



International Community School

Parent Handbook

2019-2020

Kindergarten – 5th grade
An International Baccalaureate School (IBPYP)

2418 Wood Trail Lane. Decatur, Georgia 30033

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1. A Message from the Principal

Greetings ICS,

Welcome to the 2019-20 school year! I am glad that you are part of the ICS community and want to recognize the role that each of you plays in ensuring that our students receive a rigorous and holistic education. I'm eager to get this fantastic year underway, and I'm glad that we can continue partnering together for our students. I am deeply committed to your child's academic, social, and emotional growth here at ICS.

The ICS Parent Handbook gives you an overall explanation of what happens on a day-to-day basis, who to reach out to for what, and what you can expect for the upcoming school year. While we aim to cover as much information as possible, you may have further questions. In that case, feel free to reach out to your child's teacher, or our office staff, or me with any questions, suggestions, or concerns. I look forward to seeing you all at the school!

Sincerely,

Julie Allen

julie.allen@icsgeorgia.org

Principal/CEO

2. Mission, Vision, Values, Statement of Understanding

ICS MISSION

The International Community School (ICS) is an International Baccalaureate World School that welcomes refugee, immigrant, and local children and provides a rigorous and holistic education in an intentionally diverse community of mutual learners.

ICS VISION

ICS seeks to develop creative and critical thinkers who will understand and change their world harmonizing the richness of diversity within our community and world.

ICS VALUES

- Academic Excellence: Students follow the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) within the framework of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP). The challenging PYP offers an investigative, inquiry-based approach to learning. ICS is an authorized IB School, implementing the IBPYP. English, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, the arts and other languages are taught in this integrated framework, emphasizing cross-disciplinary thinking, problem-solving and personal wellness.
- Community in Diversity: ICS seeks a diverse student body and staff in terms of national, ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. The school helps students to learn about the beliefs and traditions of others and encourages a respectful environment and global perspective.
- Service-Oriented Education: ICS expects students to become independent learners and to feel responsibility for the life of their school community and for the success of all its members. The school fosters a sense of service to others both within and outside the school community.
- Family and Community Partnerships: ICS partners with parents and community organizations in order to provide families with the educational, social and spiritual services they will need in a multicultural society.

ICS STATEMENTS OF UNDERSTANDING

We understand that each member of our community (student, staff, family) is unique and essential to our life together.

We believe that everyone is inherently able to learn and it is our collective responsibility to nurture the unique genius of every person.

We believe in educating the whole child – their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, cultural and creative selves. Teaching in a culturally responsive lens, we view socio-emotional development as important as promoting academic excellence.

We encourage expression through maintaining home languages, fostering fluency in Standard English and offering opportunities to learn other languages.

We welcome and engage with people of various identity differences including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical ableism, faith and political affiliation.

We are preparing children to be global citizens who take action and work toward social justice in their communities.

As a beloved community, we approach complex issues with strong communication, collaboration, perspective, respect and active listening.

I contribute to a legacy and my voice and my actions matter.

3. ICS Profile and General Information

Students: Annually, ICS students represent about 30-40 countries and 25-35 different language groups. Approximately half are refugee/immigrant children, and half are native born.

Classes Approximately 420 students are enrolled in Kindergarten through 5th grade. There are classes per grade, maximum class size is 25 students. Aside from the Homeroom teacher, here is an assistant in every class for Kindergarten and first grade, and one per grade in the remaining classes.

Staff: ICS has a diverse group of teachers, recruited from area public and private schools and from abroad. Many are multilingual or have experience teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). They are supported by an international group of teaching assistants, a counselor and office staff, along with the Principal, Mrs. Julie Allen, Assistant Principal, Mrs. Sharonda Frazier,, and Academic Coach, Mrs. Aliya Jafri.

Facilities: ICS is leasing a Dekalb County building that has, aside from classrooms and offices, a cafeteria/auditorium with a kitchen, gymnasium, playground, basketball court, and a mutli-use field. There are four modular buildings.

School Hours. Classes start at 8:20 a.m., and end at 3:15p.m. Students are considered late after 8:20 am. And an adult must come in with the child to the office, and sign in as “tardy”. Afternoon carpool ends at 3:45 p.m. Students who are not enrolled in the After School Program must be picked up no later than 3:45 pm in order to avoid late fees. If a student must be picked up before carpool time, it must be by 2:30 p.m. No child can be checked out after 2:30 p.m. until students are released to buses and carpool at 3:15.

Transportation.

BUS: ICS will be utilizing Dekalb County School buses. We will be utilizing a transportation zone which will require a minimum distance and maximum distance at which transportation can be provided for students.

Bus service requests must be made at least two weeks in advance to take effect. Students who do not ride the bus will not be able to ride unless they have already requested bus service two weeks ahead of time.

Routes will be developed by Dekalb County based on student’s addresses It is very important that the Registrar and/or Campus Coordinator has your current address on file.

