



International  
CHARTER SCHOOL

Teaching in the languages of our community: English, español, Português

# Family Handbook

## 2010-2011

(Revised 6/2010)

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## **BACKGROUND & MISSION**

### **Background**

The International Charter School is a dual language, elementary public school of choice, located in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Department of Education allows charter schools to be established by public school districts or Rhode Island non-profit organizations. The International Institute of Rhode Island was granted the initial charter for the International Charter School in 2001.

### **Corporate Structure**

The ICS is an independent, self-funded corporation, with its own 501c3 status and is responsible for own budget. In 2002, the International Institute placed its endowment and building as collateral for the bond note, which ICS took out in order to complete the physical plant construction for the school. ICS pays all costs associated with the bond. ICS has its own Executive Director and Board of Trustees.

### **Mission**

The International Charter School is a dual language, elementary public school of choice founded to help meet the educational needs of the children of Rhode Island. The mission of ICS is to integrate the diverse languages and cultures of the communities it serves by teaching all students in two languages—in Spanish and English or in Portuguese and English—and helping children develop an appreciation of other cultures. Children learn to work collaboratively from their multiple experiences and backgrounds, striving towards high standards of academic achievement. Everyone is part of a community of learners, engaging in inquiry about the world, themselves, and others.

### **Goals**

Our students will

- develop high levels of language proficiency in their first language and in a second language
- perform at or above standard in academic areas in both languages
- demonstrate high levels of self esteem and act as a responsible members of the community

Our staff will

- foster a love of life-long learning in students
- participate as members of a community of learners
- foster an environment free of bias, prejudice and bullying
- contribute as members of a collaborative work environment

Our families will

- be given educational, health, and other opportunities for growth and development
- be partners in their children's education

Our work will

- be informed by empirically sound research

Our board will

- be full partners in the school's operation

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Board of Trustees is in charge of guiding and overseeing the school's strategic development. This group is made up of parents, staff and members of the community. This group meets the once each month at the International Charter School. The meetings are open to the public.

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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

There are five important elements of ICS curricular programming:

- Bilingual education
- Creating a caring community
- Establishing high level academic standards
- Arts and experiential learning
- Promoting healthy lifestyles

Together, these provide for a rich, complex, and challenging curriculum for all students. The following are some details regarding particular areas of study:

### **Bilingual Education**

ICS uses a dual language immersion program, which means that students spend approximately 50% of their time studying in English and 50% of their time studying in either Spanish or Portuguese.

### Language Use

Academic instruction occurs in both languages. It is important that students use the “minority” or non-English language at least 50% of the time. This should be an “additive” environment where all students have the opportunity to learn a second language while continuing to develop their native language. Separation of languages is essential by time block, subject (e.g. math in Spanish, science in English), week, teacher, or a combination. At ICS we use a “week-to-week” model, in which students learn entirely in one language for a week at a time.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> language Instruction

Integrating the 2<sup>nd</sup> language instruction with academic or other content matter is more effective than teaching second language in isolation. Students will develop content area knowledge along with proficiency in both languages. Teachers need to provide extended opportunities for classroom discourse in the target language. We need to include native speakers of the language in the same classrooms (balanced if possible) and provide explicit and implicit language curriculum.

### Academic Instruction

Academic instruction occurs in 2 languages with mixed classrooms or in student’s native language. This allows students’ access to curriculum in native language. The same core academic materials should be available for all students. Positive interactions of students should be facilitated through the use strategies such as cooperative learning.

For more information on bilingual education, go to <http://www.cal.org>

### **Creating a Caring Community**

*Responsive Classroom* is a very important part of the everyday life of ICS. This is an approach that is intended to help our entire school community establish and live in a

manner that supports respectful behavior. It gives equal value to *how* children learn and *what* they learn, which in turn promotes positive social and academic growth and development for all. Some elements include:

- Morning Meeting: A daily routine that builds community, creates a positive climate reinforces academic and social skills
- Rules and Logical Consequences: A clear and consistent approach to discipline that fosters responsibility and self control
- Guided Discovery: A format for introducing materials that encourages inquiry, heightens interest, and teaches care for the school environments
- Academic Choice: An approach to giving children choices in their learning that helps them be interested, self-motivated learners
- Classroom Organization: Strategies for arranging materials, furniture and displays that encourages independence, promotes caring and maximizes learning
- Family Communication Strategies: Ideas for involving families as partners in their children's education

For more information, go to <http://www.responsiveclassroom.org>.

