.

Student Responsibility

Enrollment in an AP course is a commitment to the academic standards of the College Board and to Innova Prep's expectations for excellence. Students who enroll in AP courses are expected to complete all assignments, participate actively, and sit for the AP examination at the end of the course. Students experiencing difficulty in an AP course should seek support from their teacher promptly rather than waiting until performance has significantly declined.

Course Offerings

AP Pre-Calculus

AP US History

AP United States Government

AP Environmental Science

AP Music Theory

AP English Language and Composition

Graduation Requirements

Innova Prep follows the Mississippi Department of Education graduation sequence for the traditional high school diploma. To graduate, students must complete each of the following requirements:

CURRICULUM AREA	CARNEGIE UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4 ¹	English I
		English II
MATHEMATICS	4 ²	Algebra 1
SCIENCE	3 ³	Biology
SOCIAL STUDIES	3 ½	1 World History ⁴
		1 U. S. History ⁴
		½ U. S. Government ⁴
		½ Economics ⁴
		½ Mississippi Studies ⁴
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	½ ⁷	½ Physical Education
HEALTH	½ ⁸	½ Contemporary Health
TECHNOLOGY or COMPUTER SCIENCE	1 ⁹	
THE ARTS	1 ¹⁰	
COLLEGE- and CAREER-READINESS	1 ¹¹	
ELECTIVES	5 ½	
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	24 ^{12, 13, 14}	

NOTE: Enrollment at Innova Prep does not guarantee that a student will receive a high school diploma. If at any point it is determined that gaps in a student's academic and behavioral performance are too wide to bridge given the resources available, parents will be notified and advised on the appropriate steps to take for their child's continuing education elsewhere. Presentation of a student's academic and behavioral data over time as proof of these gaps should be expected during this process.

MDE Diploma Endorsement Options

All 9th graders must choose whether they want to work towards a traditional high school diploma or take additional classes to earn an academic or distinguished academic endorsement. These diploma options include minimum Carnegie unit requirements set forth by the Mississippi Department of Education.

Each diploma option will prepare students to be successful after graduation, whether that be in the workforce, a career and technical program or college. Also, students who earn an academic or distinguished academic diploma endorsement from a high school accredited by MDE will automatically qualify for admission into any of the state's public universities.

Parents and students will choose one of the following options during the course selection process prior to the 9th grade:

Traditional Mississippi High School Diploma

- Earn 24 credits (Carnegie units) in a selection of required classes including English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Technology or Computer Science, College and Career Readiness, Health, Art, Physical Education and electives
- Innova Prep may add graduation requirements to the state requirements.

Traditional Diploma + Academic Endorsement

- Earn 26 credits

- Earn at least a 2.5 grade point average
- Two elective courses must meet MS IHL college preparatory curriculum (CPC) requirements.
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - ACT sub scores of 17 in English and 19 in Math
 - Essentials of College Math or Essentials of College Literacy (in senior year)
 - SAT Equivalency subscore
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One AP course with a C or higher and take the appropriate Advanced Placement exam
 - One dual credit course and earn a C or higher in the course

Traditional Diploma + Distinguished Academic Endorsement

- Earn 28 credits
- Earn at least a 3.0 grade point average
- Two elective courses must meet MS IHL CPC recommended requirements
- Must successfully complete one of the following
 - ACT sub-scores of 18 in English and 22 in Math
 - SAT equivalence sub-score
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One AP course with a B or higher and take the appropriate AP exam
 - One dual credit course and earn a B or higher in the course.

Graduation Honors Recognition

At the end of the third quarter, grades of all 12th grade students are calculated to determine academic honors. This calculation includes final averages in all completed Carnegie unit courses (including units earned in 7th and 8th grade) and averages for Carnegie unit courses through the third quarter of the senior year.

The following requirement must be met to determine eligibility for academic honors before specific honors can be determined: A student must have no grades lower than a “B-” for a final grade in any course earning Carnegie units. This refers to the final average for the course as posted on the official transcript and does not include points added for AP courses. The average for the first 3 quarters will be used for senior classes that are one credit. The 3rd quarter grade will be used for 2nd semester ½ credit courses.

