

# **2020-2021 Elementary Parent-Student Handbook**



## **Independence Community Schools**

East Elementary School: Grades K-2  
1103 1st Street West  
Independence, Iowa 50644  
Phone: (319) 334-7425  
Fax: (319) 334-7427

West Elementary: Grades 3-6  
1301 1st Street West  
Independence, Iowa 50644  
Phone: (319) 334-7430  
Fax: (319) 334-7433

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# Calendar

## Independence Community School District 2020-2021 School Calendar

Start – Finish  
August 24 – May 25

### Summary of Calendar:

Days in classroom:  
First & Second Term . . . . . 91  
Third & Fourth Term . . . . . 89  
TOTAL CALENDAR DAYS 180

### Summary of Calendar:

Hours in classroom:  
First & Second Term . . . . . 547:00  
Third & Fourth Term . . . . . 536:30  
TOTAL CALENDAR HRS 1083:30

Student Day: 6 hours, 30 minutes

### CALENDAR LEGEND

No School-Prof Development  
Early Dismissal & Late Starts  
Parent/Teacher Conferences  
End of Term  
Holidays  
Vacation Days



### HOLIDAYS:

Labor Day (9/7)  
Thanksgiving Day (11/26)  
Christmas Day (12/25)  
New Year's Day (1/1)  
Spring Break (4/2)  
Memorial Day (5/31)

180 Student Days  
1083:30 Instructional Hours  
+ 19 Conference Hours  
1102:30 Total Hours  
- 1080 Required Hours  
22:30 Hours Built In

Note: In-service Days may be classified as Career Development, Collaboration and/or Professional Development depending on the content of the activities being performed.

Note: Any full days of school missed will be made up at the discretion of the superintendent.

This calendar was adopted by the Board of Education on 06/30/2020 and is part of each employee's contract for the 2020-2021 school

August					Student Days/Hours	
M	T	W	Th	F		
3	4	5	6	7		
10	11	12	13	14		
17	18	19	20	21		
24	25	26	27	28	5	28:30
31				6		33:30
September						
	1	2	3	4	10	57:00
7	8	9	10	11	14	81:00
14	15	16	17	18	19	111:30
21	22	23	24	25	24	142:00
28	29	30			27	161:30
October						
			1	2	29	172:30
5	6	7	8	9	33	198:30
12	13	14	15	16	38	227:00
19	20	21	22	23	43	257:30
26	27	28	29	30	48	281:30
November						
2	3	4	5	6	53	312:00
9	10	11	12	13	58	342:30
16	17	18	19	20	63	373:00
23	24	25	26	27	65	393:00
30					66	399:30
December						
	1	2	3	4	69	412:00
7	8	9	10	11	74	442:30
14	15	16	17	18	79	473:00
21	22	23	24	25	81	486:00
28	29	30	31			
January						
4	5	6	7	8	86	516:30
11	12	13	14	15	91	547:00
18	19	20	21	22	96	578:00
25	26	27	28	29	101	608:30
February						
1	2	3	4	5	106	639:00
8	9	10	11	12	111	669:30
15	16	17	18	19	116	700:00
22	23	24	25	26	121	730:30
March						
1	2	3	4	5	126	764:30
8	9	10	11	12	130	778:30
15	16	17	18	19	135	809:00
22	23	24	25	26	140	839:30
29	30	31			143	859:00
April						
			1	2	144	865:30
5	6	7	8	9	148	889:30
12	13	14	15	16	153	920:00
19	20	21	22	23	158	950:30
26	27	28	29	30	163	981:00
May						
3	4	5	6	7	168	1011:30
10	11	12	13	14	173	1042:00
17	18	19	20	21	178	1072:30
24	25	26	27	28	180	1083:30
31						
June					1103:00	
	1	2	3	4		
7	8	9	10	11		
14	15	16	17	18		
21	22	23	24	25		
28	29	30				

Date	Events
Aug 17	New Teacher Day
Aug 18-21	Non-Student Days - Prof Dev
Aug 24	First Day of School (Grades 3-12) 2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev K-2nd Gr - No School-Conferences
Aug 25-26	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Aug 25	All Activity Parent Meeting 7:00 p.m.
Aug 27-28	Full Days of School
Sept 4	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Sept 7	Labor Day (No School)
Sept 11	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Sept 18	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Sept 25	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
TBD	Homecoming
Oct 2	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Oct 8	2-Hour Early Dismissal K-12 Parent Teacher Conf 2:15-7:45
Oct 9	Non-Student Day - Conferences K-12 Parent Teacher Conf 8:00-12:00
Oct 16	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Oct 23	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Oct 23	End of 1st Term K-12 (257:30)
Oct 30	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Nov 6	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Nov 13	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Nov 20	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Nov 25-27	Thanksgiving Break (No School)
Dec 4	No School
Dec 11	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Dec 18	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Dec 23-31	Winter Break (No School)
Jan 1	Winter Break (No School)
Jan 4	Classes Resume
Jan 8	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Jan 15	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Jan 15	End of 2nd Term K-12 (289:30)
Jan 22	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Jan 29	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Feb 5	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Feb 12	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Feb 19	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Feb 26	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Mar 5	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Mar 11	2-Hour Early Dismissal K-12 Parent Teacher Conf 2:15-7:45
Mar 12	Non-Student Day - Conferences K-12 Parent Teacher Conf 8:00-12:00
Mar 19	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Mar 19	End of 3rd Term K-12 (262:00)
Mar 26	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Apr 2	Spring Break (No School)
Apr 5	Spring Break (No School)
Apr 9	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Apr 16	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Apr 23	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
Apr 30	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
May 7	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
May 14	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
May 18	Seniors Last Day of School 10:55:00 hours
May 21	2 Hour Early Dismissal-Prof Dev
May 23	Graduation Jr/Sr High School Gym
May 25	End of 4th Term K-12 (274:30)
May 25	Last Day of School-2 Hour Early Dismissal
May 26	Prof Dev
May 31	Memorial Day (No School)



## Independence Community School District

Superintendent Russell Reiter

Director of School Improvement Erin Burmeister

### East Elementary and West Elementary

Principal Kay Reidy

1103 1st Street West

Independence, Iowa 50644

Phone (319) 334-7425

Principal Cheryl Reed

13011st St West

Independence, Iowa 50644

Phone (319) 334-7430

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August 2020

Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome to East Elementary and West Elementary and the 2020-2021 school year! We are sincerely grateful that you have chosen the Independence Community School District for this academic year. We take great pride in your support as well as the work of our staff to provide the best educational environment possible.

Our district's mission statement provides the focus for everything and everyone in our building. More specifically, our goal is: "Educating people to be life-long learners and respectful, responsible citizens." To achieve this goal, we ALL must work diligently, on a daily basis, to satisfy our mission. Nothing more is needed, but nothing less is acceptable.

This handbook has been prepared to acquaint students and parents with the organizational policies and procedures used at East Elementary and West Elementary. We ask that you take some time to familiarize yourself with the information. For only by knowing the expectations and meeting them, can we meet our ultimate objective of being the best school district in the state of Iowa!

Students-We thank you, in advance, for the dedication, respect, and quality work ethic you have displayed in previous years. Parents-We thank you for your trust, commitment, pride and support over this same time. As an administrative team, we certainly hope all of these positive characteristics and actions will continue for the 2020-2021 school year. For only by working collaboratively and cooperatively, can we make the 2020-2021 year the best ever for the Independence Community School District.