### **Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)**

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is an organized approach of teaching pro-social expectations that focuses on teaching, modeling and acknowledging positive behaviors. At ICS, our expectations for our students are to be 'Respectful', 'Responsible' and 'Dedicated'. Over the course of the school year, students are taught these expectations and are encouraged to demonstrate their proficiency in being 'Respectful', 'Responsible' and "Dedicated' in their classroom, in the school community and in the world. Activities, events and school functions highlight and celebrate the students' success with becoming global citizens who internalize the importance of showing and receiving respect, responsibility, and dedication.

#### Key Elements of PBIS

- Outcomes: Academic and behavior targets that are endorsed and emphasized by students, families, and educators
- Practices: Interventions and strategies that are evidence based
- Data: Information that is used to identify status, need for change, and effects of interventions
- Systems: Supports that are needed to enable the accurate and durable implementation of the practices of PBIS

For more information, go to <http://www.pbis.org>.

### **Establishing High Level Academic Standards**

#### Language Arts

At ICS, we take a balanced approach to literacy instruction to help students meet

both the RI Grade Level Expectations (GLE's) and language learning objectives. Students engage in learning comprehensive reading and writing strategies, through Reading and Writing Workshops and Word Study. Through the workshop format, students receive large and small group instruction at their level, as well as individual conferencing and conferring with teachers. A typical workshop schedule might look like this:

- Mini-lesson (focused strategy instruction through shared or interactive activities or read aloud)
- Workshop (including guided reading or writing, individual conferences, and independent practice)
- Sharing (students and teachers talk about what is happening in their reading/writing; this provides our developing readers/writers with input, purpose, and validation)

Word study activities call for *active* problem solving. Teachers create opportunities for students to investigate and organize word and letter patterns. Students are encouraged to look for spelling patterns, form hypotheses about patterns and word meaning, predict outcomes, and test them. These activities require students to continually ask themselves, "What do I know about this new word, and how is it similar to words that I already know?" Word study provides students an opportunity to manipulate words (and parts of words) in meaningful and enjoyable activities and games.

### Math

The development of problem-solving skills and independent thinking are major goals of the mathematics program at every grade level. Instruction in the process of problem solving is integrated early and continuously into each student's mathematics education. Children have many opportunities to develop and use the skills of computation, estimation, time, money, measurement, geometry, graphing, probability, and algebra to solve a wide variety of problems. Students at ICS are expected to meet the Rhode Island Grade Level Expectations (GLE's) for math.

### Science

Students learn about science through hands-on activities that are focused on a variety of areas of science: physical, natural, earth, reasoning and technology. Many of these units take an interdisciplinary approach to learning about science through reading and writing. Students at ICS are expected to meet the Rhode Island Grade-Span Expectations (GSE's) for science.

### Social Studies

Students at ICS meet the expectations of the Rhode Island Social Studies Framework by learning through a variety of units that explore the self, family, local and global communities, history and civics. Many of these units take an interdisciplinary approach to learning about social studies through reading, writing, and experiential learning opportunities.

## **Arts & Experiential Learning**

### Music Program

The study of general music in our elementary school focuses on the development of appreciation, understandings, and attitudes essential to music literacy. Students experience music through a variety of related activities, which include listening, singing, moving, and playing melodic and choral instruments. Emphasis is placed on exploration, appreciation, creativity, expression, and enjoyment. The music curriculum is aligned with the RI Arts Framework and all students have music class with a certified music teacher once every three days for 45 minutes.

### Visual Arts Program

Our visual arts program strives to unify student learning in the arts so that art is not taught as an isolated activity, but one that is integral to human experience. Students will develop their communication and critical thinking skills through written, verbal and visual expression. The elementary art program includes skill development in drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and crafts. The art curriculum is aligned with the RI Arts Framework and all students have music class with a certified art teacher once every three days for 45 minutes.

### Experiential Learning

Experiential learning provides students with the opportunity to embark on an educational adventure in learning through experience. Experiential education may take place outside of ICS or at school. These experiences are designed to complement and support curricular goals and vary by grade and developmental level.

## **Promoting Healthy Lifestyles**

### Physical Education

Students participate in activities that develop motor skills, basic game skills and body awareness. Our program stresses the importance of achieving an appropriate level of physical fitness. Students have physical education classes from a certified physical education teacher once every three days for 45 minutes each class.

### Health Education

The goal of our elementary health program is to focus on developing skills that will help keep the students safe. The students will learn the importance of how to keep the body healthy through proper care of the body, good nutrition, and avoidance of disease. Students learn about health topics with their classroom teachers.

### Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program

ICS is participating in the USDA's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program beginning in the 2010-2011 school year. The program aims to combat childhood obesity by helping children learn more healthful eating habits. It is a creative way of introducing fresh fruits and vegetables as a healthy snack option. For the entire school year, every ICS student will be given a snack consisting of variety of fresh, local produce that they otherwise may not have the opportunity to sample. As a result, we are

asking families NOT to send snacks with their children, as we will provide them with a healthy snack daily with no charge to families.

### **EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

Summer school and after school provide ICS students extended learning opportunities.

#### Summer School

ICS offers two summer school programs. One is a Title I program designed to help students who are not meeting grade level expectations. There is no charge for children to participate in this federally funded program. We also offer Spanish and Portuguese language camps. There is a fee for children to participate in these programs.

#### After School

ICS's after school program, ICS +, is designed to provide families with an after school care and learning opportunity for their children from the end of the school day until 6:00 P.M. There is a fee of \$40/week (3 days) or \$60/week (5 days). Applications are available in the main office.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Special education services at ICS are provided in the context of a philosophy that emphasizes the importance of small classes and individualized attention for all students.

Within the guidelines of charter school law, traditional special education services are also available for those students who are determined to be eligible by a multi-disciplinary team. Reflecting the ICS's inclusive philosophy, most students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) attend all regular classes for the entire school day.

Our Special Education Administrator is responsible for evaluating student needs, arranging IEP meeting with students, staff, and their families, and connecting students to the services they need in order to be successful in school. ICS employs two Resource Teachers who work on site. Other resource providers work as independent contractors.

ICS has a Local Advisory Committee (LAC)—comprised of families, staff and community members—which meets several times a year to discuss issues related to Special Education at ICS.

### **ASSESSMENT**

ICS participates in all state and federal assessments, and we assess students at the school level on an ongoing and meaningful basis. We have high academic standards for all students in all languages and recognize the need to assess students in all languages. Teachers collect data on each individual child to discover his/her interests, unique characteristics, attitudes and abilities throughout the year.

Assessment of children's development and learning is essential if teachers are to provide curriculum and instruction that is meaningful.

#### Rhode Island State Assessments

The International Charter School participates in all State Assessments. All students in grades 3-5 are assessed annually in math and reading. Students in grade 5 will also be assessed in writing and students in grade 4 will be assessed in science beginning the 2007-2008 school year. Rhode Island participates in the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). Testing will occur from October 1-23 During the 2008-2009 school year for reading and math and in May for science. Detailed testing schedules and tips will be sent home to parents of students in grades 3-5 at the start of the school year. The ACCESS for ELLs will be administered to all students for whom English is not their native language between January 15<sup>th</sup>-February 15<sup>th</sup>. More information can be found at <http://www.ride.ri.gov>

#### Parent-Teacher Communication

At ICS, we truly feel that parents are our partners in helping children create and meet their educational goals. There are a few times each year, where we set aside time for all teachers and parents to meet to plan together and discuss students' development.

#### Progress Reports and Parent-Teacher Conferences

There are three conferences each year (fall, winter, spring) that occur at the time each progress report is created. These meetings present opportunities for teachers, students, and families to reflect and plan together as a team. Apart from Parent-Teacher conferences, teachers can be available to meet with families if they have questions or concerns about their child, or if they want more information about his/her development. Parents wishing to meet with their child's teacher should call the school to arrange an appointment date and time. Parents should arrange to meet teachers after school on weekdays, or by arranging a mutually convenient time. Teachers generally will not be available to meet parents between 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

#### Individual Learning Plans (ILP) and Personal Literacy Plans (PLP)

Each student has an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), created together by families and teachers, to set goals for student achievement. This document is created at the first conference and used at each additional conference to measure progress. If a child is not reading at grade level, teachers and parents will create a Personal Literacy Plan (PLP) to support the child's progress in reading. These PLP's are mandated by Rhode Island and will take the place of the ILP, until the time when a PLP is not needed.

### **HOMEWORK**

#### Purpose of Homework

Homework can be a tool to expand opportunities for academic excellence by:

- providing opportunities for students to develop good study habits and to build self-discipline and responsibility

- communicating with parents/caregivers about what their child is doing in school
- helping to individualize instruction.

Homework has different purposes at different grades. For younger students, it can foster positive attitudes and habits of work. For older students, it can expand upon daily learning experiences.