Once a student is deemed eligible for academic honors, the following additional requirements must be met to qualify for the specific categories of academic honors at Innova Prep:

	Magna Cum Laude	Summa Cum Laude	Historian	Salutatorian	Valedictorian
GPA Requirement	Cumulative GPA of 90 and above at the end of the senior year	Cumulative GPA of 95 at the end of the third quarter of the senior year	Earned the third highest academic honor GPA	Earned the second highest academic honor GPA	Earned the highest academic honor GPA
AP Course Requirement		Minimum of 1	Minimum of 1	Minimum of 1	Minimum of 1
Absence Requirement			No more than 5 unexcused absences during senior year	No more than 5 unexcused absences during senior year	No more than 5 unexcused absences during senior year
Discipline Requirement			No suspensions during senior year	No suspensions during senior year	No suspensions during senior year
Enrollment Requirement			Enrolled at Innova Prep for at least junior and senior year.	Enrolled at Innova Prep for at least junior and senior year.	Enrolled at Innova Prep for at least junior and senior year.

VI. Schedule and Attendance

School Year and Instructional Time

In accordance with MDE guidelines, Innova Prep operates for 180 days of instruction. In the event severe weather or other emergencies interfere with operation, the state may waive up to five days, with a minimum of 175 days required. Half-days, of which only two are planned per year, must include a minimum of four hours of instructional time, not including lunch, recess, or breaks. Regular school days consist of at least 330 instructional minutes, excluding breaks and activity periods.

School Hours

School hours are 7:45 AM to 3:15 PM. Students should be dropped off between 7:45 AM and 8:10 AM. Students arriving after 8:10 AM must be signed in by a parent. Elementary students are released at 2:15 PM, except those who have middle school DT Maintenance during seventh period. Middle and high school students are dismissed at 3:15 PM. Parents are responsible for picking up their students at dismissal time. If an emergency arises, parents should contact the office to notify faculty. Additional fees may be imposed if a parent routinely fails to pick up their student by 3:30 PM.

Signing In and Out

Students entering or leaving school between 8:10 AM and 3:15 PM must report to the Innova Prep office with a parent, who will sign the child in or out as appropriate. A form of identification will be required for a child to be signed out during the school day. If a parent has a custody issue with their child's other parent, the custodial parent must provide the office a copy of applicable court documents stating to whom their child may be released and with whom educational information may be discussed.

Illness at School

Students with a fever of 100.0 or higher should go home as soon as possible and should not return until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without medication. Should a child begin vomiting or experience diarrhea while at school, parents will be contacted to take the student home. The child should be symptom-free for at least 24 hours without medication before returning. Students who test positive for COVID or live in a household in which a family member tests positive will be required to isolate for five days before returning to school.

A student may be excused from P.E. or kept inside from recess at a parent's request due to health or safety issues. A note from the parent or a call to the office is required for a student to sit out of P.E. or recess.

Student Supervision

All students must be supervised by a designated adult while on Innova Prep's campus. Faculty are assigned to student supervision between 7:45 AM and 3:15 PM, and no supervision is guaranteed outside of these times. Students should never be left at Innova Prep before 7:45 AM.

At no time will a student be allowed to leave the grounds unless accompanied by an adult documented on the student's permission-to-release form, or by other arrangements made by the

parent with the office. If a parent arranges for a substitute driver to pick up their child, photo identification of that driver is required, and parents must email or call the office to make these arrangements. Students who drive themselves must obtain approval from the executive director; other students will not be allowed to ride home with a student driver without written consent from both students' parents.

Absences

No student shall be promoted to the next level whose absences exceed twelve days during the school year; however, the administration and school board may waive this standard if absences resulted from unusual circumstances or extended illness, provided the academic objectives missed are mastered and Individualized Learning Plan has been followed.