Parents must be present at the bus stop for any student who is under the age of 9. Students will not be dropped off if they are under the age of 9 and a parent is not present.

The school provides bus service to and from Clarkston and other areas with large concentrations of our students. In the mornings, all students are picked up, and taken to school. Students must be at their designated stop about 10 minutes before the scheduled pickup to ensure they do not miss the bus. In the afternoon, there are two schedules on the days when after school activities are offered: 3:15 p.m. for students who do not participate in any after-school activity; and 4:30pm for those participating in a sport or club.

CAR: Many families bring their children by car or arrange transportation with others. Families must follow carpool procedures in place. *For questions, contact the main office at (404) 499-8969, Ms. Tamesha Squire (campus coordinator) or Ms. Inye (registrar).*

Meals. The children can eat lunch or breakfast that the school serves, or bring from home. All families must fill out the *Federal free or reduced meal application* online at <https://www.schoolcafe.com/> in order to qualify for financial assistance. Families who do not qualify, must pay for the meals.

We are currently NOT a nut-free school. If you have concerns about this, please address it at the front office. When bringing food to share in the classroom, please avoid nuts and pork. *For questions, contact the main office, Mr. Javid (javid.f.arani@icsgeorgia.org) or Cholpon Ismailova, School Business Manager cholpon.ismailova@icsgeorgia.org.*

After-School Program. Generation InFocus provides afterschool services 3:30pm-6:00pm Monday through Friday. Parents can sign-up during registration, or by inquiring at the front office. Please see ICS Website for more information on Generation Infocus.

In addition, some teachers run free afterschool clubs on different days of the week. A full listing of options for the year will come home in August, and clubs will begin after Labor Day.

Governance. ICS is a DeKalb County public (charter) school governed by a Board of Directors, composed of a diverse group of stakeholders that includes ICS parents.

Visitors. Every person who enters the building must sign in/out at the front office, and receive a badge/sticker before moving to other parts of the building. Families must make an appointment with the teacher: no walk-ins, as it interrupts instruction.

4. Admissions

Criteria for Selection. Students must be residents of DeKalb County. Kindergarten students must be age five and first grade students age six before September 1, of the school year.. ICS gives preference to applicants whose siblings are already enrolled in the school and to children of our staff. Students who are eligible to attend Decatur City Schools cannot attend DeKalb County Schools. ICS does all that it can to ensure that the diversity of the student body reflects our Mission, Vision, and Values.

Admissions Procedures. Parents complete an online application form. In late March, the school verifies the number of qualified applicants (see above) for the following school year, and if there are enough places for qualified applicants, the school informs the parents/guardians that the children have been accepted. If there are more applicants than places in a charter school, the law obliges these schools to conduct a lottery among the applicants. If a student is accepted, before s/he can be registered at ICS as a DeKalb County student, parents must complete official registration forms and submit all necessary paperwork. Students may not enroll in ICS, unless consequences at a prior school or system have been served. This includes expulsion and alternative school determinations. Students who have been expelled from another school or assigned to an alternative school will not be allowed to enroll at ICS until those consequences expire or are reversed.

In order to hold the place for a student who has been accepted, the school must receive all paperwork by the established deadline. If for any reason you would like for the school to provide school records or transcripts, please contact our registrar with ample notice.

5. Academic program

ICS Approach: Innovative Education Platform

The ICS curriculum, distinctive instructional methods, and educational programs are based on one unifying principle: ICS is not a school for refugees or a school for American-born children. Instead it is a school where community is intentionally built around groups with diverse backgrounds, nationalities, religions and experiences under the powerful pedagogical idea that the presence of each aids the learning of the other, both academically and socially. ICS improves student learning for refugee, immigrant and local children through its special education services, enhanced language instruction, and a variety of community building activities designed to offer exposure to other cultures and perspectives.

Fostering an Academically Rigorous, Nurturing Environment

It is the goal of ICS to prepare all students to meet the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). Our understanding of academic rigor is that teachers' instruction, student work, and formative and summative assessments should all be aligned with the GPS, and that when these elements are all in alignment - instruction, student work, and assessments - our ICS students will do well on the high-stakes state assessments that determine our College and Career Readiness Performance Indicator (CCRPI) scores.

Our educational philosophy contends that when students are given quality instruction and learning opportunities, when they are given proper supports in a good learning environment, and when expectations are high, the students will do well on assessments.

Students at ICS represent an economic mix seldom seen in U.S. public schools: about 50% are child refugees or immigrants, and about 68% are eligible for free or reduced lunch. It is our responsibility to ensure that all of our students are given every opportunity to succeed and to excel in academics. Some students arrive at ICS with exposure to traditional educational approaches, but in a homogenous setting. Others arrive from far corners of the world, surviving political hardships, never having had the opportunity to be in a school environment, and speaking a variety of languages.

