



# **Family Handbook 2018-2019**

# **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Discovery Charter School  
Hillpointe Campus  
8941 Hillpointe Rd.  
Las Vegas, NV 89134  
Phone: 702-240-0359 Fax: 702-240-0432**

**Discovery Charter School  
Mesa Vista Campus  
3883 E Mesa Vista Way  
Las Vegas, NV 89120  
Phone: 702-547-5682 Fax: 702-547-5685**

**Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Monday-Thursday)  
7:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (Friday)**

**School Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 2:45 p.m. (Monday-Thursday)  
8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (Friday)**

## **Administration and Support Staff**

**Deniece Nohara, Ed.D. - Principal  
Amanda Kettleon - Assistant Principal  
Angie Story - Office Specialist  
Gabriel Espinoza - Special Education  
Dana Limanen - Special Education Assistant  
Samantha Bianco - Special Education Assistant  
Debbie Parshall - FASA (Hillpointe)  
Amber Marino - Custodian (Hillpointe)  
Isabella Pichon - FASA (Mesa Vista)  
Jordan May - Custodian (Mesa Vista)**

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## WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?

Defined by the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools ([www.publiccharters.org](http://www.publiccharters.org)), charter schools are independent **public schools** allowed freedom to be more innovative, while being held accountable for improved student achievement. They foster a partnership between parents, teachers, and students to create an environment in which parents can be more involved, teachers are given freedom to innovate and students are provided structure they need to learn, with all three held accountable for improved student achievement.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Discovery Charter School's mission is to promote a safe, nurturing environment which fosters student success through community involvement, progressive educational practices, and innovative use of technology.

## **ACADEMICS AND SCHOOL INITIATIVES**

### **Academic Learning Contracts**

With their classroom teacher, all students create an Academic Learning Contract. Included in this agreement are academic, behavioral, and attendance goals. Using initial assessment data, students and teachers in all grade levels create year-long goals for student success. Academic goals differ by grade level and student, but all students are expected to have nine or fewer unexcused absences and make appropriate choices that prevent them from being suspended or receiving an RPC during the school year. Students in Grades 3-8 also make the commitment to provide their teacher with 150% effort on the SBAC assessment. The Academic Learning Contract meets the requirements of NRS 388.165 requiring the development of an academic plan for all middle school students.

Students meeting their goals are invited to an end-of-year field trip at no cost to the student or their family. Students were invited to Six Flags Magic Mountain in California at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. Discovery Charter School (DCS) charters busses and teachers and staff members chaperone the event. Families are invited to join the celebration but parent entrance fees are the responsibility of the parent.

### **Curriculum**

As a public school funded by the State of Nevada, DCS is required to implement Nevada Academic Content Standards and show growth according to standardized assessments and the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) 2.0. Although we are held accountable to teach these standards, we are able to determine how the standards are addressed.

DCS uses the following curriculum to address content areas:

1. Ready/i-Ready are used as the reading and mathematics curriculum for students in Grades 1-8. Students in kindergarten use Ready for mathematics only.
2. Heggerty Phonemic Awareness builds students' ability to hear and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words. This is a foundational skill and the program is used by students in kindergarten and 1st grade.
3. Reading Eggs also builds phonemic awareness and is used by students in kindergarten and 1st grade in addition to older students who have not mastered this foundational skill.
4. Learning Dynamics addresses early reading skills including letter identification and phonics. It is used by students in kindergarten.
5. ST Math, or Spatial Temporal Math, is a computer program requiring students to solve math puzzles addressing skills using spatial and temporal reasoning. Students are asked to manipulate objects in order to solve multi-step problems. Students in kindergarten through Grade 8 use ST Math.
6. Thinking Maps is a series of eight graphic organizers that build cognitive thinking skills across all content areas. Students in kindergarten through Grade 8 use Thinking Maps.
7. FOSS, or Full Option Science System, addresses science standards through inquiry, investigation, and experimentation and is used by all students.
8. Common Sense Media's Digital Citizenship Curriculum addresses Technology standards and builds students' awareness of the importance of being a digital citizen. Common Sense Media is

a non-profit organization and their purpose is to educate students, families, teachers, and policymakers about the importance of digital citizenship. The curriculum is appropriate for K-12 students. It is a free resource for students, teachers, and families.

In addition to the curriculum listed above, students also visit a specialist weekly. All students attend a physical education class twice each week and a music, technology, and art explorations class once each week.

Physical Education classes build gross motor skills, promote health-enhancing physical activity, and encourages physical safety. Music classes focus on playing instruments, reading and evaluating music, and singing. In technology, students focus on becoming a digital citizen, effectively communicating using technology, conducting research using online tools, coding, and computer science. Lastly, the art explorations class focuses on multimedia, performing, and visual arts.