Accepted Reasons for Excused Absences:

- Illness of the student
- Illness of a parent preventing transportation
- Death in the family
- Appointments with doctors, dentists, orthodontists, speech/language pathologists, counselors, psychologists, and other related professionals
- Situations related to a student's disability or challenge when documented in their IPS Individualized Learning Plan
- Religious holidays
- Court proceedings
- Attendance at school-organized activities.

Family vacations are not considered excused absences; please consult the Innova Prep annual calendar before making vacation plans.

Acceptable written excuses include a note from the office of the doctor or other professional, or a handwritten note from the parent for up to five absences. After five absences, parent-written notes are not acceptable without consent from an Innova Prep administrator. If parents are aware in advance that a student will be absent, they are encouraged to contact the Innova Prep office so that assignments can be provided for the period of absence.

Excessive Absences and Truancy

Regular attendance is mandatory at Innova Prep. If a student accumulates more than twelve absences during the school year, admission for the following year may not be granted. A student is considered truant after accumulating five or more unlawful absences in a school year, excluding suspension and expulsion days. After five unexcused absences, Innova Prep will refer the student to MDE by making a report to the Compulsory Attendance Officer, and parental contact by IPS administrators will occur via email or parent conference.

Tardiness

Habitual late arrival is not permissible, and parents will be contacted if tardiness becomes a serious concern. Homeroom begins at 7:45 AM each morning, and students arriving after 8:10 AM are considered tardy. When a student arrives late, they or a parent or guardian must come to the office to sign in, and the student must receive a pass to class. If a faculty or staff member causes a student to be tardy, that faculty or staff member must send a note with the student for

presentation to the next teacher. Students who are less than five minutes late to class will be given an unexcused tardy in Gradelink.

Early Release for Seniors

Per MDE guidelines, seniors are eligible for early release if they obtain an English subscore of 17 and a math subscore of 19 on the ACT, or if they have at least a 2.5 GPA, are on track to meet all diploma requirements, and are enrolled in Essentials for College Math.

VII. Conduct and Discipline

Overview

Classroom teachers handle discipline matters first. If a student engages in behavior contrary to the expectations outlined in this handbook, appropriate responses should be expected. More serious and chronic concerns will be brought to the attention of the principal, and except for minor incidents, parents will be informed.

Courtesy Code

Students at Innova Prep are expected to display school spirit by taking pride in their appearance and being courteous to staff, family members, and fellow students. They are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship as players or spectators at all school events, behave politely and respectfully toward others, honor their families and friends through appropriate conduct, and accept collective decisions once they have been made.

Classroom Expectations

Each teacher will set specific expectations for their classroom, and students are expected to follow those expectations while under a teacher's supervision. Failure to follow classroom expectations will first be addressed through redirection, with increasingly severe consequences for continued defiance.

Parental Partnership and Responsibilities

The parent or guardian of a student enrolled at Innova Prep is financially responsible for their child's destructive acts against school property or persons. A parent or guardian may be requested to appear at school for a conference regarding the actions of their child, and any parent who refuses or willfully fails to attend such a conference may be summoned by proper notification from the executive director or designee.

Parents and guardians are responsible for any criminal fines brought against their child for unlawful activity occurring on school grounds. Parental actions toward the board, administration, faculty, staff, or other families that violate the rules outlined in this document will be considered when determining a student's continued placement at IPS. Abusive behaviors by students or their families are grounds for immediate dismissal. Additionally, Innova Prep reserves the right to monitor and regulate its public platforms. Using those platforms to damage the school's mission and standing in the community, or to damage a staff member's professional or personal reputation, is strictly prohibited.

Innova Prep believes that a strong partnership between families and the school is essential to each student's success. To support this partnership, parents and guardians are **required** to attend **two conferences per academic year** — one held in **December** for the mid-year conference and one held in **May** for the end of year— to discuss their student's academic progress, social-emotional development, and overall experience at Innova Prep. Conference dates will be communicated in advance through the school's primary communication channels, and families will have the opportunity to schedule a time that works for them. Failure to attend a scheduled conference without prior notice or rescheduling may result in a follow-up from school administration. Families who have concerns or questions outside of scheduled conference periods are always welcome to reach out to their student's teacher or advisor directly.