Our goal is that ICS students will leave ICS with the academic skills and knowledge that they will need in order to succeed and to thrive when they move on to sixth grade in another school and well beyond in order to live choice-filled lives.

The ICS education model seeks balance between enrichment and foundational learning, concurrently addressing the needs of groups ready to connect concepts as well as those of groups needing to develop skills. We do this by providing special programs and services not available in most traditional public schools:

- Students follow the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) within the framework of the International Baccalaureate® (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP).

The challenging PYP offers an investigative, inquiry-based approach to learning, emphasizing cross-disciplinary thinking, problem-solving, risk-taking and personal wellness among other traits. The PYP prepares students to become active, caring, lifelong learners who demonstrate respect for themselves and others and have the capacity to participate in the world around them. It focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both within and beyond the classroom

- The student/teacher ratio at ICS is intentionally smaller than many traditional public schools, with classroom assistants working in every grade level.
- All students at ICS study a second or even third language (English, French or Spanish) daily. Some students coming to ICS from other countries may already know more than two languages.
- Children who need extra help in reading, math, and English language skills receive individual assistance through our “School Within the School” tutoring program.
- First-grade students identified by their classroom teachers as needing additional help participate in Reading Recovery®, an early intervention literacy program used in schools around the world.
- ICS expects students to become independent learners and to feel responsibility for the life of their school community and for the success of all its members. The school fosters a sense of service to others both within and outside the school community.

Educating the Whole Child

ICS maintains a commitment to academic excellence, while also providing extracurricular offerings that enhance social development:

- We are committed to providing access to music, art, language, physical education and recess while insisting that students meet progress requirements in language arts, social studies, mathematics and science.
- About one-fourth of the student body participates in ICS’s soccer program, making the ICS soccer program one of the largest public elementary soccer programs in the state. The program, run by volunteers, brings students and families together in the form of a supportive network that breaks down cultural boundaries.
- Many students participate in after school tennis and running clubs sponsored by the United States Tennis Association and Atlanta Track Club, respectively. These offerings are also led by volunteers.

Field Trips. Students extend their learning in the classroom by visiting sites and participating in activities outside the school. Field trips are a part of the academic program at ICS, and must be related to the topics covered in the standards, and the PYP. Teachers, assisted by teaching assistants and room parents, organize visits to places of interest in the Atlanta area during the school day.

Assessment of Student Learning. Assessment is the gathering and analysis of evidence of student learning and performance. Good assessment addresses student knowledge, understanding, performance and attitudes. Assessment is integral to teaching and learning. Both students and teachers should be actively engaged in assessing the student's progress. Students, teachers, parents, administrators and board members should have a clear

understanding of the reasons for assessment, what is being assessed, the criteria for success and the method by which the assessment is made.

Assessments should help to improve, rather than just document student performance. ICS expects the highest possible standards of performance from all of its students. Teachers have purposefully designed internal assessment to provide students with authentic tasks, meaningful benchmarks and direct feedback that they can then use to further their learning.

The school also administers the standardized tests given at other DeKalb County Schools according to the County and State testing calendars. Some of these tests are:

State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Georgia Milestones is administered in grades 3-5 in April/May ● ACCESS is administered to students in ESL (English as a Second Language) class in January/February ● GKIDS (The Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills) is a year-long, performance-based assessment aligned to the state mandated content standards for Kindergarten
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NWEA MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) administered K-5, in the fall, winter and spring. ● CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) and ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) for students who may qualify for Gifted class are administered in the fall.
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment System will be administered at the beginning of the year to all students, K-5. ● Math unit assessments will be administered at the beginning and end of each unit. ● Teacher developed projects, writing assignments, teacher developed quizzes and tests.

Working with a multi-talented student body

Our purpose at ICS is to encourage, inspire and guide students toward reaching their capacities for academic performance. The capacity of one student is different from the capacities of others. So we do everything we can to set our daily work and homework assignments to the needs of each child.

- Level One Plans, Individual Educational Improvement Plan (IEP), Special Needs Identification and Early Intervention Program (EIP). According to State and County policies, the school develops a plan for students who do not meet minimum standards on tests given by DeKalb County Schools. Students who have been identified with “special needs” through the SST process and specific testing may qualify for an IEP which specifies what services they receive. ICS provides an “Early Intervention Program” for

students in kindergarten through Fifth Grade who are not performing at grade level in mathematics and/or language arts. The learning specialist either works with these students in the regular classroom setting or pulls them out for special sessions. The school determines the approach based on the needs of the children.

- Student Support Team (SST). The SST is an official DeKalb County Schools Committee comprised of several members of the school staff and an assigned DeKalb County School System psychologist. The SST meets with parents and teachers of children who require additional support to reach their full potential, and develops written protocols for those services at the school.
- Working with Advanced Students. According to our charter, ICS will address the needs of more advanced students, including those identified as “gifted” according to their results on standardized tests. These identified students participate in a class on a weekly basis to address their unique needs.
- Guidance Program. An important support to healing and community building is the school’s guidance programs. The guidance counselor works with the faculty and coordinates programs for children to encourage social-emotional growth in students and assists staff in creating an environment in which all kids can succeed.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Progress reports will be sent home during the 3rd week of October, and 3rd week of March. Report Cards will go home in the 2nd week of January and 5th week of May.