Go Mustangs!

Sincerely,

Kay Reidy  
East Elementary Interim Principal

Cheri Reed  
West Elementary Principal



## **Independence Community School District Vision, Mission, Values and Beliefs**

### **Vision**

#### What do we want to create?

Creating a climate in which individuals of the Independence Community School District will strive to become effective communicators, problem solvers, responsible citizens, and productive people.

### **Mission**

#### Why do we exist?

Educating people to be life-long learners and respectful, responsible citizens.

### **Values**

#### What are the personal attributes we promote?

- Compassion
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Perseverance
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Pursuit of Knowledge

### **Beliefs**

#### What are our basic operating principles?

- All people want to succeed and are capable of learning.
- By providing a safe environment, we promote success.
- Diversity is an asset that must be dignified and respected.
- High expectations for all according to their potential.
- Our resources should promote student achievement.
- Problems are opportunities for improvement.

## **Independence Learner Performance Goals**

### **Responsible Citizen**

#### Respect for self and others

- Treats others with respect.
- Expresses a positive attitude towards self.
- Does not use violence, coercion, or intimidation.

#### Group Interaction

- Demonstrates the ability to work as a team player.
- Demonstrates positive leadership skills, contributes to the overall effort of the group.
- Uses conflict resolution skills.

### Responsible Action

- Practices self-restraint.
- Considers choices and is accountable for consequences of decisions.
- Maintains a healthy self-concept.
- Obeys the law.

### Active Community Involvement

- Protects the environment.
- Participates in civic functions.
- Appreciates the value of volunteering.

### Appreciates Diversity

- Is aware of and examines stereotypes.
- Is aware of, understands, and works well with all individuals in any situation.
- Appreciates cultural differences.

## **Problem Solver**

### Gathering, Examining and Evaluating Data

- Collects, analyzes, organizes, and presents information from a variety of resources in an ethical manner.
- Demonstrates an understanding of and applies basic principles of hypothesis testing and scientific inquiry.
- Chooses an appropriate problem-solving strategy.
- Differentiates among fact, fiction, and opinion.

### Applying Data

- Develops and presents an original product or performance for a specific audience.
- Generalizes ideas and communicates them effectively.

### Technology

- Critically analyzes and interprets media.
- Uses information media and technology to access, evaluate, use, and share information.
- Understands and applies a systematic approach to information problem solving.
- Understands basic computer hardware, software, and operating systems.

## **Productive Person**

### Work Ethic

- Sets and manages goals.
- Displays reliability and demonstrates responsibility.
- Perseveres.



### Pride in Workmanship

- Uses tools and resources specific to a job including an understanding of the basic operations and concepts of technological systems.
- Completes quality work.
- Evaluates work according to high standards and demonstrates a willingness to improve.
- Acts in an appropriate and ethical manner.

### Preparation for the Workplace

- Sets career goals and develop strategies to achieve them.
- Understands one's role in the workplace including that of a team member.
- Leads or follows in appropriate situations.

### Healthy Lifestyle

- Takes responsibility for career and life choices.
- Avoids substance abuse.
- Maintains personal hygiene.

### Managing Daily Life

- Functions as an effective member of a family.
- Is aware of and applies strengths for managing money effectively.
- Displays effective interpersonal communication skills.

### Decision Making

- Makes ethical decisions.
- Understands and applies basic problem-solving strategies.
- Draws conclusions based on data collected, organized, and analyzed.

## **Effective Communicator**

### Reading

- Applies the necessary reading skills to a variety of material.
- Understands material read.
- Reads with confidence.
- Reads for personal satisfaction and understands the value of reading.

### Technology

- Accesses, evaluates, and uses information media and technology.
- Uses appropriate technologies.

### Vision Literacy

- Uses various visual media to accomplish tasks.
- Appreciates creative self-expression.

### Listening

- Listens thoughtfully to the ideas of others and shows the ability to ask appropriately for clarification and respond to opinions.

- Gains information from listening.
- Follows oral directions.

### Speaking

- Expresses ideas clearly and confidently.

### Writing

- Applies the general skills and strategies of writing, including grammar, and mechanics.
- Uses different types of writing.

## **District Policies (Board policies are referenced for convenience)**

### **Bullying and Harassment**

### **Board Policy 106.R1**

The Independence Community School District is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and/or harassment of or by students, staff, and volunteers is against federal, state, and local policy and is not tolerated by the board. Bullying and/or harassing behavior can seriously disrupt the ability of school employees to maintain a safe and civil environment, and the ability of students to learn and succeed. Therefore, it is the policy of the state and the school district that school employees, volunteers, and students shall not engage in bullying or harassing behavior in school, on school property, or at any school function or school-sponsored activity.

#### **Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy, the defined words shall have the following meaning:

- “Electronic” means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. “Electronic” includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, and electronic text messaging.
- “Harassment” and “bullying” shall mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student, staff or volunteer based on the individual’s actual or perceived age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status, and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:
  1. Places the student, staff or volunteer in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or property.
  2. Has a substantial detrimental effect on the student’s, staff’s or volunteer’s physical or mental health.
  3. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s academic performance.
  4. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a staff member or volunteer’s work performance.

5. Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.
- "Trait or characteristic of the student, staff or volunteer" includes but is not limited to age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.
  - "Volunteer" means an individual who has regular, significant contact with students.

**Level 1 Investigator:** Erin Burmeister, Director of School Improvement

**Contact Address:** 1207 1st Street West, Independence, IA 50644

**Contact Telephone Number:** (319) 334-7400

**Contact Email Address:** [eburmeister@independence.k12.ia.us](mailto:eburmeister@independence.k12.ia.us)

**Alternate Investigator:** Dewey Hupke, Assistant Principal

**Contact Address:** 700 20th Ave. SW, Independence, IA 50644

**Contact Telephone Number:** (319) 334-7405

**Contact Email Address:** [dhupke@independence.k12.ia.us](mailto:dhupke@independence.k12.ia.us)

## **Description of a Homeless Child/Youth**

## **Board Policy 501.17**

The Independence Community School District believes all students should have access to a free, appropriate public education. The district will ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as other children and youth. The term "homeless children and youth" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth who are:
  - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as "doubled up");
  - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - Living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
  - Abandoned in hospitals.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

To help ensure that homeless children and youth have a full opportunity to enroll, attend, and succeed at school, the board shall:

- Designate the Director of School Improvement as the local homeless children and youth liaison;
- Provide training opportunities for staff so staff may help identify and meet the needs of homeless children and youth;

- Remove barriers, including those associated with fees, fines, and absences, to the identification, enrollment, retention, attendance and/or success in school for homeless children and youth;
- Ensure collaboration and coordination with other service providers;
- Ensure transportation is provided in accordance with legal requirements;
- Provide school stability in school assignment according to the child's best interests;
- Ensure the privacy of student records, as provided by applicable law, including information about a homeless child or youth's living situation;
- Engage in the dispute resolution process for decisions relating to the educational placement of homeless children and youth as provided by applicable law; and
- Prohibit the segregation of a homeless child or youth from other students enrolled in the district.