Harassment and Bullying

Innova Prep does not tolerate harassment or bullying by or toward students, parents, or faculty, and will take appropriate actions to stop bullying and assign consequences proportional to the severity of the situation.

Bullying is characterized by three necessary features:

1. Targeted and repeated abusive behavior toward a victim to fulfill a psychological need of the bully,
2. A clear intention to cause physical or emotional harm, and
3. An uneven power dynamic between the victim and the bully.

Bullying may take physical forms (violence, unwanted contact, damage to personal property), emotional forms (name calling, offensive gestures, harmful gossip, intentional exclusion, discriminatory slurs), amatory forms (harassment based on gender or sexual preference), or virtual forms (transmission of disrespectful messages, emails, photographs, or social media posts). It is important to distinguish bullying from conflicts between students, episodes of spite or annoyance, random acts of aggression, or mutual disagreements, which do not meet the definition.

Sexual harassment is considered a major rule violation and may result in reports to external agencies. Students, faculty, and staff who are concerned about any perceived bullying or harassment should immediately notify the executive director or another trusted adult; a bully's most powerful ally is their victim's silence. Students are expected to treat others with friendliness, helpfulness, courtesy, and sensitivity. The use of foul words or racial, misogynistic, heterosexist, or xenophobic language in student or parent interactions will not be tolerated.

Infractions

Consequences for both positive and negative behavior are a part of the Innova Prep discipline plan. Innova Prep implements a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system that focuses on rewarding good behavior. Students earn points — called Talons — that can be used to purchase food, drinks, and toys in the Owl's Nest, the Innova Prep school store. Students may also lose Talons because of negative behaviors.

When a student violates the codes of conduct with minor infractions, teachers, counselors, and administrators will first redirect the student toward positive behavior and issue a warning.

Minor infractions include:

- Insubordination or disrespect to teachers, administrators, or staff
- Insulting or obscene language or behavior
- Accumulation or refusal to serve detentions
- Failure to report to a teacher as directed
- Inappropriate displays of affection
- Excessive tardiness
- Any action that seriously or regularly disrupts the learning environment
- Any action constituting gossip or sharing of personal, sensational, or intimate content about another student or staff member through any medium.

Major infractions are negative behaviors that may necessitate both internal and external consequences.

Major infractions include:

- Fighting
- Harassment (including intimidation, threats, sexual harassment, and bullying), chronic truancy
- Possession or use of matches, lighters, or tobacco products
- Stealing or possession of stolen property
- Possession or use of weapons or ammunition
- Possession or use of prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia
- Vandalism or graffiti
- Indecent exposure
- Possession of pornographic material
- Possession or detonation of fireworks
- Gambling
- Any real or perceived threat toward a student, teacher, administrator, counselor, or staff member.

Proper authorities will be notified and charges filed as appropriate; this includes threats made outside of school hours and off school property that involve harm at school.

Consequences

When efforts to redirect negative behaviors fail, students will be issued a demerit. Demerit forms serve as a means to notify parents of problematic student behaviors and are recorded in a student's yearly file. The number of demerits received in a classroom is a consideration in determining the student's conduct grade, and failure to return a signed demerit form will result in continuation of punishments and the issuance of additional demerits. The consequences associated with demerits are cumulative.

Escalating Consequences for Demerits:

- Demerit #1: Referral to the Director of Student Services (DSS) and documentation in Gradelink and in the student's yearly file.
- Demerit #2: Referral to the DSS to contact parent or guardian, one to three days of lunch detention assigned, and documentation in Gradelink and in the student's yearly file
- Demerit #3: Referral to the DSS to contact parent or guardian, one day of out-of-school suspension, and documentation in Gradelink and in the student's yearly file.
- Demerit #4: Referral to the DSS to contact parent or guardian, two days of out-of-school suspension, and documentation in Gradelink and in the student's yearly file.
- Demerit #5: Referral to the DSS to contact parent or guardian, three days of out-of-school suspension, and documentation in Gradelink and in the student's yearly file.
- Any demerit beyond #5: Parent meeting with the Executive Director, Associate Executive Director, and Director of Student Services to determine if continued attendance at Innova Prep is appropriate.

