IDEA policies may be added or amended during the current school year. Any major policy changes will be communicated to students and their families in writing.
Health and Wellness

Communicable Diseases
The DC Department of Health does not permit students to remain at IDEA if they have a communicable disease or symptoms of a communicable disease. Parents or legal guardians should notify the school nurse within 24 hours after the student has developed a known or suspected communicable disease. If a student is found to have signs or symptoms of a communicable disease, a notice will be sent home to all families indicating the disease and the nature of the illness. The names of any ill students will not be shared. All information about communicable diseases is confidential.

The following communicable diseases must be posted or reported:

- COVID-19
- Chickenpox/Varicella
- Conjunctivitis, infectious pink eye
- Diarrhea: viral, parasitic, or bacterial (e.g., E. Coli, Salmonella, Shigella, Rotavirus, Norwalk agent, Enterovirus, Giardia)
- Diphtheria
- Fifth Disease/Erythema infectious
- Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease
- Herpes simplex virus stomatitis (severe case of oral herpes)
- Impetigo
- Influenza (the flu)
- Lice
- Lyme Disease
- Measles
- Meningitis, viral or bacterial (e.g., meningococcus, enterovirus)
- Mumps
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Rabies
- Rubella
- Ringworm of the scalp or body
- Scabies
- Stomatitis
- Strep throat/Scarlet fever
- Tuberculosis
- Typhoid Fever
Drug Policy
IDEA maintains a drug-free environment. Our Code of Conduct requires IDEA to take disciplinary action against any student involved with drugs. IDEA will also take rehabilitative action in such cases through referrals to appropriate agencies. In accordance with the IDEA Code of Conduct, any student suspected of being under the influence of drugs while on school property will be evaluated by the school nurse to determine if the student is under the influence of a controlled substance which then could lead to disciplinary action. In accordance with the IDEA Code of Conduct, any student in possession of drug paraphernalia will be suspended from school and a disciplinary review hearing may result.

Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing or selling any illegal drug or controlled substance, or cannabis (including medical cannabis, marijuana, hashish, vape pens, and infused edibles or liquids) is strictly prohibited and a Level III violation of the Code of Conduct. Although District of Columbia law permits the use and possession of defined amounts of marijuana by persons 21 and over, possession of marijuana or cannabis on school grounds is illegal and will be referred to the Metropolitan Police Department. District of Columbia law permits the use of medical marijuana (i.e., use by persons possessing lawfully issued medical marijuana cards), for persons 18 years or older, but federal laws prohibit marijuana use, possession, and/or cultivation at educational institutions who are recipients of federal funds. The use, possession, or cultivation of marijuana for medical purposes is therefore not allowed at IDEA PCS; nor is it permitted at any school sponsored event or activity off campus.

This policy applies to students, parents, visitors, and staff in all areas within 1,000 feet of IDEA, as it is a drug-free zone by District law.

National School Breakfast and Lunch Program
IDEA is a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school. This provision allows all IDEA students to eat breakfast and lunch free of charge. Students are also allowed to bring their own breakfast and lunch into the building. Refrigeration is not provided by the school. Microwaves are available for student use during breakfast and lunch. If a student brings his or her lunch, she may carry it in the hallway to and from lunch in closed or sealed containers or wrappers, but at no other times. Food may not be stored in school refrigerators or storage units at any time of the day. All food or drinks must be stored in a student’s locker during the school day except during his or her lunchtime.

IDEA is a closed campus. Students may not leave campus to obtain food nor are they permitted to order food for delivery (e.g. UberEats). Students are not permitted to eat or drink outside of the cafeteria. Staff and visitors may not bring nor order students food at any point during the school day unless prior approval is given by the principal.

Students with food allergies must bring in documentation of the allergy and provide it to the nurse and front office staff.

The health of our students and community is important to us. Therefore, students may not bring in unhealthy food or drinks such as candy; soda, energy drinks, or other sugary, carbonated, or

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caffeinated drinks; or messy foods such as sunflower seeds, into the school building. Such foods will be confiscated upon entry of the school building and discarded at the cost of the student. Additionally, students may not enter the school building with any open container of food or drink. Students will be instructed to discard the open or unwrapped items prior to entering the building. These rules apply before, during, and after the school day.

Fitness Room
All PE students will be trained on the use of equipment in the fitness room. Students are not allowed in the fitness room unsupervised. Abuse, destruction, or misuse of equipment will not be tolerated. The fitness room should be left clean. After use, use the appropriate wipes to clean the equipment. All balls, weights, and other apparatus must be returned to the proper place.