### **Dissemination of Information: Use Of Directory Information**

**Board Policy 506.2R1**

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Independence Community School District, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Independence Community School District may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Independence Community School District to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications.

### **Equal Educational Opportunity**

**Board Policy 401.2**

It is the policy of the Independence Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact:

**Equity Coordinator:** Erin Burmeister, Director of School Improvement

**Contact Address:** 1207 1st Street West, Independence, IA 50644

**Contact Telephone Number:** (319) 334-7400

**Contact Email Address:** eburmeister@independence.k12.ia.us

The board requires all persons, agencies, vendors, contractors, and other persons and organizations doing business with or performing services for the school district to subscribe to all applicable federal and state laws, executive orders, rules and regulations pertaining to contract compliance and equal opportunity.

The Independence Community School District will provide equal opportunity to employees and applicants for employment in accordance with applicable equal employment opportunity and affirmative action laws, directives, and regulations of federal, state and local governing bodies. Opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment includes hiring, placement,

promotion, transfer or demotion, recruitment, advertising or solicitation for employment, treatment during employment, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and layoff or termination. The school district will take affirmative action in major job categories where women, men, minorities, and persons with disabilities are underrepresented. Employees will support and comply with the district's established equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policies. Employees will be given notice of this policy annually.

The board will appoint an affirmative action coordinator. The affirmative action coordinator will have the responsibility for drafting the affirmative action plan. The board will review the affirmative action plan annually.

Individuals who file an application with the school district will be given consideration for employment if they meet or exceed the qualifications set by the board, administration, and the Iowa Department of Education for the position for which they apply. In employing individuals, the board will consider the qualifications, credentials, and records of the applicants without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. In keeping with the law, however, the board will consider the veteran status of the applicants.

Advertisements and notices for vacancies within the district will contain the following statement: "The Independence Community School District is an equal employment opportunity/affirmative action (EEO/AA) employer." The statement will also appear on application forms.

Inquiries by employees or applicants for employment regarding compliance with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action laws and policies, including but not limited to complaints of discrimination, will be directed to the affirmative action coordinator by writing to the Affirmative Action Coordinator, Erin Burmeister, Independence Community School District, 1207 – 1<sup>st</sup> Street West, Independence, Iowa 50644; or by (319) 334-7400.

Inquiries by employees or applicants for employment regarding compliance with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action laws and policies, including but not limited to complaints of discrimination, may also be directed in writing to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commissions, Milwaukee Area Office, Reuss Federal Plaza, 310 West Wisconsin Ave., Suite 800, Milwaukee, WI., 53203-2292, (800) 669-4000 or TTY (800) 669-6820. <http://www.eeoc.gov/field/Milwaukee/index.cfm> or the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E. 14th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-1004, Phone: 515-281-4121, Toll Free: 1-800-457-4416, <http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/index.html>. This inquiry or complaint to the federal office may be done instead of, or in addition to, an inquiry or complaint at the local level.

Further information and copies of the procedures for filing a complaint are available in the school district's administrative office and the administrative office in each attendance center.

## **Freedom of Expression**

## **Board Policy 502.5**

Student expression, other than student expression in student-produced official school publications, made on the school district premises or under the jurisdiction of the school district or as part of a school-sponsored activity, which may be attributed to the school district; and

therefore, this student expression must be responsible. Student expression must be appropriate to assure that the students learn and meet the goals of the school activity and that the potential audience is not exposed to material that may be harmful or inappropriate for their level of maturity.

Students will be allowed to express their viewpoints and opinions as long as the expression is responsible. The expression shall not, in the judgment of the administration, encourage the breaking of laws, defame of persons, be obscene or indecent, or cause a material and substantial disruption of the educational program. The administration, when making this judgment, shall consider whether the activity in which the expression was made is school-sponsored and whether review or prohibition of the student's speech furthers an educational purpose. Further, the expression must be done in a reasonable time, place, and manner that is not disruptive to the orderly and efficient operation of the school district.

Students who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary measures. Employees shall be responsible for ensuring students' expression is in keeping with this policy. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy.

#### **Interviews of Students by Outside Agencies**

#### **Board Policy 502.11**

Generally, persons other than parents and school district officials and employees may not interview students during the school day.

Requests from law enforcement officers and from persons other than parents, school district officials, and employees to interview students shall be made through the principal's office. Upon receiving a request, it shall be the responsibility of the principal to determine whether the request will be granted. Generally, prior to granting a request, the principal shall attempt to contact the parents to inform them of the request and to ask them to be present.

If a child abuse investigator wishes to interview a student, the principal will defer to the investigator's judgment as to whether the student should be interviewed independently from the student's parents, whether the school is the most appropriate setting for the interview, and who will be present during the interview.

Students will not be taken from school without the consent of the principal and without proper warrant.

#### **Open Enrollment/ Nonresident Students**

#### **Board Policy 501.2**

Students who are eligible to attend an Iowa public school, but who are not legal residents of the school district may be admitted into the school district at the discretion of the superintendent upon application and payment of tuition. The tuition rate shall be the current per-pupil cost of the school district as computed by the board secretary and as authorized by the Iowa Department of Education. Resident students whose families move from the school district after the start of a semester and who wish to complete the semester in the school district may be permitted to attend without the payment of tuition at the discretion of the superintendent and approval of the board. Students who plan to open enroll to the nonresident district may complete the school year

without approval of the superintendent or board. These students, other than students in grades eleven and twelve, must have the recommendation of the principal, as well as an adult who resides in the school district, identified for purposes of administration. Students in grades eleven or twelve who are no longer residents of the school district, but were residents in the preceding school year, may continue to attend school until they graduate without the payment of tuition. These students must have an adult, who resides in the school district, identified for purposes of administration.

Nonresident students who are eligible to attend an Iowa public school and who have evidence they will become legal residents of the school district prior to the third Friday in September may be allowed to attend without the payment of tuition.

### **Reasonable Force (Corporal Punishment)**

### **Board Policy 503.5**

Reasonable physical force may be used on a student with or without advance notice when the use of such force is deemed essential by a reasonable person for self-defense, the preservation of order, or to quell a disturbance, to end an action that is threatening to others, and to protect school property, or for the protection of others located on school property.

### **Search and Seizure**

### **Board Policy 502.10**

School district property is held in public trust by the board. School district authorities may, without a search warrant, search students or protected student areas based on a reasonable and articulable suspicion that a school district policy, rule, regulation or law has been violated. The search shall be in a manner reasonable in scope to maintain order and discipline in the schools, promote the educational environment, and protect the safety and welfare of students, employees and visitors to the school district facilities. The furnishing of a locker, desk or other facility or space owned by the school and provided as a courtesy to a student, even if the student provides the lock for it, shall not create a protected student area and shall not give rise to an expectation of privacy with respect to the locker, desk, or other facility.

School authorities may seize any illegal, unauthorized or contraband materials discovered in the search. Items of contraband may include, but are not limited to, nonprescription controlled substances, marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, barbiturates, apparatus used for controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, apparatus used for vaping, weapons, explosives, poisons and stolen property. Such items are not to be possessed by a student while they are on school district property or on property within the jurisdiction of the school district; while on school owned and/or operated school or chartered buses; while attending or engaged in school activities; and while away from school grounds if misconduct will directly affect the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school district. Possession of such items will be grounds for disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion and may be reported to local law enforcement officials. The board believes that illegal, unauthorized or contraband materials may cause a material and substantial disruption to the school environment or presents a threat to the health and safety of students, employees, or visitors on the school district premises or property within the jurisdiction of the school district.