NOTE: Aggressive or intimate contact between students of any kind is not tolerated at Innova Prep and immediately merits a one to five day suspension depending on the extent of the contact.

Lunch Detention

Upon receiving a second demerit, administrators may issue supervised detention to be served during a student's lunch period. Students will be allowed to eat their lunch, with any remaining time used at the discretion of the detention supervisor. Detention is served on the same day the demerit is issued, or as soon as the teacher or principal makes the necessary arrangements. Students who do not report to their designated supervisor for lunch detention will receive an additional demerit. During detention, students may only do homework or studying, or complete oral or written presentations reflecting on how their choices violated IPS policies and disrupted the learning environment and what better choices they could make in the future.

Suspension

The administrator has the power to suspend any student from school for good cause per MS Code 37-9-71, and the Innova Prep School Board has the authority to suspend a student for misconduct in or around the school, on the road to and from school, at any school-related activity or event, or for conduct occurring off school property when such conduct is determined to render the student's presence a disruption to the educational environment or a detriment to the welfare of other students.

Expulsion

Expulsion of students shall be in accordance with law and requires the recommendation of the Executive Director and approval of the Innova Prep School Board in all cases. Upon written parent request, the student shall be provided a private due process hearing before any expulsion action is taken. Written notice of all charges will be supplied to the student and parents or guardians, the parent must be present at the hearing, and the student or parent may be represented by legal counsel at their own expense. The student will be allowed to give their version of the facts, offer the testimony of witnesses, and observe all evidence offered against them. The hearing will be conducted impartially, and the determination shall be based solely on evidence presented. A record of the hearing will be kept, and findings will be reduced to writing and sent to the student and their parents or guardians within a reasonable time. The student and parents or guardians will be made aware of their right to appeal the decision to the executive director and, ultimately, to the School Board.

Home-Based Placement

Home-based placement will be assigned only when the student's presence in the school is disruptive to the educational environment and detrimental to the well-being of other students, when referral to another private or public school is not appropriate, and when Innova Prep's services can be reasonably and effectively provided through the learning management system in place. Upon written parent request, the student shall be provided a private due process hearing prior to assignment of home-based placement, following the same due process procedures described in the expulsion section above.

VIII. School Safety

Loss of Phone Communication

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

Loss of Electricity

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

Fire Emergency

In the event of a fire emergency, students will leave their backpacks and personal belongings in the classroom. Each teacher will take their phone to access student rosters and will close the classroom door. Teachers will retrieve their emergency packs near the classroom door upon reaching the safe assembly area, in case phone service is unavailable. Students and teachers will walk quietly to their preassigned safe space outside the building, where teachers will take attendance and send an "all here" or "missing students" message to the principal via GroupMe. When the all-clear alarm sounds, students and teachers will walk quietly back to their classrooms.

Bomb Threats

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

Weather Emergencies

Innova Preparatory School administration monitors severe weather watches and warnings and maintains contact with the Forrest County Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service during severe weather threats. If the National Weather Service issues a tornado warning for the school, all students will follow weather protocol and report to their designated safe place, remaining in the building until the warning is lifted. If parents are in the campus parking lot when a warning is issued, they will be encouraged to come into the building and directed to a safe area. If a tornado warning occurs during dismissal, students will remain in designated safe areas. Innova Prep will use the School Status text alert system to notify parents of any changes in dismissal or after-school activities due to severe weather.