### **Grit and Growth Mindset**

We believe in fostering grit and a growth mindset among ourselves and our students. As a staff, we engaged in a book study using the book *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* by Angela Duckworth. Our school counselor also provides in-class lessons focused on these topics. To continue the grit and growth mindset discussion at home, we ask our families to reflect on the following questions:

- Does my child persevere through difficult tasks?
- Does my child have a growth mindset?
- Is my child respectful toward staff members and peers?
- Is my child compassionate toward others?
- Is my child responsible?

### **Project Based Learning**

Discovery Charter School implements Project Based Learning. Project Based Learning is a teaching method where students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to a complex question, problem, or challenge. Essential project design elements include:

- Key Knowledge, Understanding, and Success Skills- The project is focused on student learning goals and includes standards-based content and skills such as critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, and self-management.
- Challenging Problem or Question- The project is framed by a meaningful problem or question.
- Sustained Inquiry- Students engage in a rigorous, extended process of asking questions, finding resources, and applying information.
- Authenticity- The project features real world context, tasks and tools, and quality standards and also speaks to students' personal concerns, interests, and issues in their lives. When appropriate and possible, community members may be invited to participate in a project. Participation may be in the form of project evaluation or an entry event.
- Student Voice and Choice- Students make some decisions about the project, including how they work and what they create.

- Reflection- Students and teachers reflect on learning, the effectiveness of their inquiry and project activities, the quality of student work, and obstacles and how to overcome them.
- Critique and Revision- Students give, receive, and use feedback to improve their process and products.
- Public Product- Students publicize their project by explaining, displaying, and/or presenting it to others beyond the classroom.

### **Standards-Based Grading**

DCS does not use a traditional, point-based grading system where, for example, 90% correct on an assignment is equivalent to an A- letter grade. Instead, we use a standards-based grading model.

The purpose of a standards-based grading model is to measure a student’s proficiency level regarding specific standards. Whereas a traditional grading model provides information regarding a student’s knowledge of a topic at one point in time and computes an average of the student’s scores, standards-based grading measures student progress toward mastering a topic over a period of time.

DCS uses a four-level grading model and numbers correspond as follows:

- 1 - Not Yet
- 2 - Approaching (Almost There)
- 3 - Meets (Independent)
- 4 - Mastering

The numbers listed above do not translate to a traditional grading scale and are not meant to translate. This grading system does not have a negative effect on our middle school students applying to magnet high schools.

Since academic standards were designed with the purpose of end-of-year mastery, standards-based grading aligns with the intent of our academic standards. Additionally, this grading practices aligns with our school-wide initiatives focusing on fostering grit and a growth mindset.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance and participation in class are essential if the student is to gain the maximum benefit of the educational program. Regular and punctual school attendance of students is expected, encouraged, and will be enforced. School attendance is an area which requires mutual cooperation among the school, parents, and the student. Before school and after school care is available at each site.

### **Absences**

If your child will be absent for any reason, please call the main office and leave a message. Contact the main office immediately if your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness.

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MESA VISTA CAMPUS: 702-547-5682

An excused absence is allowed for student illness, doctor/dentist/legal appointments, death in the immediate family, or quarantine. When your child is absent for any reason, he/she is expected to make up missed classroom assignments. A written note or email to the main office is **required** in order for the absence to be documented as Excused. This documentation must be received within three days of your child's return to school.

If you expect your child to be absent from school for three (3) days or more for any reason, you must meet with the classroom teacher to arrange for makeup assignments.

If you expect your child to be absent from school for five (5) days or more for a reason that is not related to a doctor/dentist/legal appointment, death in the immediate family, or quarantine, a prearranged absence form must be submitted to the main office for review by administration. Factors affecting the approval or denial of a prearranged absence include, but are not limited to, attendance, tardies, and academic progress. If the request for a prearranged absence is denied, the absences will be documented as Unexcused.

### **Unexcused Absences**

When the school records indicate a student has accumulated a total of five (5) unexcused absences, a letter will be sent home documenting the absences and a meeting with the counselor will be scheduled if the student has a history of absences from the previous school year or another school.

When a student accumulates ten (10) unexcused absences, a letter will be sent home documenting the absences and a meeting with the counselor will be scheduled. An administrator will attend the meeting if the student has a history of absences from the previous school year or another school.

When a student accumulates 15 unexcused absences, a letter will be sent home documenting the absences and a meeting with administration will be scheduled.

If a student accumulates 20 unexcused absences, DCS has the option to file educational neglect under NRS 392.210.

When a student is absent for 10 consecutive days with no parent communication regarding the absences, the student will be withdrawn and the opening given to the next student on the waiting list.

### **Early Student Dismissal**

We ask that appointments are scheduled toward the end of the school day to minimize the disruption of your child's instructional day. If it is necessary for your child to be released during the school day, a parent/guardian must come to the main office and sign the student out. If someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up the student, he or she must be listed as an emergency contact in Infinite

Campus and will be asked to provide identification to main office personnel. If the student returns during the same school day he/she must sign in again.