**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Acts of 1973****Board Policy 103.E3**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. In order to fulfill obligations under Section 504, the Independence Community School District has the responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a disability should knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices of the school system.

The Independence Community School District has the responsibilities under Section 504, which includes the obligation to identify, evaluate, and, if the student is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to appropriate educational services. If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school district, he/she has a right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer.

**Statement of Non-Discrimination****Board Policy 103.E1**

It is the policy of the Independence Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact:

**Equity Coordinator:** Erin Burmeister, Director of School Improvement

**Contact Address:** 1207 1<sup>st</sup> Street West, Independence, Iowa 50644

**Contact Telephone Number:** (319) 334-7400

**Contact Email Address:** [eburmeister@independence.k12.ia.us](mailto:eburmeister@independence.k12.ia.us)

**Student Records -- Education Records Access****Board Policy 506.1**

All student records containing personally identifiable information are located in the counseling office and shall be kept confidential as directed by school board policy. Only the local school district personnel and the area education agency personnel have access to students' records and have the right to view the records.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) also specifies rights related to educational records. This Act gives the parent or guardian the right to: 1) inspect and review his/her child's educational records; 2) make copies of these records; 3) receive a list of the individuals having access to those records; 4) ask for an explanation of any item in the records; 5) ask for an amendment to any report on the grounds that it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's rights; and, 6) a hearing on the issue if the school refuses to make the amendment.

If there are questions regarding this policy, please contact the superintendent of schools, or Section 504 Coordinator for the Independence Community School District, Erin Burmeister, at 319-334-7400.

If the board policy that you need is not listed above, please log on to our website [www.independence.k12.ia.us](http://www.independence.k12.ia.us) or contact the district administrative office.

## Section 1: East/West Procedures

### Absences

Regular attendance and being on time are both things that help your child have a good attitude toward school. Absences and tardiness are upsetting for our youngsters. Both disrupt their schedules, require readjustment to the class routine, and slow down learning.

Students are encouraged to remain in school for the entire school day. Important announcements and instructions are given throughout the day.

Students should be in class each day unless they're sick. It's very important that you notify us as soon as you know your youngster will be absent. If we don't hear from you by 9:00 A.M, you will receive an automated phone call reporting your child's absence and asking you to call in. Your call to us will help protect your youngster – ensuring that both school and home knows where your child is located and is safe.

Any absence not excused by a physician, school nurse, or building principal shall be considered an unexcused absence or truancy. **Students who visit a doctor/dentist are to bring back documentation of the visit to avoid an unexcused absence.** If unexcused absences become an ongoing concern for a student, the following actions will take place:

10 unexcused absences = letter to parent

15 unexcused absences = problem solving meeting held with parent, principal and truancy officer

18 unexcused absences = referral to assistant county attorney for prosecution

### Acceptable Use Policy Information Technology Resources

### Board Policy 605.6R1

This acceptable use policy for technology is intended to provide guidelines and examples of prohibited uses, but does not attempt to state all required or prohibited actions by users. The school's information technology resources, including email, Internet access, applications, and other technological media, are provided for educational purposes.

#### Students must:

- Respect and protect the privacy of others.
  - Use only assigned accounts.
  - Not view, use, or copy passwords, data, or networks to which they are not authorized.
  - Not distribute private information about others or themselves.
- Respect and protect the integrity, availability, and security of all electronic resources.
  - Observe all network security practices, as posted.

- Report security risks or violations to a teacher or network administrator.
- Not destroy or damage data, networks, or other resources that do not belong to them, without clear permission of the owner.
- Conserve, protect, and share these resources with other students and Internet users.
- Respect and protect the intellectual property of others.
  - Not infringe upon copyrights. (No making illegal copies of music, games, or movies!)
  - Not plagiarize.
- Respect and practice the principles of community.
  - Communicate only in ways that are kind and respectful.
  - Report threatening or discomfoting materials to a teacher.
  - Not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that violates the school's code of conduct (such as messages that are pornographic, threatening, rude, discriminatory, or meant to harass).
  - Not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that is illegal (such as obscenity, stolen materials, or illegal copies of copyrighted works).
  - Not use the resources to further other acts that are criminal or violate the school's code of conduct.
  - Not send spam, chain letters, or other mass unsolicited mailings.
  - Not buy, sell, advertise, or otherwise conduct business, unless approved as a school project.

**Students may, if in accordance with the policy above:**

1. Design and post web pages and other material from school resources.
2. Use direct communications such as email, online chat, or instant messaging with a teacher's permission.
3. Use the available resources for any educational purpose.

**Appropriate Use of Online Learning Platforms**

**Board Policy 604.12**

It is important to embrace technology that can foster a creative, interactive learning environment for students, and facilitate employee professional development and collaboration. The use of online platforms to host remote interaction between students and employees and to facilitate learning is encouraged in the district.

While student and employee instruction and communication using virtual and online platforms provides a wide array of learning opportunities, it is imperative that employees and students recognize that the use of such platforms is a privilege. Training related to the use of online learning platforms will be provided to employees and students.

The district shall carefully safeguard the right of students and employees to learn and teach in a respectful environment regardless of the method. All instruction and communication through online learning platforms should be appropriate to the age and ability of the participants. Students and employees should be aware that online platforms may be monitored by the district.

Verbal and written communication occurring on these platforms may be recorded and stored by the district in accordance with applicable laws.

Any verbal or written communication on these platforms deemed to be inappropriate will subject the student and/or employee to the same disciplinary measures that would exist if the interaction took place through traditional in-person learning. Students and employees who have concerns about the proper use of these platforms are encouraged to speak with their teachers or building principal. The superintendent will make administrative regulations necessary to enforce this policy.

### **Counseling and Guidance**

The counselor is a person students can go to when needing help understanding a circumstance or situation that creates a personal problem for them. Students may see the counselor before and after school or during class time as arranged with the counselor and/or teacher.

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is defined as the use of any electronic communication device to convey a message in any form (text, image, phone, audio, game, or video) that defames, intimidates, harasses, or is otherwise intended to harm, insult, or humiliate another in a deliberate, repeated, or hostile and unwanted manner under a person's true, false, or misrepresented identity. In addition, any communication of this form that disrupts or prevents a safe and positive educational or working environment may also be considered cyberbullying. Use of personal communication devices or district property to harass, intimidate or bully another is prohibited.

Examples of cyberbullying include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Sending or posting mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
- Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
- Targeting the use of computer viruses to intentionally degrade, disrupt, or damage another person's files or equipment.

### **Consequences for Violation**

The use of Independence's Acceptable Use Policy for Technology, including laptops, Internet access, is a privilege, not a right. Compliance is mandatory. Users who violate this policy may have their computer/technology privileges limited, suspended, or revoked. Such violations may also result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension or revocation of technology, based upon the circumstances as well as possible referral to law enforcement.