Threats to the Geographical Area

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

Earthquake

In the unlikely event of an earthquake, students should drop to the ground (those physically unable to do so should remain seated and cover their heads with their arms and hands), take cover under or near desks, tables, or chairs in a kneeling position with their backs to the windows, and hold on to table or chair legs until ground movement ends. Teachers will assess their surroundings for structural damage, fires, toxic chemicals, and student injuries, and will evacuate the classroom if necessary, proceeding to the fire evacuation assembly area. Teachers

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

Active Shooter

In the event of an active shooter situation, students and faculty will follow a Run-Hide-Fight protocol. If there is a considerable distance between an individual and the armed person, they should quickly move away from the sound of the gunfire. If it is safe to do so, they should run out of the building and move far away until reaching a secure location. Belongings should be left behind, hands should be kept visible to law enforcement, and others should be taken along, if possible, without staying behind for those who refuse to go. Call 911 as soon as it is safe to do so; do not assume someone else has already reported the incident.

If the shooter is in proximity and evacuation is not safe, individuals should hide in an area out of the armed person's view, choosing a location with thicker walls and fewer windows if possible. Doors should be locked and barricaded with furniture, lights turned off, phones silenced, and windows covered to avoid being seen from outside. If outdoors and unable to run safely, find cover that protects from gunfire, such as a brick wall or large trees. Remain in place until receiving an all-clear signal from School Status.

As a last resort, and only when life is in imminent danger, individuals should take action to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter. This includes acting with physical aggression, using available items such as fire extinguishers or chairs, and throwing objects at the shooter if possible. After any incident, wait for local law enforcement officers to assist with evacuation if inside the building; when law enforcement arrives, display empty hands with open palms. It is important to understand that gunfire may sound artificial — any popping sound should be assumed to be gunfire. If two or more persons are in the same place when a violent incident begins, they should spread out to avoid presenting an easy target. Violent attacks may involve any type of weapon, including knives, blunt objects, or explosives. Planning and visualizing possible escape routes, including accessible routes for those with disabilities or limited mobility, is strongly encouraged.

IX. Other Policies and Procedures

Textbooks

All non-consumable books are rented to students, with the rental fee included in tuition. If a student loses or damages a book, the parent will be required to purchase a replacement.

School Lunches

Students must bring their lunch and a drink each day. Microwaves are available to warm food; however, parents should send food that can be heated quickly so that all students have adequate time to warm and eat their meals. Students are also encouraged to bring a reusable water bottle to keep with them throughout the day.

Late or Missed Lunch Deliveries

Innova Prep encourages families to make consistent lunch arrangements for their students each day. If a student arrives without a lunch and no delivery has been arranged, the school will provide a lunch to ensure the student is cared for and ready to learn. Families will be notified each time this occurs. Beginning with the third occurrence, a **\$10 lunch provision fee** will be charged to the family's account for that instance and each subsequent occurrence thereafter. To avoid this charge, families are encouraged to communicate with the front office by **9:00 a.m.** on any day a lunch arrangement changes or a delivery may be delayed.

Late Pick-up Policy

Innova Prep's school day concludes at **3:15 p.m.**, and families are expected to arrange timely pick-up for their students each day. Students who have not been picked up by **3:30 p.m.** will remain under staff supervision until a parent or authorized guardian arrives. A **\$5 per minute fee** will be charged to the family's account for each occurrence. Families will be notified when this fee is applied. Repeated late pick-ups may result in a required meeting with school administration to discuss a plan for ensuring timely dismissal. If an emergency arises and a family anticipates being late, they are encouraged to contact the front office as soon as possible.

Birthday Celebrations

Parents who want to celebrate their child's birthday at school may bring enough cookies or cupcakes to share with their child's class. Students may enjoy birthday treats during their lunch period.

Dress Code

Innova Prep maintains a comfortable dress code to support student learning. Clothing must be clean, neat, and properly fitting, and must be free of profanity, sexual language or images, political references, or content related to drugs or alcohol. Students and faculty will follow the dress code during the school day and at any Innova Prep-sponsored activity. Parents will be informed by phone when an outfit is considered inappropriate and asked to bring a change of clothes for the student.