**Parental oversight of homework is essential. The parental role should include:**

- Providing an appropriate time and place of study.
- Monitoring this time, which should be free of distractions, such as radio, television, and video games.
- Communicating to child that completing homework is important.
- Contacting their child’s teacher(s) about questions or concerns with homework.

Each child in grade 1-5 will bring home a homework journal. Parents/caregivers should look at and sign their child’s homework journal daily.

**Homework in English, Spanish, Portuguese**

By the very nature of our program, teachers will assign homework in a language that the parents/caregivers may not speak, read, or write. Assignments are an extension of the day and teachers will explain homework assignments in class. A child should be able to complete such assignments without the parent/caregiver needing to know the language. Encourage families to support children in their efforts to learn the language not spoken in the home—it helps everyone to be more successful.

**Amount of Homework**

When we design homework assignments, keep children’s developmental stages in mind to create work that is “just right.” For all of our students we expect that minimally, families should read 15-20 minutes daily with their children (read to or have children read to parent) and to review the child's day.

Specific subject matter and assignments should be made by individual teachers and teams to reflect their students’ grade and developmental levels.

**FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are part of our experiential learning program and are scheduled throughout the year. Permission slips are sent home to cover all walking field trips for the year with back-to-school information. Other permission slips will be sent home to cover each additional educational or cultural trip. Please return these slips promptly to ensure that your child can participate in these experiences. If we do not have a permission slip, your child will remain at school in another classroom.

## **RECESS AND PLAYGROUND**

### **Playground and Recess**

Our playground is used by ICS students for recess during the day. After school, families and members of the larger community are welcome to use the playground, which closes at dusk. The playground is located at the corners of Taft and Tidewater (around the corner from our entrances). Please follow the rules of the playground and be safe and treat our playground with respect.

### **Recess**

Each day we take children outside for recess. We believe that students need good outdoor activity, which is part of our social and physical education program. Thus, unless it is raining or extremely cold, we will go outside. Please dress your child appropriately to be outside. If you believe that there is a medical reason why your child should not be going outside, we will need a note from the doctor, which we will be glad to honor.

At each grade level, teachers spend time at each recess teaching students how to play a variety of games which are fun and do not require fierce competition. Students also have the opportunity to engage in free play, use of our playground equipment and structured activities.

## **ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE, AND PICK UP**

### **School Hours**

- School Hours: 8:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Monday through Friday
- Office Hours: 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday through Friday

### **Arrival & Departure**

Each morning, all students are either dropped off by parents/caregivers or arrive by school bus. Parents/Caregivers who drop off can either stay in their car and drop off on Pleasant Street, where we have staff awaiting students, or can park and bring their child into the building. If you choose to park, please honor all parking restrictions.

Students enter on the first floor (either on Tower St. or Pleasant St.) and proceed to the Community Room, where breakfast will be available from 8-8:20. Teachers will pick students up from the Community Room at 8:20 A.M. to take students to classrooms. The instructional day will last from 8:30-3:00 P.M.

Children who arrive after 8:30 must enter through the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor main entrance on Pleasant St. and obtain a late pass.

### **Pick Up**

Families can pick students up between 3:00-3:15 P.M. Students can be picked up at school only by those adults who are authorized. People with whom we are not familiar will not be allowed to pick up a child unless we have been notified in advance and a picture ID is presented at the time of pick up. In cases where there are court ordered custody arrangements or restraining orders in effect, ICS must receive

a copy of such arrangements.

If changes to the usual pick up routine occur during the day, we ask that parents/guardians should notify the school by phone the office by **noon**, and we will accommodate changes.

### **Parking**

Please pay attention to all parking signs. Parking is prohibited on Tower St. during arrival and dismissal since buses need to drop off/pick up children.

### **SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

There will be no school on the following days:

- Labor Day
- Primary Day
- Columbus Day
- General Election Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving
- Winter Break
- Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
- Mid-winter Recess
- Good Friday
- Spring break
- Memorial Day
- 6-1/2 days for Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Professional Development Days

### **School Cancellation, Late Openings, or Early Dismissal due to Weather Conditions**

Due to hazardous road conditions caused by snow or other weather conditions, school may be canceled, open late, or close early. Check the following media sources to see whether ICS is closed:

- radio (WPRO, 630AM)
- television news (ABC 6, NBC 10, or Channel 12)
- online at <http://www.turto10.com/closings>

We are listed as “The International Charter School” NOT “Pawtucket School Department.”