October: After parents receive progress reports in October, they are asked to meet with grade-level teachers. They will schedule a time with the teacher, when they will discuss the progress the student has made in the first 9 weeks of school, areas of strength and of improvement. Depending on the child and the subject of the meeting, student participation in the conference can be a very positive experience both for the child and for the parents.

May: Before the school year ends, the parents schedule another conference with the teacher, but this time the student will lead the conference where he/she will show their work to the parents. The teacher would be present, but it is an opportunity for the student to share what they learned throughout the year, using a collection of yearly work kept in a portfolio.

6. Schedule of school activities

Regular School Hours are from 8:20 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Morning arrival.

School doors will open at 7:30 am. Teacher assistants supervise students in the cafeteria until 7:45, at which time, students go to class to engage in independent reading time.

7:40-8:20 - Carpool: Parents may drop off their child. There are adults outside to supervise the children coming into the building.

Students who come by bus will arrive at about 7:45 a.m.

Students are considered late after 8:20, and an adult must sign them in at the office. Students will walk to classrooms by themselves, and parents need to say goodbye to their children at the door of the office.

We keep careful records of attendance and lateness for two reasons: (1) In the interests of the children's safety and security, we must know which children are at school each day and where they are throughout the day. (2) We must report attendance records to school authorities.

Afternoon Departure. Students will not be released from the office between 2:30 and 3:45 pm. During these times, parents must wait for the carpool time, and follow such procedure.

Buses leave at about 3:25 pm, and carpool begins at 3:20 p.m. We ask that all parents who pick up children stay in their cars and display the cards indicating carpool numbers so that we can calmly and safely get the children to their cars within a very short period of time.

Parents will be charged, through Generation InFocus, \$1 per minute after 3:45pm if students are not picked up.

Children whose parents have arranged for the After-School Program are escorted to the rooms reserved for the program. If you wish your child or children to participate in the After-School Program, please register them in the office. After school students must be picked up by 6:00 pm.

There will be no early release days for the 2019-20 school year.

Daily Schedules for all grade levels are comparable (This list is not in chronological order)

Two periods of Balanced Literacy

Two periods of Mathematics

One period of writing

One period of ESOL (*English for Speakers of Other Languages*), French or Spanish

One period of art, music, physical education or library

20 minutes for lunch and a 30 minutes recess with additional transition time built in wherever possible

On Fridays, teachers will still teach one remedial Math block to differentiate and reach all learners. The rest of the day will be spent in social studies and science content relating to the IB theme. Fridays will also be reserved for field trips.

7. Homework

ICS views homework as an extension or practice of work done in the classroom. Therefore, teachers give homework to reinforce what the student has practiced in class. Teachers give homework according to the abilities and progress of individual students. Homework should encourage a student to become more responsible and help her/him to make effective use of her/his time. We really do want to see what the children can actually do, so that we can adjust our teaching to their needs. Therefore, beyond some simple advice or a quick response to a child's question, parents should not assist their children with homework. If homework is taking an extensive period of time, or your child cannot complete the homework, simply sign the top of the homework and provide a quick note to the teacher so they can follow up and review with your student the next day.

Some grade levels give homework on a weekly basis and ask that students complete some of it each night of the week. Other grade levels give homework daily. Especially at the upper grades, some assignments are longer term.

ICS does not want homework to be a burden to either the children or their parents, and we realize that children should play at home and be in bed early every evening. Children should never stay up beyond a reasonable bedtime to finish their homework. Parents can always further student learning by extending topics in conversations, games, readings, visits to museums and other places of interest, etc.

8. Code of Conduct

The goals of the PYP Behavior & Discipline Policy at ICS are to create a safe and orderly environment that is conducive to learning for all students, and to develop in our students an awareness of how their personal actions affect others and the overall school community.

The relationship between rights and responsibilities is pivotal to behavior expectations of our students. In order for each of us to exercise our rights, it is necessary for us to uphold and honor our responsibilities to preserve these rights for everyone. The code of behavior applies to all in-school and school-related activities, including during field trips, the After-School Program and on the school bus.

ICS teachers and students work together to build classroom community agreements that are consistent and aligned with the IB Learner Profile. Each teacher has the professional discretion to establish and enforce his/her own classroom agreements, which are posted in the classroom, and is responsible for communicating the classroom agreements and consequences to the respective parents. Teachers, students, parents and administrators are committed to working together to address disciplinary matters with the aim to help students develop strategies to self-regulate behavior and take responsibility for their chosen actions.