### **Due Process**

Each student, before any disciplinary action is taken against said student, has a right to due process. A student, who is accused of a breach of discipline and is susceptible to consequence, has certain rights including notice of the inappropriate action, an opportunity to present a defense (either orally or in writing) and be notified of the consequences. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the principal, he/she may appeal to the superintendent. The student's parents/guardians may attend any of these proceedings.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Whenever a class leaves a room for any emergency, students are to stay with teachers until they hear the signal that means *time to return*. Please help your children learn how important it is to follow the teacher's instructions quickly and quietly in an emergency drill.

## **Fire Drills**

A loud, continuous sound coming through the alarm/buzzer system signals a Fire Drill. We are required by state law to have four drills per year - two each semester to teach boys and girls the safest, quickest route from school buildings. Whenever a class leaves a room for any emergency, students are to stay with their teachers until they hear the signal that means *re-enter*.

## **Lockdown/Lockout Drill**

An announcement is made over the PA system when the building is going into lockdown/lockout. In a lockdown, the students are secured in their classroom, out of sight, and remain there until a message is given that lets teachers know that there is an *all clear*. In a lockout, the building perimeter is secured and school business continues as usual.

## **Severe Weather Warnings**

A loud sound coming from a foghorn signals a Tornado Drill. We are required by state law to have four drills - two each semester to teach boys and girls the safest, quickest route to safety in the assigned area within the building. It is important to remain calm, walk quickly and quietly, sit and cover their heads, and absolutely no talking or sounds.

## **Health Services**

The nurse is a resource person that we can call on to help treat injuries and monitor student health concerns. She can also help teach nutrition, cleanliness, dental care, basic safety, and health rules.

Please do not send a sick child to school. We think good attendance is vital, but not when it may jeopardize the health of others. If your child becomes ill or gets seriously hurt at school, we will notify you as soon as possible. If your child has a fever of 100.0 degrees or higher, keep him/her home. Children need to be fever free for 24 hours without the use of medicines such as Tylenol or ibuprofen before returning to school. If your child has been vomiting or having diarrhea, keep them home for 24 hours after the last vomiting or diarrhea episode. If your child has been vomiting, do not send them back until they have eaten a regular meal without vomiting.

## **Immunizations**

Per Iowa State Law, an immunization form including vaccines, dates, and source of vaccines is required on each student in order for them to attend school. Requirements for vaccines can be found online at <http://idph.iowa.gov/immmtb/immunization/laws>. If you have further questions, please contact your healthcare provider or school nurse.

## Medications

When possible, medication should be scheduled so that it may be taken at home and not during school hours. If your child needs to take medicine at school, bring it to the nurse's or secretary's office and complete a Consent for Medication form. The school nurse or office staff may dispense medication with written permission from the student's doctor and parents. BY LAW, WE CANNOT DISPENSE MEDICATION UNLESS IT'S IN THE ORIGINAL LABELED CONTAINER. This applies to over-the-counter medications such as aspirin, etc. as well as prescription drugs. Information on the form includes the child's name, the dose, time of day to be taken, and expected duration of treatment.

Medication shall be administered when the student's parent or guardian (hereafter "parent") provides a signed and dated written statement requesting medication administration and the medication is in the original, labeled container, either as dispensed or in the manufacturer's container.

When administration of the medication requires ongoing professional health judgment, an individual health plan shall be developed by an authorized practitioner with the student and the student's parent. Students who have demonstrated competence in administering their own medications may self-administer their own inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors. A written statement by the student's parent shall be on file requesting co-administration of medication, when this competence has been demonstrated. By law, students with asthma or other airway diseases or students with a risk of anaphylaxis who use epinephrine auto-injectors may self-administer their medication upon the written approval of the student's parents and prescribing licensed health care professional regardless of competency. For further information regarding the above, please see board policy 507.2.

Persons administering medication shall include authorized practitioners including licensed registered nurses and physicians, and persons to whom authorized practitioners have delegated the administration of medication (who have successfully completed a medication administration course). A medication administration course and periodic update shall be conducted by a registered nurse or licensed pharmacist and a record of course completion shall be maintained by the school. A written medication administration record shall be on file including:

- Date
- Student's name
- Prescriber or person authorizing administration
- Medication
- Medication dosage
- Administration time
- Administration method
- Signature and title of the person administering medication
- Any unusual circumstances, actions or omissions.

Medication shall be stored in a secured area unless an alternate provision is documented. Emergency protocols for medication-related reactions shall be posted. Medication information shall be confidential information as provided by law.

## **School Cancellation**

The Independence Community School District utilizes School Messenger to communicate with stakeholders through phone messages, texts and/or e-mail regarding weather announcements, schedule changes, event cancellations or postponements as well as other emergency and non-emergency situations. This system has proven to be very effective in meeting the goal of relaying important information in an accurate and timely manner. At registration, parents/guardians will have the opportunity to provide the district with appropriate contact information for School Messenger.

In addition to School Messenger, the Independence Community School District notifies the following radio and television stations in the event that school is closed, starting late or dismissing early due to inclement weather. These entities may also be contacted for other emergency situations, if the situation warrants.

### **Television Stations**

KCRG- TV	Channel 9
KGAN-TV	Channel 2
KWWL-TV	Channel 7

### **Radio Stations**

Q92.3	92.3 FM
KOEL	950 AM
KOKZ/KXEL	1540 AM/105.7 FM
KQMG	1200 AM/95.3 FM
KHKE	89.5 FM
KUNI	90.9 FM
WHO	1040 AM
WMT	600 AM/96.5 FM

Please plan with your children what they are to do in the event school is dismissed early and you are not home. On late start days, students should not arrive until 20 minutes before the announced school start time.

## **Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug Policy**

The Independence Community School District prohibits a student from being under the influence, possession, consuming, distributing, or manufacturing alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, controlled substances, or imitation substances (i.e. huffing) on school district property, vehicles, or on property within the jurisdiction of the school district or associated with a school event home or away.



Violation of this policy will result in a discipline/consequence and intervention. The discipline/consequence may include up to 10 days out of school suspension and/or expulsion. The extracurricular activity policy/rule will be enforced when and where applicable.

Distributing alcohol and drugs on school district property, vehicles, or on property within jurisdiction of the school district or associated with a school event home or away will result in a recommendation for expulsion. In all cases, legal authorities will be contacted. The principal and designee(s) will meet with the parent or guardian. Evidence of follow through for professional counseling assistance may be necessary for readmission to school.

If the student refers him/ herself to the Response to Intervention (R.T.I) and if satisfactory progress is made in following the Intervention Team's recommendations, the suspension period(s) may be re-evaluated.

### **Transportation**

As a School District, we need to make sure everyone is properly restrained in vehicles at all times. This applies to teachers and coaches who may be transporting students in school vehicles other than buses. If a student refuses to buckle up, the staff member should refer that student to the principal.

In accordance with Iowa Code 321.446 Child restraint devices. A child at least six years of age but under eighteen years of age who is being transported in a motor vehicle subject to registration, except a school bus, shall be secured during transit by a child restraint system that is used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or by a safety belt or safety harness of a type approved under section Iowa Code 321.445. Please encourage and support the school district's transportation staff by sharing with your child that school staff will be securing them in seats on school provided transportation.