### **Absences**

Absence from school breaks the continuity of learning. We encourage Parent/Guardians to make every effort to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time each morning. Only illness and emergencies should

prevent students from attending school. We ask parents to arrange medical and dental appointments for after school hours whenever possible.

- A written note from parents is required for all absences.
- In cases of excessive absences, a doctor's note should be provided.

While we understand that families may need to travel to other countries and that unexpected emergencies may arise, we encourage children not to miss school. ICS is a school of choice and many children are on a waiting list to enter our school. Any student who is absent for the first 5 days of school will forfeit his or her place in the school.

### **HOLIDAY POLICY**

It is part of the mission to respect and learn about different cultures, which includes holiday observances. There, we do not observe any holidays as a school. We do not have classroom parties or celebrations for Halloween, Christmas, or Valentine's Day. In addition, we do not address the concept of Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny. Instead, we promote festivities that complement our units of instruction, for example, an author's celebration or harvest festival. If a child will be absent from school for a religious or cultural observance, we ask parents to please notify the classroom teacher in advance in writing.

### **Respecting Diversity of Opinion**

Holidays can promote positive cultural identity, appreciation of other lifestyles, and awareness of the larger society, and positive social interactions among children. Holidays will be presented as part of a comprehensive worldview. Students will experience holidays in terms of universal themes to bring about awareness of human commonality. Holidays activities will be historically accurate developmentally appropriate and connected to specific children and families within the school. Differences in how each family celebrates will be evident and respected. A recognition will be made that all people do not celebrate all holidays. Activities will help children identify and think critically about various stereotypes of holiday customs. We encourage parents to discuss with their child's teacher any specific concerns or expectations for their child early in the school year.

### **Birthdays**

Teachers and peers will be able to acknowledge a child's birthday. Appropriate ways include: wishing the child a happy birthday, permitting others to make cards during free choice periods or quiet time, or contributing one book to our school or classroom library (with the child's name inscribed).

At ICS, we do not have classroom birthday parties. Thus, parents should not send snacks, party supplies, or invitations to school. If birthday items come to school, the teacher will return the items home with the student.

## PATRIOTISM

Early in the school year, teachers will explain the words and the history of the Pledge of Allegiance and appropriate behavior during flag salute. Each morning before Morning Meeting, the student will choose or not choose to salute the flag. Someone (teacher or student) will direct the flag salute in one area of the room. Non-participating students will be silent during the pledge. The Pledge will be said in the language of instruction.

## DRESS CODE

Students at ICS dress according to a code. Students can wear an official uniform—which can be purchased at many locations, including Target and Burlington Coat Factory. Students may also wear non-uniform clothing that meets the uniform code (i.e. khaki pants). Solid colored t-shirts in our colors or the ICS shirts can also be worn.

### Shirts/Blouses:

- White, light blue or navy blue
- Long or short sleeves
- All styles are allowed except deep V-neck, strapless, undershirts or those that expose the tummy

### Pants/Slacks:

- Navy blue or khaki
- Long pants or shorts (no jeans or sweatpants)
- Pants should fit appropriately, no more than 1 size larger, with the waistline not falling below the waist-line

### Skirts and Dresses/Jumpers:

- Navy blue or khaki
- Length is between knee and calf-length
- Skorts or shorts worn underneath are recommended

### Shoes:

- Black, brown or dark blue sturdy shoes (no heels of any kind)
- Sneakers/tennis shoes for Physical Education days and recess (should not light up)
- Please be sure that shoes that require laces, have laces and that the laces are tied when children leave the home.

### Other:

- Hats may be worn to school, but must be removed when entering building and remain off throughout day (hooded shirts, too)
- Headbands/bandanas that are not used to hold hair are not allowed
- Clothing with hurtful or hateful images or slogans is not allowed.

If a child wears layers of clothing, each of the layers should be uniform clothing.

Children must have comfortable shoes for P.E. and recess that they can run, skip, jump, go outside, etc. in. If a child does not have appropriate shoes, s/he will not be allowed to participate in P.E. class.

Because the *whole* school has adopted this policy, the whole school needs to be consistent with using a uniform. We have found that it becomes a distraction for children when one child does not wear a uniform. If a child comes to school out of uniform, we will contact the parent by sending an “Inappropriate Dress” notice home (Appendix 5). If a child consistently arrives to school out of uniform, we will request a conference with the parent and child to discuss this.

If a child needs a change of clothing because s/he is out of uniform or soils clothing, ICS does have a supply of clothes. Whenever we change a child’s clothing, we send home a “School has provided clothing” letter.