When misconduct happens, referrals are to be (can be) completed and submitted by Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Paraprofessionals, and Administrators. (Students receiving In School Suspension, ICS Parent Handbook 2019-20

will not be able to participate in extracurricular activities, field trips, assemblies, or special class/school events on the same day). Please see the ICS Code of Conduct for further details.

Every parent and student must acknowledge that they have understood the complete ICS Conduct Policy (available in a separate document, and from which this section of the handbook is extracted), including expectations, agreements, consequences and recognition/incentives.

Please refer to the ICS Code of Conduct for complete information.

9. Attendance and Absences

Student Attendance. Regular attendance and punctuality are vital to students' academic success and to their integration into our school community. Please make certain that your child can be present in her/his classroom by no later than 8:20 every morning. The school is obliged to report absences and tardiness to the local school authorities. There are official sanctions for students who are too often absent or frequently late.

Late. When a student gets to school after 8:20, the parent or guardian must come into the office with the child to sign him/her in and a late slip will be issued for the student to take to his/her teacher. Students that are not escorted in will be held in the main office until the parent/guardian returns to sign them in for the day.

Absences.

For Reasons of Illness: In case of absence for more than two days because of illness, please provide a note on your child's return explaining the nature of the illness and giving the details of any medication needed or possible after effects. Both you and the doctor must complete a school form before the school can dispense medications of any kind. Ordinarily, children who are not well enough to take part in class and recesses should remain at home. If they are sick, children should not be at school. For children who are absent more than two days in a row, the school must have a note from the child's doctor.

For One Day or More for Other Reasons: Please refrain from taking students out of school for reasons other than illness or family emergency. When it is necessary to do so, please inform the Registrar or the front office in writing at least one week prior to the day(s) of absence. Teachers can provide homework assignments in these cases, but completion of such assignments will not substitute for the child's active participation in the class sessions themselves. Parents send important messages to their children by the way they treat school attendance.

For Absences during Part of a Day: The school prefers that parents schedule medical and dental appointments for children outside of school hours. However, if you must take your child out of school during the school day for any reason, e.g. medical appointments, family commitments, please provide a note to the office in

advance. Please do not take children out of school for activities such as dance, music, etc. There may also be occasions when the school must send your child home (sickness for example). In all cases, come to the school office and sign your child out. We will bring her/him to you in the office. We will not release a child to an unknown person without identification and prior permission from the parent or guardian.

Inclement Weather and other Emergencies. DeKalb County Schools' primary concern is the safety of all students and employees-those who ride buses, those who walk, and those who are driven or drive their own cars to school. When severe weather creates hazardous conditions in DeKalb County, regular school scheduling may be altered or suspended. ICS, as part of DCSD, follows these measures. Please follow us on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and subscribe to our newsletter to receive these updates. We will also use robocall when appropriate.

10. Meals

The children can eat lunch or breakfast that the school serves, or they can bring it from home.

School Breakfast will not be served after 8:15 am to ensure students are ready for instruction at 8:20am.

School lunch is catered by *Lunch For Kids*. A menu is available at the front office at the beginning of each month. All families must fill out the *Federal free or reduced meal application* online. Families who do not qualify for free meals, must pay the school for the reduced or full fee of the meals. It is preferred to have a positive balance in your account. Lunch and/or breakfast can be purchased on a regular basis or sporadically. Payments for Afterschool and Meals: The preferred method for payment is through TeacherEase, which can be found at www.teacherease.com. Otherwise, there is a box located in the office for payment by cash, check or money order.

The fees are: BREAKFAST \$1.89 full price and \$0.30 reduced per meal. LUNCH \$2.95 full price and \$0.40 reduced per meal.

According to school policy if a paid lunch student has an unpaid balance that student can be refused a standard school lunch. Students with a negative meal account balance will be given a supplemental school lunch. This is also in accordance with USDA guidelines.

Sending food from home. The school serves healthy meals, so we ask families to send balanced meals including fruits, vegetables and protein. Please avoid sending sugary drinks, and excess of chips and such snacks.

We are currently **NOT a nut-free school**, but when bringing food to share in the classroom, please avoid nuts. *For questions, contact the main office, Mr. Javid in the cafeteria (javid.f.arani@icsgeorgia.org) or Ms. Cholpon Ismailova (cholpon.ismailova@icsgeorgia.org)*

11. Uniform and school materials

School Uniform. The uniform for the ICS is simple: navy blue pants/shorts and light blue or white polo-style shirt or knit shirt for boys, and navy blue pants/shorts/ skirt or jumper and light blue or white polo-style shirt or knit blouse for girls. Children should wear blue or white socks or tights. Only on Fridays, they have a choice of wearing the uniform, or they can wear an “ICS” t-shirt. They can wear uniform, or “jeans” bottoms.

They should wear comfortable shoes that they can play in (tennis shoes or sneakers, or other comfortable shoes, but not sandals or flip-flops), since they will not change their shoes for recess or PE. Parents can purchase these clothes at department stores such as Target, Sears, WalMart, etc. The clothes are also available at uniform stores.