### **Weapons**

The Independence Community School District believes weapons, other dangerous objects or look-alikes in school facilities disrupt the school environment and present a threat to the health and safety of students, employees, and visitors. Weapons, other dangerous objects, and look-alikes shall be taken from students and others who bring them onto school property or onto property within the jurisdiction of the school. Confiscation of weapons or dangerous objects shall be reported to parents and to law enforcement officials, and students will be subject to disciplinary action.

Students bringing firearms to school or knowingly possessing firearms at school may be expelled for not less than one year and will be referred to law enforcement officials. The superintendent shall have the authority to recommend this expulsion requirement be modified for students on a case-by-case basis. The principal may allow authorized persons to display weapons or other dangerous objects or look-alikes for educational purposes and such display shall also be exempt from this policy.

## **Section 2: East/West Elementary Expectations**

### **Admission of Students**

New families coming to Independence may enroll their children by calling East Elementary 332-0534 or West Elementary 332-0484.

Parents of students who are transferring from other districts should sign a release form in the office that will release records from the previous school attended.

Kindergarten students must be five years of age on or before September 15. Children entering first grade must be six years of age on or before September 15.

In the spring, parents are asked to pre-register their Kindergarten students for the next fall so that an appropriate number of staff will be in place.

Later in the spring, a Kindergarten Roundup Day is held during which students spend a half-day in kindergarten classrooms so that teachers can assess needs and school readiness skills.

### **Arrival – East/West**

Teachers come to school early to make preparations for the school day. Outside areas of school ARE NOT SUPERVISED UNTIL 7:45 A.M. (EAST) and 7:50 A.M. (WEST) or after dismissal time in the afternoon.

For these reasons, we ask that children NOT come to school before 7:45 A.M. at East/West unless eating breakfast at school. Abuse of this policy will lead to a parent contact. If the child is eating breakfast at school, the child can be dropped off at designated entrances at East (breakfast starts at 7:30 A.M.) or West (breakfast starts at 7:45 A.M.).

#### **School Times**

East (K,1,2)	8:15 A.M.-3:10 P.M.
West (3,4,5,6)	8:20 A.M.-3:15 P.M.

#### **Teachers Hours:**

East	7:45 A.M.-3:45 P.M.
West	7:50 A.M.-3:50 P.M.

### **Birthday Parties**

Students are welcome to bring classroom treats to celebrate their birthday with teacher approval. Treats must be items allowed by the Independence Community School District's Nutrition Guideline and Policy. Out of school party invitations are not to be passed out at school to avoid hurt feelings and/or classroom distraction.

Flowers, balloons, etc. should NOT be sent to the school for your child for special occasions. These cause a distraction in classrooms and pose a hazard on buses. Please reserve these gifts for home only.

### **Bus**

Children will have a safe trip if drivers can concentrate on driving and not discipline. To make the bus ride safer, please help your youngster learn these guidelines-

- Obey the driver's instructions.
- Remain seated until your stop.
- Keep the aisles clear.
- Keep everything inside the bus.
- Talk quietly. Don't yell.
- Keep your hands to yourself.
- Be courteous.
- Don't throw things.
- No weapons.
- No smoking/vaping.
- No alcohol or drugs.

Most students never misbehave on the bus. Those who won't follow the guidelines risk losing their bus riding privileges. If a busload of youngsters repeatedly misbehaves, the district may suspend the route for a period of time.

### **Bus Changes**

If for any reason, a student needs to ride a different bus at any time, a note from home needs to be sent to the teacher indicating the date and the reason. Students will then take the note to the bus driver who will allow them onto the new bus for that day. A phone call from parents will serve the same purpose.

### **Bus Discipline Policy**

In accordance with School Board Policy 711.2, the following matrix will serve as a guide for handling discipline problems on the bus.

<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Level 4</i>	<i>Level 5</i>
Standing/moving	3 <sup>rd</sup> level 1 misbehavior	3 <sup>rd</sup> level 2 misbehavior	3 <sup>rd</sup> level 3 misbehaviors	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level 4 misbehaviors
Minor teasing, name calling or putdowns	Throwing objects in the bus	Fighting	Harassment (racial or sexual)	Possession/drinking alcohol
Loud yelling/noises	Spitting	Vandalism	Possession or use of tobacco products	Possession/using chemical substances
Inappropriate clothing	Unacceptable language (sucks, crap)	Theft	Destruction of bus property	Weapon possession and/or use
Minor distractions	Unacceptable gestures	Throwing objects out the bus	Throwing items at driver	Violation of School Board Policy
Not respecting the property of others	Uncooperative behavior	Threatening others (verbal, written)	Opening back door while moving	Starting fires
Littering	Dishonesty	"Mooning" out the window/door	Assault (fighting causing injury)	7 bus referrals
	Danger to self (unsafe conduct)	Tampering with emergency door	5 bus referrals	
	Refusal to follow directions	Verbal abuse/gestures toward the bus driver	Threats against the driver	
	Pushing/shoving (Aggressive)	Getting under the bus 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense		
	Getting under the bus (1 <sup>st</sup> offense)			
	Theft (minor)			
<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Intervention</i>
Stop, Look, Read, Review, Promise	Parent phone call by the principal	Parent conference with principal	Parent conference with principal	Parent conference with principal
Verbal Warning	Student conference with the principal	1-5 day suspension of bus privileges	10-15 day suspension of bus privileges	Bus privileges revoked
		Saturday In-School Suspension (3 hrs.)	Police notification	Police notified
		Restitution	Saturday In-School Suspension (3 hrs.)	Out of school suspension/expulsion
		Restriction of activities	Out of School Suspension	Restriction of activities
			Restitution	Four Oaks
				Intensive monitoring with school liaison officer

## Cafeteria/Lunch/Breakfast

## Board Policy 710.4

Children can bring a lunch or buy it at school. A school lunch is a well-balanced meal that provides 1/3 or more of the nutrients boys and girls need each day. It includes at least 2 oz. of protein, ½ cup fruit and ½ cup vegetable, bread, and 8 oz. of low fat milk.

The school provides a hot lunch program with well-planned and varied menus. All children who attend school are encouraged to participate in this program. If cold lunches must be sent, they should be equally nutritious. Pop and candy bars are not allowed. If you plan to bring food from another eating establishment for you and/or your child, you will be asked to eat in a private area.

Carbonated beverages cannot be consumed by students during meal times if they are eating in the school building. Students and parents are not allowed to bring these beverages in during the meal times.

A student lunch will cost \$2.75 per day. Milk is served with the meal. Additional milk is 40 cents per carton. Breakfast will cost students \$1.90. The cost for adults is \$2.10 (breakfast) and \$3.85 (lunch). Cost is subject to change.

Students have use of a meal account. Families may add money to student accounts using electronic payment options, cash, or check.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases. Schools are encouraged to provide a reimbursable meal to students with outstanding meal charge debt. If an alternate meal is provided, the meal must be the same meal presented in the same manner to any student requesting an alternate meal.

There are multiple ways to put money on your student's account: cash, check, or our online program. Our online program, [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) is the easiest and most informative way. You are able to check balances and see purchases made to the account as well as deposit money. (There is a \$1.00 transaction fee included when a deposit is made.)

Breakfast is available for all students at all elementary schools. Breakfast is served at:

**East:** 7:30 A.M.

**West:** 7:45 A.M.

Breakfast will be served daily unless there is a 2-hour late start. All students should enter the gym/cafeteria for breakfast after entering the designated doors.