## **PLAYTHINGS AND VALUABLE ITEMS**

### **Playthings and Valuable Items**

Sharing items from home is an integral part of our educational process here at ICS. Children share photographs, important objects, books, etc. as part of the “Morning Meeting” almost daily as part of our Responsive Classroom approach to creating a caring school environment. However, when children bring in items from home that are not intended for these educational purposes, they frequently cause a distraction for the students. Children should not bring any item from home that distracts from the learning process on the bus or to school.

#### Playthings

Personal toys, radios, electronic games, cards, walkie talkies, pagers, walkmans, CD players, cosmetics, or jewelry that is used as a toy, etc. should not be brought to school, unless an item is to be used for a specific purpose within the classroom. These items distract the children and do not enhance the educational process. If a child brings in an item to school for educational purposes (i.e. to be shared within the classroom) s/he should keep the item in his or her backpack until s/he gets to the classroom, at which time s/he should give it to the teacher.

#### Violence-oriented toys

We ask that harmful or violence-oriented toys or implements never be brought to school for any purpose. Toy guns and knives potentially threaten others.

#### Money

As a rule, students should not bring money to school. The only time a child should bring money to the school is to purchase items at a special school event (i.e. book fair, photographs, etc.) or to leave a deposit for school lunch. When parents/caregivers send money to school, they should place the money in a sealed envelope with the child's name, teacher's name, room number and purpose and ask their child to give this money to only an adult, not to other children.

### Chewing gum and candy

Chewing gum and candy must be left at home since neither is nutritious and may contribute to tooth decay. They often cause classroom disruptions or hurt feelings when not shared. Wrappers and chewed gum are often found on the floor or furniture. For these reasons, children should not bring gum or candy to school.

Any item that proves to be disruptive to the learning process will be collected and returned to the parent/guardian upon request. Staff will complete a Student Brought Inappropriate Object to School form to send home to the family. We believe that this policy fosters a better learning environment and avoids valuables from being stolen or misplaced.

### **HEALTH SERVICES**

The health of a child is a cooperative effort between home and school. We rely on families to see that each child has a good night's rest and is healthy enough to stay at school. No child should be sent to school if he/she has a severe cold, fever, sore throat, diarrhea, red itchy eyes with any drainage vomiting, rash, or any other symptom of a contagious disease. If a child is well enough to return to school, he/she should be able to participate in all activities. If a child is permitted to come to school on a doctor's recommendation with crutches, cast, etc., there should be a letter from the parent and/or doctor giving limitations, if any, and procedures for going home. Students who are sent home from school with a fever should not return to school until the child is free of fever for 24 hours. This policy is a twofold: a child recovering from an illness has a weakened resistance and is susceptible to other illnesses and it is to protect other students from any lingering illness your child may have.

ICS has a full-time School Nurse-Teacher who provides first aid and assesses students' health needs.

### **Allergies**

Please notify our School Nurse-Teacher if your child has any allergic reactions.

### **Medications**

If a student is to be given medication at school, state law requires medication authorization consent form completed and signed by the doctor and the parent. This permission form must be brought to the School Nurse-Teacher's office. Forms are available in the School Nurse-Teacher's office. Children are not allowed to carry medication to school to take on their own (e.g. aspirin, throat lozenges). All medication must be given to the Director or School Nurse-Teacher with the signed form. Parents are welcome to come to school to administer medicine or the school nurse-teacher will administer the medication.

## **Immunizations & Exams**

All students entering the school system are required to have immunizations for polio, rubella, measles, DPT, and mumps as well as a hematocrit and a TB test. A physical examination—including a vision test—is required prior to admitting new students entering kindergarten or coming from out of state.

Special note for children wearing glasses: It is of utmost importance that each child takes the responsibility of seeing that his/her glasses are brought to school every day. A day of learning is missed without those glasses.

Several tests are given to each child throughout the school year, such as hearing, vision, etc. Should a child need further examination by a professional, the parent/caregiver will be notified by the School Nurse-Teacher.

## **First Aid and Emergencies**

### Minor Injuries

If a child becomes ill and/or receives an injury, s/he will be evaluated by our School-Nurse Teacher, appropriately treated, and given one of the following options, depending on their health needs: 1) s/he may return to their classroom, 2) s/he may rest for a limited period and return to their classroom, or 3) s/he may be sent home with a parent, guardian, or other emergency contact. A child will be sent home if s/he vomits (may not return for 24 hours); has a temperature greater than 100.5; has diarrhea (may not return for 24 hours); has marked abdominal discomfort; has a persistent headache; has persistent pain with or without impaired mobility; has a severe cough, cold sneezing, sore throat, or red/watery eyes; has suspicious skin eruptions; has pink eye; or has any other condition which keeps the child from functioning at school. It is the parent's responsibility to come and get the child. If this is impossible, arrangements should be made with a neighbor or friend to do so.