Students must wear the uniform as it is described. There are to be no logos on shirts. Students must also tuck in their shirts or blouses when they are in the building and not wear a hat in the building. Spirit days are every Friday and jeans and an ICS shirt are allowed on these days. Additional Spirit Days will be announced.

Young children are active, both in class and on the playground, and so the clothing provided should allow for ease of movement. “Flip flops,” heels, open-toed sandals or shoes are not acceptable, because they are hazardous on the playground and stairways.

Lost and Found. The school keeps lost property for a certain period of time. Parents and students should check the designated area as soon as they notice that an article is missing. At the end of each month, clothes will be given away. Please help us to minimize loss by marking all items, including the uniform, with the student’s name.

Educational Materials. Each student needs a sturdy bag suitable for carrying school books and materials. Parents should purchase supplies from the list provided by each grade level. Generous volunteers sometimes provide enough supplies for families who cannot afford them. The school provides textbooks. We encourage talking to the homeroom teacher and offer to support students who can’t cover them.

All ICS students are expected to use technology appropriately. All electronic devices need to be kept off during the school day. When using ICS technology, the devices must be used for class assignments and learning only. ICS reserves the right to confiscate devices being used in an inappropriate manner per the code of conduct. Students should not use devices to record other students or adults in the building without express permission to do so. See the Code of Conduct for further details.

Toys and/or games are not permitted at ICS unless students have expressly been given permission to do so by a teacher or staff member.

12. Safety and Health

The safety and health of each one of our students is of the utmost importance to us.

Safety of Students. ICS adheres to the DCSS rules and procedures regarding fire drills, tornado drills, lockdown, and evacuation drills. Please note that in the event of an actual tornado, lockdown, or evacuation that students will not be released until the school has been given the “all clear” notification.

Release of students. Every family is asked to provide the information of authorized people who can pick up the students. We ask that you keep that information updated, so we can ensure the safety of our students.

Visitors. Every person who enters the building must sign in/out at the front office, and receive a badge/sticker before moving to other parts of the building.

Security Camera Policy. Security cameras have been installed in certain areas of the school for the enhancement of security for students, staff, and property. Cameras will be used in a professional, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with Georgia law. Access to camera surveillance will be restricted to Principal, Assistant Principal, and School Business Manager.

Security cameras will be reviewed in the event of any incident and/or accident that occurs on school grounds.

Accidents at School. Staff members report accidents on a form for that purpose, and call parents in case of a relatively serious accident. In serious cases, staff members call parents and emergency services.

Student Health. We encourage families to keep the children home if they appear to be sick, or they are not feeling well yet. Children may transmit the illness to others, and they can't learn if they are feeling sick. In the case that this happens, the school will make every attempt to help the child feel comfortable, but will call the parents to pick up their child if they don't feel better. They must be fever-free (less than 100.5°F) and with no vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school.

Students in any school have a variety of physical and health challenges and ICS creates a specific health plan (federally recognized *504 Plan*) for each student with a special health challenge. Please speak with the registrar if you have questions about this.

Allergies. Several of our students have allergies to specific substances. These need to be properly documented in the office.

Healthy Food and Drink at ICS. ICS encourages students to eat healthy food and drink, low in sugar, fat and processed materials. If you provide a snack for your child and/or other children, please make sure that it meets these criteria.

Medications. The office (not the teacher) is responsible for giving prescribed medication to a child, but only on receipt of a form giving her permission to do so (signed by both the doctor and the parent) and full instructions. Such forms are available in the school office. Parents should never give children medication to take in school without supervision.

Infectious Diseases. From time to time, the Health Care Coordinator will inform parents of an incident of infectious disease among the children of a certain grade level. This information is given so that parents will observe their child and take whatever precautions are necessary.

No-Nit Lice Policy. The presence of nits (eggs) or even lice in children's hair is widespread throughout the world. The U.S. National Pediculosis Association writes, "Pediculosis represents one of the most common communicable childhood diseases and whether or not we understand how this has evolved, it is important to acknowledge head lice as a problem when raising or caring for children. We can begin to improve the current situation by assuring that the health programs of every school, camp and child care facility operate with an acceptable head lice management protocol." Unless parents treat the condition, other children at the school will also become infected, and the problem will not be managed at school. For these reasons, ICS has adopted the No-Nit Policy recommended by the National Pediculosis Association: "Head-lice is very contagious and requires immediate treatment with appropriate medication (Rid or Nix, for example). Nits (lice eggs) must be removed from the hair shaft with a fine-toothed comb or by using one's fingernails to pull the nits out of the hair. **Children cannot return to the school until they are free of live lice or nits.** When a child returns to the school, the Health Coordinator or another designated person together with the parent, will check the child's head to confirm that the hair is free of live lice and nits before the child is allowed to return to class."