Free or reduced price lunches are available for those who qualify under the established Federal Lunch Guidelines. Please call the Food Service Director at the JSHS (334-7423) for specific information. Application forms are available in each building or you are able to fill out an application online at [www.myschoolapps.com](http://www.myschoolapps.com).

All guidelines are stated in the ICSD's Wellness Policy regarding food and beverages and will be enforced. Staff and students are encouraged to use non-food alternatives for fundraising and non-food alternatives as rewards for students. Any food brought into school for snacks for students during the school day need to meet the school's Wellness Policy guidelines. Staff, students, and parents are discouraged from bringing in food that has nuts or nut oils in them out of respect for those students with severe allergies.

#### **(Child) Custody and Parental Rights**

#### **Board Policy 507.7**

Disagreements between family members are not the responsibility of the school district. The school district will not take the "side" of one family member over another in a disagreement about custody or parental rights. Court orders that have been issued shall be followed by the

school district. It shall be the responsibility of the person requesting an action by the school district to inform and provide the school district the court order allowing such action. (School information can be given to the non-custodial parent if requested).

### **Curriculum**

In Independence, we stress the partnership between home and school by trying to let you know all about your children's education.

Subjects covered in elementary school include:

- Communication
- Reading
- Language
- Handwriting
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Citizenship and Personal Development
- Safety, Health and Nutrition
- Physical Education
- Music

### **Discipline Plan**

One goal of education is to help students develop self-discipline. This comes with age and experience. Until students have developed adequate self-discipline, they need the help of parents and teachers. We must be careful not to give students so much freedom that they are unable to deal effectively with responsibilities and decisions that go with such freedom. It must be gradual, and as students grow, they'll be able to accept more and more responsibility for their behavior. Just as an academic program must be structured to ensure progress and balance, a discipline plan should help students improve their behavior from year to year.

Independence has a plan with several parts:

- Sets of rules describing appropriate behavior.
- Specific ways that students receive positive rewards for good behavior.
- Consequences to deal with poor behavior.

Each student is taught the rules and the consequences for breaking and following the rules. Examples of the consequences a student might expect are:

#### **Possible Positive Consequences**

- Positive referrals, "Up Slips" or phone calls to parents
- Award certificates
- Special privileges
- Teacher praise

#### **Possible Negative Consequences**

- "Time Out" area

- Loss of privileges (such as recess)
- Contact with parents
- Detention (staying after school)
- Counseling by principal or counselor
- Suspension in/out of school
- Restitution assignment (ie: letter of apology, student action, etc.)

### **District Newsletter**

The district newsletter containing information and announcements from each building is available three times a year online at [www.independence.k12.ia.us](http://www.independence.k12.ia.us) or a hardcopy can be requested to be mailed by calling (319) 334-7400.

### **Dress Code/Appropriate Attire**

Students are expected to come to school clean and well groomed. Clothing worn to school must be safe, decent, appropriate, and should in NO way interfere with the educational climate of the classroom or building. While the primary responsibility for appearance rests with the students and their parents, the administration reserves the right to judge what is proper for the school setting and what has become an interference in the classroom/school setting. Students wearing prohibited clothing will be asked to put shirts or jackets over their attire for the remainder of the day.

- Students must wear gloves/mittens, hats, and warm boots during wet and snowy weather.
- Unless otherwise notified, boots are required after the first snowfall and until the playground area dries in the spring or as designated by building administration.
- Students should not wear T-shirts or shorts during cold weather.
- No clothing with profane, obscene language or pictures which display/imply sexually explicit behavior, vulgar gestures, racial, ethnic, or sexist slurs or advertise any alcohol or tobacco products or messages that encourage the use of drugs of any kind are allowed.
- No apparel and/or garments, backpacks, book covers, notebooks, or other items which display, imply or depict logos and/or organizational names (i.e. racist groups, gangs, professional wrestling) are allowed.
- No clothing which reveals breasts, buttocks, or stomachs (examples: halter tops, tube tops, crop/midriff tops, very short shorts) are allowed.
- All clothes will be worn as they were intended to be worn (pants must be worn at the waist, straps and suspenders must be fastened correctly).
- Footwear is required at all times. Flip flops and/or sandals are highly discouraged due to the possibility of injury and our extremely active physical education and recess programs.
- Rubber soled shoes are recommended for physical education classes.
- For safety and comfort, girls are encouraged to wear slacks or shorts for physical education classes.

In addition:

- No chains.
- No headgear (examples: hats, caps, bandanas, sunglasses) inside the building.
- No electronic devices (examples: iPod, electronic games, cell phones, MP3 players, etc.)



- If forms of decoration (such as tattoos, hair color, or others) are not permanent in nature and become a source for distraction or conflict, students will be asked to remove/wash off the decoration.
- No “wheeled” backpacks.

### **Fundraising**

Staff and students are encouraged to use non-food alternatives for fundraising. Any food provided or sold for fundraising that targets students and takes place during school hours must meet the Iowa Healthy Kids Act nutritional standards.

### **Homework Philosophy**

Independence Schools believe homework for elementary-aged youngsters can be a good thing when properly planned. Our teachers assign homework so youngsters can complete regular classroom assignments or work on basic skills. Homework may also be given so a child can make up work missed during absences. Homework can also be used to help youngsters develop study skills and to encourage creativity. Independence Schools believe homework may not be given as a penalty.

It is recommended that home assignments for primary grades be limited to activities that allow students to complete work not done during school time. This could include such things as reading stories, practicing spelling words and learning number facts. Enrichment activities are also good for primary students.

Generally, home assignments for elementary grades should not exceed 60 minutes. This time may vary from student to student due to pace/ability. More homework than this may be assigned to youngsters to make up assignments or who didn't do their work at school.

Exceptions to these guidelines are worked out with parents at each school. If you have any questions about homework assigned to your child, please discuss it with your child's teacher.

We believe that if all students use their time productively, there shouldn't be much homework.

### **Late Arrival/Early Departure**

It is recommended that medical/dental appointments be made during the summer and before school starts in the fall. Some appointments, of course, have to be made during the school year. Please try to get appointments as late in the school day as possible or early in the morning. Students will be counted absent one-half day if they arrive after 9:30 A.M. (East/West) or if they leave school before 2:00 P.M. (East/West). If a student is to leave school early on any day, a note should be sent to school (or a phone call made before 10:00 A.M.) stating the date, reason for leaving and time. If a student is arriving late or leaving early, come to the office to sign your child in/out. To protect our children, they're not allowed to leave campus without signing out in the school office. **Students who are to be picked up after school, should be picked up no later than 3:15 P.M.** due to limited supervision availability.

**Liability (Property Violation)**

Independence's schools belong to you and your neighbors, the people who support and pay for them. People who damage school property may be held liable for those damages, according to state law. In the case of minor children, their parents are liable. As a taxpayer, you've already done your part to financially support the public schools. We don't want you to have to "contribute" again because of your child's misbehavior. So we ask you to help us by teaching your child respect for public property.

**Lost and Found**

Please put your children's names on clothing and personal things they bring to school. Taking some time to do it now may save you the cost of buying replacements later.

Since we can't be responsible for lost items, no toys or electronics are allowed. Toys or electronics may be confiscated until parents pick these items up from school.