### **Tardies**

It is very important that each student is on time to school and class each day. Promptness is not only a necessary courtesy to the teacher and other students but, more importantly, it assures the child of getting off to a good start each day. Students who arrive late lose valuable class time in the main office waiting for a tardy pass and become an interruption to the classroom. Helping students realize the importance of being on time is part of building good habits for life.

Tardiness is only excused if a student has a medical, dental, or legal appointment and provides a note from the appointment or there has been a death in the family. All other tardies are considered unexcused.

When school records indicate a student has accumulated a total of five (5) unexcused tardies, the main office will notify the family and possibly schedule a conference. When a student accumulates 10 unexcused tardies, a meeting will be scheduled with the counselor. When a student accumulates 15 unexcused tardies, a meeting with administration will be scheduled.

## **STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Campus Security**

In order to keep our campus secure, our exterior gates are locked and all visitors are required to sign in at the main office. With the exception of the first two days of school, adults are not permitted beyond the school's gates without signing in at the main office and obtaining a visitor's badge.

### **Emergencies**

First Aid and accident procedures are followed by DCS staff. All accidents are reported to the main office/First Aid Safety Assistant (FASA). Each teacher has a first aid kit in the classroom for minor injuries. Students with more serious injuries or illness are sent to the main office. If a parent cannot be contacted, the person designated as an emergency contact will be notified.

DCS reviews and revises its Crisis Response Plan on a yearly basis. In the event of a crisis, parents will be called using the information in Infinite Campus. We encourage families to keep phone lines free so school personnel and community responders can communicate. Listen for information from Infinite Campus as this will help you reunite with your child in a safe and orderly manner. In the event of an evacuation, make sure you bring legal identification (driver's license or passport) to the designated reunification site. Students will only be released to anyone listed in Infinite Campus possessing legal identification.

Students' cellular phones must remain off during a school evacuation, lockdown, or drill. During these situations, tell your child **NOT** to try to contact you by cell phone until permission is given by school staff,

thus allowing emergency communication channels to remain open. DCS has the capability of contacting parents/guardians in an emergency. Additionally, administrators and safety personnel are prepared with two-way radios and cell phones.

### **Emergency Contact Information**

It is extremely important for the school to have current home and emergency telephone numbers as well as your current address so that you are notified in case of an accident, illness, or emergency. Also, be certain that people listed as emergency contacts for your child have been notified that they may be contacted to pick up your child in an emergency situation.

### **Illness**

A family will be asked to pick up a child when the following conditions occur:

1. Rash
2. Multiple diarrhea (2x)
3. Vomiting due to possible illness
4. Temperature of 100 degrees or above
5. Complaint of aches or soreness associated with an injury or a previously-listed condition

Sick children should return to school when the following conditions have been met:

1. Child is fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication
2. 24 hours on antibiotics when ordered by a physician
3. Doctor's note to return to school accompanies any child sent home for a possible contagious illness (face or body rash, blisters, sore throat accompanied by a fever, etc.) or a student diagnosed by a medical professional with a communicable disease.

Communicable diseases can spread quickly through a school and dramatically affect the attendance and learning of children. Examples of common communicable disease are conjunctivitis (pink eye), strep throat, chicken pox, and ringworm. Please notify the main office immediately if your child becomes ill with a communicable disease.

### **Immunizations**

Students are required to have current immunizations or an exemption on file. The status of a child's immunizations are monitored and managed by the school's FASA.

### **Medication Policy**

Medication can and will only be administered to a student by trained personnel. For safety reasons, students are not permitted to administer their own medication unless prescribed by a medical professional. Any parent/guardian of a student requiring medication during the instructional day must provide the health office with a signed and witnessed Medication Release Form in addition to the prescription. DCS will not administer medication to a student without a prescription. Medications must be in the original prescribed container and will be kept in a locked cabinet in the health office. The medication will be kept at all times in a labeled container which indicates the name of the student to receive the medication, the name and dosage of the medication, the name of the prescribing

practitioner, and the instructions for administration. The school is not liable for loss or misuse of such medication. Under no circumstances may a student provide medication to another student.

### **Online Safety**

Due to the increase in technology and the need for students to become responsible users and consumers of technology, DCS students spend the first quarter of the year learning digital citizenship and online safety practices. We also require students to sign an Acceptable Use Policy outlining DCS's expectations for technology use. All students are provided a DCS-managed Google account. Students use this account to access Google Classroom and other online instructional tools. All students, and their parents, must sign the Acceptable Use Policy every year and return it to the school.

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

The staff, students, and community at Discovery Charter School values being:

- respectful of ourselves, others, and our environment,
- responsible for our actions,
- an active listener,
- prepared to learn,
- resourceful problem solvers, and
- safe.

Students who model exemplary behavior have the opportunity to be nominated as an Owl of the Month and join administration for a breakfast in their honor. Teachers and support staff have the ability to nominate one student each month.

In order to ensure that Discovery Charter School is a place where learning is a priority, the school must be safe at all times and students and parents should be aware of the possible consequences of their behavior.