Pants must be size-appropriate and cannot be pajama bottoms unless those are allowed for a school-approved event. Yoga pants and leggings may be worn only with an article of clothing that extends easily to the top of the knee. Skorts, skirts, and shorts must be no shorter than three inches from the top of the kneecap and must be loose-fitting enough to fall naturally upon standing to meet that requirement. Tank tops and muscle shirts are not allowed. Shirts must fully cover a student's torso; crop tops are not permitted. Hats and hoodies may not be worn inside the building unless the student has purchased a hat pass from the Owl's Nest.

X. Appropriate Use of Computers and Technology

Innova Preparatory School provides access to the technology necessary to complete assignments. Students and parents will sign a technology agreement at the beginning of each

school year outlining the rules for acceptable use of school technology. Parents will be expected to replace any lost, stolen, or damaged technology.

Use of Laptops, iPads, Tablets, etc. for Educational Purposes

The following rules govern the use of electronic devices in the classroom:

1. The Director of Student Services has the right to refuse or revoke the use of technology by any student due to discipline history or disciplinary actions.
2. All rules in Innova Prep's technology agreement apply to personal electronic devices brought from home.
3. All Chromebooks or other admin-approved laptops must remain in a student's backpack other than at times authorized by a teacher for educational use in the classroom. Electronic devices must remain powered off when not in use.

Use of Cell Phones and Smart Watches

All cell phones and smart watches must be turned into the front office during morning drop off and cannot be accessed by students until dismissal. The use of cellphones during the school day is disruptive to instruction and student engagement. Research consistently shows that they are detrimental to learning when accessible during class time.

Cell Phone Discipline Policy:

Violation #1

- Demerit Issued
- Parent/guardian must pick up the phone

Violation #2

- Demerit Issued
- One day of out-of-school suspension
- Parent/guardian must pick up the phone
- \$25 fine (must be paid before the phone is released)

Violation #3

- Demerit Issued
- Two days of out-of-school suspension
- Parent/guardian must pick up the phone
- \$50 fine (must be paid before the phone is released)

Violation #4 and Beyond

- Demerit Issued
- Two days of out-of-school suspension
- Parent/guardian must pick up the phone
- \$100 fine (must be paid before the phone is released)

Using a School-Issued Chromebook

Students will be given a username and password that will allow them to access their devices and applications, retrieve them from homeroom in the morning, and return them before dismissal in the evening. No student may take a school-issued Chromebook home without approval from an Innova Prep administrator.

Students will use their assigned Chromebooks to access textbooks and Google Classroom, work on and submit assignments, and to take tests and quizzes. They will also have access to Google applications, like Google Docs and Sheets, via their school log-in credentials. Any digital assignment for classes at Innova Prep should be completed and saved in a student's Google Drive.

The use of guest profiles or alternate Google log-ins to circumvent the rules outlined in this document and in Innova Prep's acceptable use agreement or the digital protections put in place by the Innova Prep admin team is strictly prohibited and will result in an immediate demerit. Continued violation of this rule will result in a loss of technology privileges while at school.

Lost or Damaged School Devices

Students are responsible for paying the replacement cost for devices that are lost, damaged, or stolen. Below are the respective replacement costs:

- Replacement of Chromebook - \$300
- Keyboard/touchpad - \$100
- Power cord - \$15
- Power board damage - \$45

XI. Finances

Enrollment Fees

Application Fee (new students)	\$50.00	Non-refundable
Priority Registration for Returning Students	\$500.00	Non-refundable (by 3/06/26)
Late Registration for Returning Students	\$600.00	Non-refundable (by 5/29/26)
New Student Registration	\$600.00	Non-refundable
Building Fee	\$500.00	Per Family Non-refundable (Split - April, May, & June)
Technology Fee	\$300.00	Non-refundable (by 5/29/26)