Ringworm. Ringworm is also a highly contagious disease, and requires very specific treatments prescribed by a doctor. Students with ringworm will be sent home to be treated and cannot return until the treatment has been effected.

Suspected Child Abuse. The school will report suspicions of child abuse to the DeKalb County Schools' Social Work Department. An assigned social worker will investigate and may report findings to the appropriate authorities: the DeKalb County Department of Family and Children Services, Protective Services Division or the DeKalb County Department of Public Safety. There are three kinds of abuse: physical, emotional and sexual. Abuse in any of these categories is an action that violates state law. Any suspected abuse must be reported to the school counselor who will inform the proper authorities, if necessary. The school provides the required training to staff about Child Abuse.

14. School Events

Parent involvement and support is extremely important. All families are encouraged to attend regular and special events and meetings, where they can meet the parents of their child's friends, stay informed on the operation and day-to-day of the school, and volunteer to strengthen our school with their gifts. We are all part of this community, and we all make a difference. There are several activities throughout the year. Follow the school's website and communications sent home, to stay informed.

A suggested number of **volunteer hours** per family are 20 per year. Aside from class and school events, there are monthly meetings, as well as opportunities to volunteer during school hours include chaperoning during field trips, attending presentations and activities planned in the classrooms and assisting during the food co-op. Opportunities during after school include coaching/ assisting with athletic activities and other clubs. Spirit Nights are organized a few times a year by IPTSO.

A very special day at our school is **United Nations Day**, set to be celebrated on November 1, 2019. Children dress in native dress or colors of national flags of the country where the family is from (this is preferred), or the one they choose to represent. Children parade by national groups, holding signs indicating each country. They then sing in different languages, and other performances take place. A potluck follows, as another sign of ICS families sharing their heritage with one another. This day includes almost a full (school) day of activities, to which the whole community is encouraged to participate. There is no after school on that day. Save the date, and plan to attend.

15. Communications

Teachers use different methods to stay in touch with families on a daily or weekly basis. Your child's teacher will inform you of the best way to stay connected to class news. Additionally:

School-wide newsletters and blasts are sent every Friday with information important to the entire school. Families are highly encouraged to subscribe to the electronic version of the newsletter. You may do so by entering your email at the bottom of our website www.icsgeorgia.org under "Our Newsletter." It is advised for families to receive the electronic version as it can be translated on your device, helps reduce printing costs, and it can be accessed at the parent's convenience.

"Friday Folders" are sent home each week and are used by teachers and administration. These contain announcements, forms and news from teachers and administration.

Agendas are used in grades 2-5 to record homework, upcoming projects and tests, and to communicate about behavior when necessary. Parents are encouraged to review and reinforce this life skill with students at home.

Parents can expect a **grade-level newsletter** a minimum of once a month which includes current standards being taught, upcoming projects, field trips, special events, volunteer opportunities and a wish list.

A **calling system** is also used for phone calls and text messages for immediate news and reminders. It is important the school has your current phone numbers. Text messages are only received when families reply "Y" (Yes) to a confirmation text. In order to receive text message alerts from ICS please text the letter "Y" to 67587

The **school's website** contains a calendar, forms, news, and much more. <https://icsgeorgia.org>

Follow the school's **official Facebook** page can be found at [ICSGeorgia](https://www.facebook.com/ICSGeorgia). There also are Facebook groups for families and alumni, but these are not monitored or moderated by the school.

Follow the school's **Twitter** account [@ICSgeorgia](#)

Follow the school's **Instagram** page [icsgeorgia](#)

ICS has a YouTube Channel with a collection of videos. You can find it at: [ICS Georgia](#).

At ICS, we realize that **face-to-face communications** in an international school are very important, but also complicated because of language and culture differences. To make communication easier for everyone, we suggest the following:

- If you are a native speaker of English, be patient and understanding of those at our school who are not, both staff members and other parents. Listen to them carefully, and – with kindness – ask them to repeat a word or spell a word that you do not understand.
- When you have questions about anything in the classroom, please see the teacher. You can write a note, or communicate in another way communicated by the teacher. Teachers appreciate hearing directly from parents. However, you should not go to the classroom just before or just after classes or during the school day. During these times teachers are very busy with all of the children.
- If you have questions beyond what a teacher can answer, please contact the Assistant Principal, Sharonda Frazier.

Who to Contact for Help. As the community that we are, we help each other. Feel free to reach out to any parent or staff member if you need assistance. In the same way, if you are not new to our school, please extend a “hello” and a helpful hand to anyone, especially those who seem to need it most.

At the end of this handbook, you will find a list of the most common reasons why you might need assistance, and how to contact the person who can help you the most.

16. Supporting the school

Volunteer. Parent involvement and support is extremely important. Parents are expected to participate in building community by volunteering time and/or other resources to ICS and its families according to the needs of ICS and other families and their own capacity to contribute.