Teachers have well-defined expectations, rules, and procedures that serve to optimize the learning environment in their individual classrooms. Should a conflict or misconduct occur in the classroom or on campus, staff will adhere to the following system of increasing consequences.

### **Minor/Moderate Conflict and Misconduct**

When behavior issues arise that jeopardize student safety or detract from the learning environment, teachers document these incidents using Infinite Campus. Incident records become part of the student's cumulative educational record. Records include a description of the infraction and a description of what the teacher did to solve the problem.

1. Verbal Warning - Redirection to appropriate behaviors and creating solutions so the student has the tools to make a better choice in the future.
2. First Documented Offense - If the behavior is not corrected via the verbal warning then a teacher-student conference is held where desired behaviors and solutions are discussed with student input. The teacher will also contact the student's parents.
3. Second Documented Offense- A second offense will warrant a written reflection of the student's behavior and the teacher will contact the student's parents.
4. Third Documented Offense- A third offense will warrant a counselor referral and meeting to discuss desired student behavior and identify solutions. The counselor will also contact the student's parents.
5. Fourth Documented Offense- A fourth offense will warrant an office referral.

Meetings, discussions, and Infinite Campus documentation are necessary to collect accurate data and solve problems. Incremental steps must be established and followed to maintain a safe and productive learning environment.

If a student's behavior is continuously disrupting the learning environment, the student may be moved to another classroom or setting. The teacher will develop an agreement with another member of the DCS staff to designate an alternative setting for students that need to be removed from a class.

The teacher who has removed the student from their class will provide credit-bearing work for the student to do while they are in the alternative setting.

A teacher or staff member witnessing an incident will document the incident in Infinite Campus, inform administration, and follow up with any necessary parental contact.

### **Severe Conflict and Misconduct**

Professional judgment by the administration will determine the severity of the incident and the need for more severe and immediate action, including a Required Parent Conference (RPC) with temporary removal from the campus and /or suspension.

DCS will not tolerate destruction of school property which includes, but is not limited to, stealing, defacing school property or the property of others, unauthorized use of equipment, or inappropriate use of technology. Additionally, student threats, acts of violence, bullying, cyberbullying, and references to violence will not be tolerated.

Disciplinary action taken by administration is a direct consequence of unacceptable behavior by a student. Rules and regulations are established to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning.

## **SCHOOLWIDE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Attire**

In order to foster an environment that promotes learning, students attending Discovery Charter School are expected to wear the following:

- tops that cover their midsection,
- tops that have straps that are at least three (3) inches wide,
- shorts, skirts, and dresses that are at least fingertip length,
- hair of a natural color, and
- shoes with soles. Students will refrain from wearing slippers or flip flops. Tennis shoes are required for Physical Education.

The school administration has the right to designate the types of dress or appearance that disrupts the learning environment and/or may be deemed a safety hazard. This includes, but is not limited to, slogans or advertising on clothing that may be deemed offensive or obscene to others.

Students wear their kindness shirt every Wednesday for Kindness Wednesday and school spirit days take place on Friday so students are encouraged to wear their DCS shirt.

Parents will be asked to provide a change of clothes for students who do not adhere to DCS's dress code policy. Students who continually do not follow the dress code policy will be sent home on an RPC and a meeting will be scheduled.

**Daily Schedule (Monday - Thursday)**

7:45 a.m.	Gates Open
8:00 a.m.	Instructional Day Begins and Gates Close
8:05 a.m.	Tardy
10:45 a.m.	Lunch/Recess Block 1
11:20 a.m.	Lunch/Recess Block 2
11:55 a.m.	Lunch/Recess Block 3
12:30 p.m.	Lunch/Recess Block 4 (Hillpointe Only)
2:45 p.m.	Dismissal
2:55 p.m.	Students not picked up are taken to the main office**

\*Lunch blocks are assigned to teachers and/or grade levels on a yearly basis. Please ask for a copy of the yearly Master Schedule to identify your child's assigned lunch block.

\*\*We understand emergencies arise and when that happens we make every attempt to work with families to ensure their children are safe. The main office will need to contact the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department when students are not picked up by the time the main office closes and

contact with the parent/legal guardian was not made. Incidents of students habitually not picked up on time will be documented in Infinite Campus and a meeting scheduled with administration.

### **Daily Schedule (Friday)**

7:45 a.m.	Gates Open
8:00 a.m.	Instructional Day Begins and Gates Close
8:05 a.m.	Tardy
11:30 a.m.	Dismissal
11:40 a.m.	Students not picked up are taken to the main office**

\*\*We understand emergencies arise and when that happens we make every attempt to work with families to ensure their children are safe. The main office will need to contact the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department when students are not picked up by the time the main office closes and contact with the parent/legal guardian was not made. Incidents of students habitually not picked up on time will be documented in Infinite Campus and a meeting scheduled with administration.

### **Drop-off/Pick-up Procedures**

#### **Hillpointe Campus**

**Arrival: 7:45 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.**

There are four access points available for drop off.