### Medical Emergencies

If an illness/injury requires treatment at a hospital, ICS's school nurse or other staff member will call the paramedics and the student will be transported to the hospital. This is EMT policy. Every attempt will be made to contact the family as soon as possible. A school representative will always accompany the child to the hospital and await the arrival of a family member.

If a child becomes ill during the course of the day, the child will be sent to the nurse's office with a pass. If the child has an illness that appears to be contagious, the child will be sent home with a notice to parents/caregivers describing the symptoms and requesting that the child stay home for a period of time or see a doctor.

If a child gets injured in the course of the day, the staff member present will complete an Incident Report detailing the incident.

## **DRILLS**

We are required to have fire, evacuation, and lockdown drills several times a year. These will occur at a variety of times. For fire and evacuation drills, teachers will have students leave the building in an orderly fashion immediately whenever an alarm sounds. Students should leave bags, coats, and any other item in the school for fire drills, and take their belongings for an evacuation drill. Teachers will talk with and practice the required drills to ensure all students' safety in the event of a real emergency.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

For the following cities/towns, any student who lives farther than .75 miles from school is allowed to ride a school bus free of charge, arranged through the student's local school district: Barrington, Bristol/Warren, Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, and Smithfield. Prior to the opening of school you will be notified of the pick-up and drop-off locations and times from your district.

Any questions about bus transportation, i.e. changing bus stops, late buses, etc. should be directed to the local school district or to the bus company directly. Below are the contacts for each district; parents can call in case they have any questions or concerns regarding pick-up and drop-off locations and times.

Providence School Department Transportation Office:	456-9268
Providence Bus Yard (First Student Co.):	943-7536
First Student Pawtucket Transportation Office:	724-5768
East Providence Transportation Office	431-5029
Statewide (Central Falls, Lincoln, Johnston, North Providence)	334-0565

A parent/caregiver **MUST** accompany the child to and from the bus stop. Students who normally do not ride a bus will not be allowed to ride a bus without authorization from a parent and the school district of the bus.

Safe and respectful behavior on the bus is required to and from school. This enables the driver to concentrate on driving and for all of our students to have a peaceful bus ride. If a student misbehaves on the bus, it is reported to ICS. An administrator speaks with the child and then calls the parent/caregiver to make them aware of the situation. The consequence procedures are:

1st Offense	Discussion/Verbal warning/Parent Notification
2nd Offense	Discussion/Bus Suspension (1 day)
3rd Offense	Discussion/Bus suspension (2 days)
4th Offense	Discussion/Bus suspension (1 week)
5th Offense	Discussion/Bus suspension (remainder of the school year)

## **SCHOOL RECORDS**

For the safety of students, all personal information records must be kept up to date. It is the responsibility of parents to notify the office of any change of employment, address, telephone numbers, hours of work, care and/or custody arrangements, and other pertinent information regarding the family.

The school does not release information or records concerning children to other educational or non-educational institutions, organizations or individuals without a parent/guardian's signed consent. The school also does not release information from other sources without your prior approval. The cumulative records of students are available for parents and guardians to read upon request. Folders containing registration forms, copies of progress reports, and test results are kept at school. Copies of any cumulative folder contents may be obtained by parents/guardians.

In the beginning of the year, we will distribute to all families a class list that includes the names, addresses and phone numbers of all the children in the school.

## **MEALS**

We have our own kitchen, where breakfast and lunch are prepared and served daily for our students and staff by Aramark. We offer free meals to all families that qualify as free or reduced price. The cost for full pay is \$.50 for breakfast and \$1.00 for lunch. All families must complete a lunch application by the beginning of the school year. Menus will be distributed monthly.

Students may also bring a lunch from home. Children may not bring candy, gum, other sugary or hi-fat snacks, or soda to school.

**Breakfast**                      8-8:20 A.M.

Lunch 11:00-1:00 P.M., depending on grade

## **ENROLLMENT**

Families interested in enrolling at the International Charter School must complete an application (due March 31<sup>st</sup>), choose the Spanish-English or Portuguese-English language strand, and enter the annual lottery, which is held in early April. Students who are not admitted are placed on a waiting list. Vacancies are filled from the waiting list. Students entering kindergarten must be 5 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Application packets and our full enrollment policy are available in the main office. Each year, families must let us know if their child will be returning the following year.