Lost things are stored at school until their owners claim them. We call charitable groups when "lost and found" becomes too full. They also pick up at the end of the school year. Please check with us if your child loses something at school. Many items, especially clothing, go unclaimed all year. Toys unclaimed by parents are disposed of at the end of the year.

**PE Restrictions**

If your child's PE activities need to be restricted for medical reasons, a doctor's statement will be required. Please inform the office and teacher.

**Phone calls to teachers**

If you would like to talk with your child's teacher, please call either before classes begin or after the boys and girls are dismissed. If you call during class hours, you can leave a message on the teacher's voice mail and the teacher will try to return your call the same day.

**Phone Use**

Students who need to come to the office to place a phone call should do so during recess or lunchtime, not instructional time. Students may call if they would go without lunch, glasses, or other items deemed important by the classroom teacher. No calls may be made home to ask to stay overnight with someone. If students are in possession of a cell phone, it will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day.

**Recess Restrictions**

1. All students should participate unless they have a valid medical excuse. A note from parents will be accepted for the first day back after an illness.
2. Students are not allowed to leave the playground without permission.
3. Weather Wise – Outside Recess Guidelines are as follows:

We recognize students need to get outside if at all possible but do not want to put them at risk of extreme temperatures. Our practice is to keep students inside if the air temperature, or wind chill is below 0 degrees. To determine our local conditions, we check Accuweather.com. Nearby TV/radio stations, such as KWWL or KCRG may state different temperatures than we find are true locally, so if you are curious about the local temperature, please consult Accuweather.com.

We check Accuweather.com just prior to each recess to determine if recess can be outside. If the temperatures are close to 0 degrees, we check Accuweather more than one time before that recess in case the wind was not gusting to record an accurate wind chill at the moment we checked the first time. Please note that East and West use the same procedures but due to having different recess times, we may get different results from Accuweather.com and therefore students may stay inside for a recess at one building while students at other buildings may go out for recess.

When students do get to go outside for recess, we ask that all wear coats, hats, and mittens to keep warm as well as snow pants and boots for playing in the snow. Parents can help by making sure their student has these items with them when they leave for school each day.

### **Report Card and Conferences**

Report cards are issued 2 times a year, after each semester.

Twice a year we have conferences. This is the time when parents and teachers talk about their child's progress in school and their special needs.

You may ask for more conferences any time during the school year. In addition, if you ever have a question, your child's teacher is no further away than the telephone.

### **School Rules**

Our rules were designed to provide a safe and orderly learning environment for all. School rules are carefully explained to our children. Respect and good discipline are maintained by recognizing and praising good behavior and taking corrective action when a child has a behavior problem. Every effort is made to communicate with parents so we can solve problems together.

The following rules were made for the benefit of your child and fellow classmates:

- Students are to be instructed to obey all school personnel. They will be polite and respectful to adults and fellow students.
- Students are to play safely. They'll do nothing to hurt themselves or others.
- Students will not harm or destroy school property or the property of others.
- Students will not use abusive language.
- Students are not to bring sharp or dangerous things to school. They will not bring weapons, cigarettes, drugs or alcohol to school.

- Food or drink is not to be taken from the cafeteria.
- Students are not to bring/chew gum or bring candy or pop to school.
- Students are to walk on the sidewalks. They should cross streets and the school parking lot only where there are crosswalks or crossing guards.
- Bicycles will be parked in designated areas.
- Playground equipment is provided by the school. No toys or materials should be brought from home unless designated by teacher for “Show and Tell” time.
- PLAY SAFE AND FAIR and follow adult instructions. Students can lose recess privileges.
- No cell phone use during school hours. Any cell phones brought by students will be confiscated.
- Any destruction of or vandalism to any property of another student, employee, or community member of the school district which has an adverse effect upon the learning environment of the district will result in appropriate discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion from school and/or extracurricular activities.

### **Special Teachers and Clinicians**

Students have special teachers for vocal music, guidance, instrumental music, and physical education. Through federal funding, Title I reading teachers are available at East to provide extra reading support. West has building interventionists for reading and math. Also available through the Area Education Agency, are a school psychologist, educational consultant, speech therapist, hearing clinician, and teachers who work with children with special needs.

### **Therapy Dog**

The Independence Elementary Schools may have a therapy dog at school from time to time. Students may be allowed to visit with the dog when appropriate. If there are student concerns about allergies, please inform the administration of those concerns.

### **Traffic Patterns (Please note the change in Front of West Elementary).**

#### **East Elementary (Gr. K-2)**

1. The drive in front of East is a ONE WAY DRIVE from west to east.
2. There is no through traffic behind the East building between 7:00 A.M. and 3:45 P.M. during the school day.
3. Students can be dropped off at the north side of the building before school begins at 8:15 A.M.
4. Parents will pick up their children from the north side of the East building.
5. Route and shuttle buses will pick up and drop off students on the south side of the building. ALL VEHICLES OTHER THAN SCHOOL BUSES WILL BE PROHIBITED FROM TRAVELING ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE BUILDING.
6. The speed limit is 5 MILES PER HOUR!
7. Traffic hazards can be appreciably reduced at East if children being brought to school are permitted to walk from 9th Avenue SW onto the school grounds.
8. Parking space is provided on the south side of the Early Childhood Center for visitors.

9. All bicycles must be parked in the racks beside the school. Bikes MUST be walked from one side of the campus to the other.
10. Students will utilize the crosswalks to walk across roadways and driveways to meet parents who are parked by the Early Childhood Center.

### **West Elementary (3-6)**

1. A new bus lane has been developed in the parking lot east of West Elementary. Please do not drive vehicles into the bus lane for any reason.
2. By 8:05 A.M., all bused students will be delivered to buildings, allowing students to eat/finish breakfast before school start time.
3. Parents can DROP OFF and PICK UP West Elementary only students along the west and north side of West Elementary.
4. All bikes must be parked in bike racks in front of the Administration Office.
5. All students walking to and from school must use the sidewalks in front of the school.
6. Visitors may park on the north end of the parking lot (nearest the Administration Office).

### **Visitors**

Parents, former Independence students, and community residents are welcome and are encouraged to visit with administrative approval. NO children from other schools will be allowed to visit unless requested by the class teacher and approved by the building principal. Small children are prohibited – even if accompanied by adults. An administrator must approve special requests from parents or potential students who wish to visit and observe the classroom to avoid conflict with scheduled events or the disruption of critical educational activities (such as testing). For security reasons, our doors are locked once school begins and all visitors, upon arrival, must sign in at the school office before visiting any classroom and receive an ID Badge. Visitors other than parents (grandparents, etc.) must have written permission from the parent to have their child visited at school.

Classroom visits afford parents/guardians one of the best means to gain information about the educational program and to observe their children's performance in a classroom learning situation. To make the visits most worthwhile, the school suggests that parents should make their classroom visits after the first two weeks and before the last two weeks of the school year. The first nine weeks of the Kindergarten class are a period of adjustment to school routines that should not be interrupted.

Lunchtime: Due to the food service staff's need to prepare an accurate amount of food each day, parents are asked to notify the school of their intent to eat with their child. Please do this by calling the school or sending a note to the classroom teacher one day in advance. If you plan to bring food from another eating establishment for you and/or your child, you will be asked to eat in a private area and receive an ID Badge before visiting any classroom.