- Kindergarten students use the gate near the main office. We ask that only kindergarten students and their siblings use this gate.
- Students in Grades 1-2 use the gate in the back parking lot.
- Students in Grades 3-5 use the gate located off Center Hill Drive.
- Middle school students use the door to the middle school building.

If you would like to walk your child to a gate, you must park in a designated space. The parking lot in the back of the school is designated for staff parking and P.E. classes.

We encourage families to walk their child to their classroom for the first two days of school. On the third day, all adults are required to sign in at the office before proceeding to a classroom.

There is **NO PARKING** on the marked sides of the island in front of the school. Parking in these spaces will contribute to traffic congestion in our parking lot and on Hillpointe Road. The outer lanes around the island are designated as staging lanes. Do not leave your vehicle unattended in the staging lanes and only make a right-hand turn on Hillpointe Road.

**Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. will need to check in at the main office.**

**Dismissal: Monday - Thursday 2:45 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.; Friday 11:30 a.m. - 11:40 a.m.**

Students are dismissed from the gate they entered. Do not leave your vehicle unattended in staging lanes. Students will be released to a designated adult coordinated between the teacher and family. Students not picked up by 2:55 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 11:40 a.m. on Fridays will be escorted to the main office.

Before- and after-school care is available for families at a cost and is provided by Symbolic Arts. Students that participate in an after-school care program will be escorted to the main office at dismissal.

### **Mesa Vista Campus**

**Arrival: 7:45 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.**

All students enter the Mesa Vista campus through the gate located next to the main office. If you would like to walk your child to the gate, you must park on the street.

We encourage families to walk their child to their classroom for the first two days of school. On the third day, all adults are required to sign in at the office before proceeding to a classroom.

**Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. will need to check in at the main office.**

**Dismissal: Monday - Thursday 2:45 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.; Friday 11:30 a.m. - 11:40 a.m.**

Students are dismissed from the gate they entered. Students will be released to a designated adult coordinated between the teacher and family. Parents may park on the street and enter through the playground gate to retrieve their child. Staging may occur on the right side of the driveway only. Please stay with your vehicle if you are in the staging lane waiting for your student. There is no parking or staging on the left side of the driveway. Students not picked up by 2:55 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 11:40 a.m. on Fridays will be escorted to the main office.

Before- and after-school care is available for families at a cost and is provided by Symbolic Arts. Students that participate in an after-school care program will be escorted to the main office at dismissal.

### **Field Trips**

At Discovery Charter School, we believe field trips are experiences that foster realistic connections to the greater community. When it is scheduled, the classroom teacher will provide parents/guardians with information concerning the purpose and destination of the field trip, eating arrangements, date and time of departure, estimated time of return, arrangements for supervision, and cost to the student.

Attendance on field trips is voluntary and as such transportation to and from the field trip is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian. DCS does not coordinate or arrange transportation for field trips and is not liable for injury or illness caused by the negligence of persons selected by parents/legal guardians to provide transportation.

If your child attends a field trip, it is mandatory that a permission slip is signed by a parent or guardian. Students must have permission slips turned in by the designated date in order to participate. Parents that are chaperoning the field trip must check in at the main office before proceeding to the classroom.

If your child does not attend a field trip, the classroom teacher will make arrangements for them to spend the day with another class.

### **Lost and Found**

Please label personal items such as coats, lunch boxes, and backpacks so these items can be returned to their owners. The lost and found boxes are located in the cafeteria at Hillpointe and the main office at Mesa Vista. Please check the Lost and Found immediately upon losing an item. Unclaimed items will be donated at the end of each month to a charitable organization.

### **Lunch**

Students are responsible for bringing their own lunch to school. Students have the option of purchasing a hot lunch provided by an outside vendor. Lunches must be ordered by 8:30 a.m. or ordered in advance. Please visit our website or contact the main office for additional information about ordering lunches.

Students are provided with a 30-minute lunch and recess block. At Hillpointe, students spend the first 15 minutes either eating in the cafeteria or playing outside. This is dependent on their schedule. Students always have the option to continue or begin eating outside, again dependent on their schedule, and many students enjoy picnic lunches with their friends when outside.

At Mesa Vista, students spend the first 15 minutes eating and the next 15 minutes playing. Students have the option to continue eating if they have not finished their lunch and some choose to continue eating and engaging in conversations with their friends.

At both campuses, students are encouraged to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before eating. Students are expected to remain seated while eating. Due to food allergies and to maintain student health, students are not allowed to share food. Students are encouraged to engage in quiet conversations with those near them and are not permitted to yell or use inappropriate language.

We are unable to deliver forgotten lunches or money during instruction. Students are welcome to come to the main office during their lunch block to retrieve their lunch. Please assist us in increasing student

responsibility by reminding your child to be prepared for the school day by ensuring they have their lunch box or money to purchase a hot lunch.

We strongly promote healthy eating habits, especially limiting high sugar foods and soda. We also promote a Nut Free Zone and ask families to support this as you prepare your child's lunch. Please visit <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/> for additional information.