If a student leaves ICS prior to graduation, we ask that his/her parent complete a transfer form, which is available in the main office.

### **RETENTION/PROMOTION**

Research has shown simply retaining or socially promoting a student who is not meeting grade level expectations does not help that child. Such children are most successful when they are provided with extra supports. Promotion and retention of a student to a particular grade shall always be made in the best interest of the student. Teachers shall recommend promotion or retention of students. When necessary, administrators shall review a recommendation and after consultation with the parent, make a decision on placement for the child. In case of a student with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), decisions would be based on IEP recommendations. Promotion, acceleration, and retention from grade in the elementary school shall be based on the following:

1. The achievement of the student in the present grade.
2. The ability of the child to do work in the succeeding grade.
3. Recommendations and information provided by the professional staff.
4. The expressed desires of the parent/caregiver.
5. Other data relevant to the decision.

### **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

We view family involvement as one of the pillars of the school and encourage families to partner with us in providing their children with the highest quality opportunities for development.

All children have rich and varied experiences and bring rich funds of knowledge to schools. At ICS we believe in acknowledging and providing native language instruction and culturally responsive pedagogy Families are our partners in this process. Research shows that family involvement increases student achievement and, consequently, that schools should take advantage of them as a resource. In order for schools to value familial contributions, they cannot assume that they have the knowledge and parents have the needs Research confirms that there are many ways to engage parents as leaders, all of which have the following characteristics:

- A wide range of activities both formal and informal, which are linguistically and culturally accessible to parents and responsive to the community
- Regular communication between parents and schools in language the parents can understand
- Treatment of diverse families and communities as rich sources of instructional resources

### **School Improvement Team (SIT)**

Our school improvement team (SIT) is made up of representatives of our school community who are interested in making our school a better place for learning and teaching. The school improvement team decides what our school should do to improve student performance. The team's work is to gather and analyze information that can be used to make decisions that drive changes in our school. Please join us at our monthly meetings.

### **Parent-Teacher Organization**

ICS has a PTO with a mission to promote a sense of community in the school, to develop and support enrichment programs and services for our children and families, and to provide input to all areas of school activity. The PTO meets monthly at the school.

### **Family Nights**

Several times each year, ICS hosts evening workshops and other events for parents on a variety of topics. Information about upcoming events will be distributed in advance, and childcare and translation are provided.

### **Home Visits**

Teachers conduct home visits prior to the start of each school year:

- For teachers and parents to meet each other in a setting other than the school;
- For teachers to gain a more complex and valid understanding of students and their families than school necessarily allows for; and
- For teachers to provide families with basic information about the school.

Teachers consider ways of integrating what is learned during these meetings into their classrooms.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

Parent Teacher Conferences take place at the end of each trimester. These conferences are for families, teachers, and students to evaluate student progress towards meeting grade level expectations. We are proud to have a history of high participation in such conferences (96% at the end of 2010!) In order to accommodate everyone's schedules, we will have school for half days during the three parent-teacher conference periods. Teachers will contact families in the weeks before to schedule time in the afternoons of these half days. The dates for conferences for the upcoming school year are listed on the calendar.

### **Parent-School-Student Compact**

Each child's success depends on the commitment and effort of everyone. By signing this compact, all of us are committing to provide the best opportunities for our students to be successful.

## **Volunteering**

Parent volunteers are welcome and needed to serve on our School Improvement Team and Parent-Teacher Organization assist with classroom activities, work in our library, and be participants in other committees.

## **Communication**

ICS is committed to:

- Open Lines of communication with families.
- Contacting parents/caregivers on a regular basis.
- Contacting parents/caregivers as soon as there is a problem.
- Involving parents/caregivers in their child's schoolwork and life.
- Involving parents/caregivers in the life of the school.
- Finding support for families in crises.
- Providing communication opportunities in a variety of settings including family homes. Help network parents/caregivers for transportation to school events.
- Bringing family concerns forward within the school to determine if there is a broader school issue.

Each student is provided with a communication folder. Parents/caregivers are expected to check this blue folder each day.

## **Newsletters**

The International Charter School Newsletter is sent home monthly. It is designed to inform parents/caregivers about current activities and issues.

## **Adult Education**

ICS offers evening classes in English, Spanish, and Portuguese for our adult community. Classes meet once or twice per week from 6-8 P.M. and are free of charge for members of the ICS community.