Tuition

\$1075.00/monthly	Full Parent Pay Rate
\$575.00/monthly	Dyslexia Scholarship Parent Rate
\$475.00/monthly	ESA Scholarship Parent Pay Rate
\$150.00/monthly	Active Dyslexia Therapy

Tuition Payment Options

Option:	Installments:	Due Date:
Plan A	Pay in Full	June 1, 2026
Plan B	Deposit and two payments	Deposit: Date of Registration Payment #1: June 1, 2026 Payment #2: January 1, 2026
Plan C	Deposit and twelve payments	Deposit: Date of Registration Payments: First of each Month

Additional Financial Notes

- Innova Prep partners with the Gradelink Tuition Management System to safeguard financial transactions between families and the school. All tuition payments will be made by ACH on the first day of each month. The following account information must be provided prior to June 1, 2026:
 - Bank Name
 - Name on the Account
 - Routing Number
 - Account Number
- The building fee of \$500 will be drafted from your account in April, May, and June in increments of \$166.67
- The registration fee is not due unless the student is accepted into Innova Prep.
- Any late payments will result in a \$40.00 fee charge.
- Any failed payments will result in a \$30.00 bank fee charge.
- Students will only be allowed to continue to attend classes and school activities if tuition and fees are paid by the stated deadlines (or until the parent makes other written arrangements acceptable to the school).
- All accounts must be paid in full before records and transcripts can be released or transferred to other schools and colleges.

Gradelink Tuition Management

Innova Prep partners with the Gradelink Tuition Management System to safeguard financial transactions between families and the school.

Education Scholarship Account (ESA)

The Education Scholarship Account is an MDE program designed to give parents of special needs children the option of withdrawing their child from the public school system and receiving a designated amount of funds to help offset the cost of private school tuition or other specific allowable educational activities. For more information, visit <https://www.mdek12.org/OSE/ESA>.

To be eligible, a student must be a resident of the State of Mississippi and must have an active Individualized Education Program (IEP) within three years from the date of application, developed by a public school district where the student was enrolled and received special education or related services.

Parents participating in the ESA program are responsible for providing an organized, appropriate educational program with measurable annual goals covering reading, grammar, mathematics, social studies, and science; documenting the student's disability every three years; and ensuring the student is not simultaneously enrolled in a public school or in a home instruction program. Participants may not also participate in the Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship or the Mississippi Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship programs while in the ESA program. Parents must notify MDE immediately upon any change in status that causes eligibility requirements to no longer be met, and must provide pre- and post-assessments to MDE's Office of Special Education by June of the awarded school year.

Applications are time- and date-stamped upon receipt, reviewed, and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until 50% of the annual enrollment limits are reached. The remaining ESAs are then chosen through a random selection process. A mid-year lottery may be held if additional scholarships become available. The scholarship amount is calculated annually each spring and may vary based on available funds.

Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship

Mississippi has the nation's only school choice program created exclusively for students with dyslexia. The program allows children with dyslexia to receive vouchers to attend accredited private and public schools that provide dyslexia therapy. There is no income limit, the program is statewide with no enrollment cap, and the voucher cap is \$9,614. The program is limited to students with special needs; prior-year public school enrollment is required, with exceptions. For more information, visit <https://www.mdek12.org/OAE/OEER/Dyslexia>.

The Office of Student Intervention Services coordinates and manages the review and award of student dyslexia scholarships, the RFP process for dyslexia grants to districts, and the selection process for a State Board of Education-approved list of dyslexia screeners. The office also provides professional development and technical assistance to parents, teachers, and administrators on topics including understanding dyslexia, identification of students with dyslexia, and effective instruction and interventions for dyslexic students. The Office of Intervention Services assists parents pursuing a scholarship or transfer under the dyslexia therapy scholarship program.

Financial Aid

Families may apply for school-based financial assistance through Clarity each spring for the following year. There is no guarantee that financial aid will be awarded. If a data-driven evaluation of a student's yearly progress demonstrates that state funds are not benefiting them, Innova Prep may recommend discontinuing those funds as a matter of fiduciary responsibility.