### **Personal Technology Devices**

Personal technology and communication devices, such as cell phones or tablet computers, are utilized in many ways and are becoming a component of the educational setting. At school, it is critical that students only access personal technology and communication devices when allowed and only for the intended use. Discovery Charter School's Acceptable Use Policy provides guidelines for the appropriate usage of both school and personal electronic devices along with consequences for violations of the policy.

At Discovery Charter School, students are allowed to use personal technology and communication devices before 8:00 a.m. and after 2:45 p.m. During the instructional day, students' cellular phones and personal electronic devices must be turned off and remain off unless permission is provided by the classroom teacher to use the device for an instructional purpose.

Use of personal technology and communication devices that violate state or federal law, any DCS policies or regulations, or Discovery Charter School's Acceptable Use Policy, is prohibited. When usage of devices is not allowed, devices must be turned off and stored in a non-visible location such as in a backpack, purse, or pocket. Failure to adhere to DCS's policies will result in the confiscation of devices. Confiscated devices will only be returned to a parent/guardian. Many of our classrooms have telephones and students are able to use the telephone in the main office.

Parents/guardians are asked to silence cellular phones and other devices while visiting our campuses. This serves to maintain the integrity of our learning environment.

### **School Parties/Celebrations**

School parties and celebrations are held to recognize special holidays or events. Details of celebrations will be announced during the year. Parents may be asked to assist teachers with preparations. If parents wish to send a treat with their child for the class to share, the teacher must be notified in advance to ensure a snack is provided that will meet the dietary needs of the classroom. Families interested in providing a snack to celebrate their child's birthday may take the snack to the main office. Teachers will distribute birthday snacks during the last 20 minutes of the day.

### **Snacks**

Up to two snack times are provided for students in Grades K-3 in addition to the students' scheduled lunch period. Snack times are provided at the discretion of the classroom teacher and last no longer than 15 minutes. Students are responsible for bringing their own snacks to school. We strongly promote healthy eating habits, especially limiting high sugar foods and soda. We also promote a Nut Free Zone and ask families to support this as you prepare your child's snack options. Please visit <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/> for additional information.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Parent Conferences**

Teachers are available after school to address any quick question a parent may have. If you would like to schedule a meeting with your child's teacher then please email them directly.

### **Parent Portal**

We use Infinite Campus' Parent Portal to keep families informed of their child's attendance and academic progress. Parents are required to sign an Infinite Campus Acceptable Use Policy before receiving their username and password information from the main office. Please contact the main office to receive your copy of the policy.

### **Phone Calls & Messages**

Emergency messages from parents to students at school will be handled promptly at any time. Please be aware that we are unable to deliver forgotten items such as lunches, money, cell phones, and supplies during instruction. Students are welcome to come to the main office during their lunch block to retrieve these items. Please assist us in increasing student responsibility by reminding your child to be prepared for the school day by ensuring they have all materials.

Routine plans for the day should be discussed with your child before he/she leaves for school. This will assist the main office and eliminate classroom interruptions.

### **Report Cards**

Students receive report cards at the end of the first semester and again at the end of the school year. Parent/Teacher and/or student-led conferences will be held toward the end of the first semester. Contact your child's teacher if you would like to schedule additional meetings to discuss your child's progress.

All parents are provided with login information for Parent Portal in Infinite Campus once an Acceptable Use Agreement for Infinite Campus is signed. This form and login information can be obtained from the main office. The Parent Portal allows parents to monitor academic progress. Additionally, parents can monitor student progress using i-Ready.

### **Solution-Based Communication**

Parents are our partners in our students' success so if you have a classroom concern, please contact the teacher in a calm manner to schedule an appointment and create a solution. Please note it may take two days before the teacher can make an appointment in person to address your concern. Once the solution is reached, please allow time for implementation.

If the problem is occurring at lunch/recess, please contact personnel supervising the lunch/recess block to work on an agreed-upon solution. Please note that some personnel change campuses every two days so it may take longer for them to set an appointment.

If the solutions do not seem to be working, please contact administration by calling the main office during our hours of operations and completing a Request for Contact. Describing the event and answering these questions will assist the administration team in identifying a solution:

- a. When did you originally meet with the teacher?
- b. What solution did you both agree on implementing in the classroom?
- c. How many days has it been since the implementation of the solution?
- d. Has there been further communication with the teacher updating you on any challenges or further issues? If so, what were the outcomes?

Administrators will respond to a Request for Contact within 24 hours.

### **Staff E-Mail**

Each member of the staff and the DCS Receiver have an assigned email address to allow for convenient communication between staff, parents, and the receiver. All email addresses consist of the person's first initial and last name followed by dcsv.org. For example, the email address for Great Teacher would be gteacher@dcsv.org.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

Student growth and achievement are measured using multiple data sources and points. Some of the assessments used at DCS are specific to our school while others are required by the State of Nevada.