All families are encouraged to attend regular and special events and meetings, where they can meet the parents of their child's friends, stay informed on the operation and day-to-day of the school, and volunteer to strengthen our school with their gifts. We are all part of this community, and we all make a difference. There are many opportunities throughout the year. Follow the school's different channels of communication to stay informed.

A suggested number of **volunteer hours** per family are 20 per year. Aside from class and school events, there are monthly meetings, as well as opportunities to volunteer during school hours. These

include chaperoning during field trips, attending presentations and activities planned in the classrooms and assisting during the food co-op. Opportunities after school include coaching/ assisting with athletic activities and other clubs, and with special events. Spirit Nights are organized a few times a year by IPTSO.

Giving

ICS Annual Fund:

ICS is a mission based non-profit educational organization. We serve a unique student population, and in order to serve our community in a holistic way, we run a variety of special programs and offer additional services to our community. The funds received from DeKalb county does not cover all our funding needs so we must fundraise for the rest. We raise funds through our Annual Fund. The Annual Fund is the bridge between funds received from DeKalb County and the actual cost of educating ICS students. The funds raised through our Annual Fund pay for all types of things like our daily bus transportation, after-school transportation, experiential learning field trips, SWS tutoring program, after-school sports clubs, professional development for teachers, facilities maintenance and so much more! We fundraise through individuals, foundations and corporations. As an ICS community member we ask that you be very aware of our fundraising practices and support our efforts. Some Foundations will only grant awards to organizations that can prove 100% financial support from all community stakeholders which includes parents, board members, staff and faculty. We ask that all parents donate to our annual fund at least once a year. Pledge cards will be distributed in the Fall and Spring semesters. Please turn one in at your earliest convenience or donate online at <https://icsgeorgia.org/donate>.

Passive fundraising: ICS participates in several passive fundraising initiatives. This is an easy way to earn money for our school. Please share this with your families and friends.

- Designate ICS as your Community Reward partner at www.kroger.com or at any store, and ICS will receive funds for every purchase you make with your *Kroger Plus Card*.
- Clip Box Tops from your grocery items and bring them to the ICS front office. Each Box Top is worth 10¢. Check out www.boxtops4education.com for online earning opportunities, product coupons, etc.
- When ordering through Amazon.com, you can go instead through Amazon Smile, and earn money for ICS. Update Your Charity to International Community School, Decatur, GA. For every purchase made through Amazon Smile, a donation is made by Amazon.

17. IPTSO

IPTSO is ICS's parent organization. It stands for International Parent Teacher Student Organization, and is the school's leading parent support base. Other schools often call theirs PTA, or PTO.

We support our teachers in their efforts to provide our children with a quality education and build community among our families. Parents, grandparents, teachers, staff members and community members may join IPTSO. Anyone who is interested in making ICS the best school it can be is welcome to be a part of IPTSO. Dues are \$5 per year. You may include your cash or check with your form or you may pay in the office.

The meetings are once a month at 6 p.m. in the cafeteria. We provide childcare.

18. Appendices

WHO CAN HELP - ICS Staff

TITLE	NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION	HOW WE CAN HELP
Principal	Julie Allen	Julie.Allen@icsgeorgia.org	School compliance, Improvement Plan, Escalated Concerns, Board of Directors, Special Education, Gifted, Charter Compliance, Scheduling
Assistant Principal	Sharonda Frazier	Sharonda.Frazier@icsgeorgia.org	Student discipline, School culture/climate, Title I, Testing, Grading, Personnel Concerns
Academic Coach	Aliya Jafri	Aliya.Jafri@icsgeorgia.org	Instruction, IB, Field Trips, Media Center
School Business Manager	Cholpon Ismailova	cholpon.ismailova@icsgeorgia.org	Nutrition Program, Transportation, Rental Contracts
Counselor	Sherrie Ramsey	Sherrie.Ramsey@icsgeorgia.org	Counseling, 504 Plans, tardies/absences
Development Director	Marinella Taoushiani	Marinella.Taoushiani@icsgeorgia.org	School's fundraising, grants, annual fund, matching gifts, business partnerships

Cafeteria Supervisor	Javid Foroughi Arani	javid.f.arani@icsgeorgia.org	Menus, Free/reduced meal program
Campus Coordinator and Special Events Director	Tamesha Squire	tamesha.squire@icsgeorgia.org	Facilities, maintenance, transportation, operations, special events, robocalls
Registrar	Inye Durham	inye.durham@icsgeorgia.org	Admissions, absences, grade reporting, records, field trips, uniforms
Communications Manager	Claudia Rule	claudia.rule@icsgeorgia.org	Newsletter, website
SWS Coordinator	Jennifer Hunter	jennifer.hunter@icsgeorgia.org	School Within a School

For a complete list of names and contact information of the instructional staff, please refer to the ICS website at: <https://icsgeorgia.org/about-us/faculty-administration/>. This page will be fully updated by the first week of August with all new staff for the 2019-20 school year.