### **DCS Assessments**

Students take a diagnostic assessment for i-Ready, the online component of our face-to-face curriculum, Ready. This diagnostic assessment is administered three times per year. Based on the student's diagnostic assessment, a personalized learning path is created for students in i-Ready and teachers also use the data to guide their instruction.

Students also take a monthly growth monitoring assessment in i-Ready to monitor their progress and adjust instruction as needed. These assessments are seamlessly incorporated into the i-Ready curriculum. Additional information is located on our website under the Academics tab.

## **Nevada Assessments**

Under Nevada's Read by 3 legislation, Senate Bill 391, all K-3 students must take the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment. Students in Grades 1-3 take the MAP assessment during the fall, winter, and spring, while students in kindergarten take the assessment during winter and spring. The MAP assessment must be administered within 30 instructional days of the start of the school year.

The Brigance Assessment is also required under Nevada's Read by 3 legislation for kindergarten students. Brigance is administered in the fall. This assessment must also be administered within 30 instructional days of the start of the school year. Your child's kindergarten teacher may ask you to assess your child during the week before the school year begins. This minimizes the amount of instructional time needed to administer this one-on-one assessment.

All students in Grades 3-8 must take the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) assessment in the spring. This is a standardized test that is designed to measure mastery of the Nevada Academic Content Standards in reading and mathematics. This results of this assessment are included in DCS's NSPF 2.0 ratings.

The WIDA assessment is administered to students whose primary language is a language other than English and have been designated as an English Learner (EL). Students new to the country are administered an initial assessment and all EL students are administered the WIDA assessment in the spring in order to measure language acquisition.

Students in Grades 5 and 8 are administered a standardized science assessment at the end of each school year. Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, this assessment will be included in DCS's NSPF 2.0 rating.

## **Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) 2.0**

All schools are evaluated using the NSPF 2.0. Among other measures, SBAC, WIDA, and attendance data are the driving forces behind each school's rating. Schools are rated on a scale of 1 through 5 given results focused on academic achievement and student growth as measured by SBAC, English language acquisition for EL students as measured by WIDA, closing opportunity gaps as measured by SBAC, and student engagement as measured by attendance and a climate survey for students in Grades 5 and above. At the middle school level, academic learning plans and NAC 389.445 requirements are also included in the student engagement score. Information for the NSPF 2.0 can be found on our website:

<http://www.dcsv.org/accountability-report/#toggle-id-2>

The information can also be found using the Nevada Accountability Portal:

[http://nevadareportcard.com/DI/nv/state\\_public\\_charter\\_schools/dcs/nspf/](http://nevadareportcard.com/DI/nv/state_public_charter_schools/dcs/nspf/)

## **ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE**

Some students may require additional assistance to ensure they meet their end-of-year goals and achieve academic success.

### **Response to Intervention (RTI)**

Discovery Charter School uses the Response to Intervention (RTI) approach to address any academic, social, emotional, or behavioral concerns. RTI is a method of intervention which is designed to provide early, effective assistance to children who are having difficulty learning.

Students requiring RTI interventions are provided with additional small-group instruction for 6-8 weeks. The interventions are designed to specifically target each student's needs. Students are monitored for growth on a weekly basis and the intervention is then revised, if necessary, to meet the needs of the students. Interventions may be provided by the classroom teacher or a licensed staff member specializing in RTI interventions.

### **Student Retention**

In accordance with Nevada's Read by Grade 3 legislation, students not performing on grade level according to multiple assessment measures may be retained by 3rd grade. The first year of 3rd grade retention, as mandated by Nevada's Read by Grade 3 legislation, will occur in 2020-2021.

In addition to Read by Grade 3 legislation, the following criteria are used when considering the retention of a student:

1. A review of achievement, both past and present
2. A review of standardized testing, if available
3. Report cards, progress reports, and general performance on daily assignments
4. Participation and progress in the RTI process
5. In the instance of children with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the recommendation of the RTI team will have precedence.
6. Attendance records
7. Evidence of parent and student knowledge regarding the student's lack of progress
8. Parent/guardian concerns

A parent/guardian that does not agree with a recommendation to retain their child may request, in writing, that the Receiver review the decision.

### **Special Education**

At Discovery Charter School, we aim to have an inclusive model for our children with special needs. We believe the regular classroom is often the best environment for our special needs children to learn. Students with identified physical, emotional, learning, or developmental disabilities have the right to placement in the least restrictive environment and may receive special education services according to a

written Individualized Education Plan (IEP). When it is necessary, we will contract with licensed specialists to provide special education services to our students.

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND FAMILY EVENTS**

### **DCS Foundation**

The DCS Foundation is a non-profit, community-based organization. Its purpose is to provide resources and opportunities to support education, the community, art and cultural programs, as well as activities and events for students, family members, and staff of Discovery Charter School. The Foundation also adheres to and assists in achieving the Mission Statement of Discovery Charter School.

The DCS Foundation is the primary source for fundraising at Discovery Charter School and provides families with another option to volunteer to support the DCS Community outside of the classroom. The Foundation meets monthly and the public is welcome to attend.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

Extracurricular activities at DCS vary based on student interest and teacher availability as all adults serving as an advisor for an extracurricular activity do so on a voluntary basis. In the past, after school clubs have included Legos, robotics, coding, journalism, chess, and various sports. The following clubs are offered every year and students are provided a membership after engaging in a selection process:

- National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS) - Students are admitted to NEHS after a teacher recommendation initiates the application and interview process. Eligibility requirements focus on scholarship, responsibility, leadership, and service. Discovery Charter School's elementary chapter is one of only 22 in the Las Vegas Valley.
- National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) - Students are admitted to NJHS after a teacher recommendation initiates the application and interview process. Eligibility requirements focus on scholarship, character, leadership, citizenship, and service.
- Student Council - Middle school students have the ability to campaign for president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer while other students may serve as classroom representatives.

All students participating in an extracurricular activity must be picked up within 10 minutes of the activity's end time in order to remain eligible for participation. After the second occurrence, students who are not picked up within 10 minutes must enroll in an after-school care program in order to re-enroll in the activity.

### **For the Love of Art Gala**

Discovery's For the Love of Art Gala and Silent Auction began in 2013 with the idea that every student at DCS should have the opportunity to create artwork and have it displayed for the public. We partnered with a downtown art gallery called Emergency Arts who allowed us to use their facility. After three years of successful shows held at Emergency Arts, we outgrew the space. In 2016, DCS's For the Love of Art Gala moved to the Downtown Container Park. The additional space allows DCS students to showcase additional skills such as theatrical and instrumental performances. Patrons have the opportunity to bid on all artwork and crafts on display.

### **Fundraising**

There are many ways to help fundraise for Discovery Charter School. In addition to attending and volunteering at large fundraising events such as the Art Gala, musicals, and the Spring Carnival, which are hosted by the DCS Foundation, you can help DCS fundraise through activities you do every day.

- Amazon
  - Use smile.amazon.com and enter 'DCS Foundation' in the search bar to add Discovery Charter School as your charity.
- Box Tops
  - Please turn them into the main office
  - <http://www.boxtops4education.com/>
- Labels for Education
  - Please turn them into the main office
- <http://walmart.dcsfoundation.org>
- <http://bestbuy.dcsfoundation.org>

### **Lunch with a Loved One**

Families are invited to enjoy lunch with students during Discovery's Lunch with a Loved One events. Picnic blankets are encouraged so families can relax and enjoy lunch on the grass.

### **Multicultural Feast**

DCS's Multicultural Feast occurs every November and each classroom represents a country. Students research the country's culture and traditions. This educational opportunity culminates in a large-scale feast where families are asked to prepare a dish to share from the countries students researched.

### **Parent Advisory Committee**

Twenty parents comprise Discovery Charter School's Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). PAC members meet with administration monthly to discuss school-wide initiatives and upcoming events.

### **Pastries with the Principal**

Pastries with the Principal meetings are held monthly and alternate between campuses although all parents, no matter the campus, are invited to attend. This provides families an opportunity to ask school-level questions to the administrative team. The meetings are streamed through Facebook Live for families unable to attend and administration discusses upcoming events and initiatives.

### **Spring Carnival**

DCS's annual Spring Carnival takes place in May and is a combined-campus event. Families can enjoy games, food, raffles, vendors, and fun!

### **Trunk-or-Treat and Fall Festival**

Families are invited to participate in a spooktacular evening filled with games, food, and a safe opportunity for students to trick-or-treat. Parent volunteers and DCS staff decorate their trunks and give candy to little ghosts and ghouls.

### **Volunteering**

Discovery Charter School thrives because of our volunteers. There are many ways parents and guardians can volunteer their time at school. We encourage you to assist in a classroom, help supervise the playground during lunch, chaperone a field trip, or read with students. Please schedule volunteer hours directly with teachers. When volunteering, sign in at the main office and receive a visitor's badge before going to the classroom. In order to maintain the integrity of the instructional day and the safety of all children, younger siblings may not accompany adults when volunteering.

In order to remain in compliance with Senate Bill 287, adults who volunteer at schools or during school activities must be fingerprinted. Volunteers with unsupervised **or** regular contact with students must be fingerprinted. Regular contact is defined as volunteering at least four times per month. The fee for fingerprinting is \$60.00 and is the responsibility of the volunteer, not DCS. Per NRS 388A.515, DCS **cannot** accept fingerprint results from another party and DCS **cannot** provide copies of the results for employment purposes. Parents interested in volunteering according to the definition listed above, must complete the application process which includes completing an application, completing a fingerprint and background check, acknowledgement of being a mandatory reporter of child abuse, and being issued a volunteer badge.

If you are interested in regularly volunteering at Discovery Charter School, please complete the application by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/dcsvolunteers>.

Additional information concerning SB287 can be found here:

[https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/79th2017/Bills/SB/SB287\\_EN.pdf](https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/79th2017/Bills/SB/SB287_EN.pdf)