Gymnasium and Fitness Center Rules
IDEA rules as specified in the Code of Conduct are applicable to the athletic facility including the gym, classrooms, locker room, and fitness room. Additionally, the following rules will apply to the gym and fitness room:

- Only sneakers are allowed on the gym floor and in the fitness room
- Sneakers must be laced and tied securely
- No balls of any kind hit off walls
- No throwing of objects
- No horseplay
- No gum, candy, seeds, or other food or drink are permissible
- Water bottles are allowed when working out and during PE class as specified by the supervising teacher or coach
- Students may not leave the gym or fitness room without permission
- Students must use appropriate language at all times
- Excessive, rough, or dangerous play will not be tolerated at any time
- Actions that are unsafe to oneself and others will not be tolerated
- Equipment must be used safely and properly and with the direct permission and supervision of the teacher

Health Services
The nurse is responsible for coordinating all medical and nursing services provided in the school. Nursing services include health assessments, health counseling, health care referrals, emergency care, first aid, and supportive health and safety education for all students and school personnel. The nurse or trained staff may administer medication with a physician’s authorization and parent or guardian consent. Students must have on file a medication authorization form that can be obtained from the nurse or the Department of Health website.

Students will not be admitted to the health suite without a valid pass from a teacher. The nurse will sign the pass noting the arrival time and the length of stay. The student must give the pass to his or her teacher upon returning to class. If the nurse determines that a student is too ill to
remain in school, she will contact the child’s parent or guardian. Students who are ill may not leave the building without written authorization from the parent or guardian.

**Immunizations**
Students must be up to date on all immunizations recommended by the District of Columbia Department of Health. If you do not want your child immunized for medical or religious reasons, you must fill out the appropriate exemption forms available from the nurse.

**Injuries**
All injuries sustained in physical education (PE) class should be immediately reported to the teacher so that proper action can be taken. Horseplay during class, in the locker room, or around the facility, will not be tolerated.

**Mandated Reporting**
Student safety is our first priority at IDEA. Because schools are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect, we will call the Child and Family Services Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline if:

- A student tells a staff member that he or she is being abused at home, has witnessed drug use in the home, has been sexually abused, is engaging in child pornography or prostitution, has witnessed domestic abuse, is being threatened at home, or does not want to go home because he or she is afraid.
- A staff member sees physical signs of abuse such as bruises, burns, fractures, etc.
- A staff member notices signs of neglect, including lack of basic food and clothing, inappropriate hygiene, lack of appropriate supervision, lack of medical treatment, or that the child is residing in an inappropriate or dangerous environment.
- A student is engaging in risky behavior (including sexual behavior, drug use, etc.) and the parents or legal guardian are not able to or are unwilling to intervene.
- A student has 10 or more unexcused absences or an extreme tardy problem.
- A student is being kept from school to care for family members or to do chores or work around the house.
- A student is not attending school because he or she is holding a job.
- Parents and legal guardians are repeatedly not returning phone calls, responding to notes or letters home, or coming to school for meetings.

**Medical Exclusion Criteria**
Children may not attend IDEA if they have any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Any illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in the school program
- Any illness that results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
- Fever (over 100 degrees by mouth, ear, or rectally)
- Lethargy, irritability, persistent pain, or other signs of possible severe illness
- Vomiting (two or more times in the past 24 hours)
- Contagious rash (chicken pox, impetigo, scabies)
- Infectious conjunctivitis (pink/red eye with white or yellow eye discharge)

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If the school nurse or IDEA staff suspect or learn of a student with a communicable disease, contagious symptoms, or any of the above signs or symptoms, the student must submit a physician’s note indicating that he or she is eligible to be in school. Students will not be permitted to return to school activity without a physician’s clearance.

**Medical Excuse**

Students in physical education class may be excused from participating in class because of illness or injury up to three days per semester by written note from a parent or guardian, or the school nurse stipulating the number of days. Students will still be required to dress for class (unless the medical situation prohibits the changing of clothes). Students will be required to participate in activities that do not interfere with their medical situation when possible or complete alternative tasks or activities when injury prohibits participating in class activities.

For more than three days of not participating due to illness, students are required to have a note from their doctor. These notes should be presented to the PE teacher and the school nurse. The teacher will make arrangements for the student to complete alternative physical education assignments.

**Medication**

The school nurse and/or trained staff may administer medication to students while in school. Students must have a current Medication Authorization Form signed by a current physician on file. No medication will be administered unless you have completed a Medical Authorization Form. The form must be completed each school year.

Prescription medicines will be administered by the nurse or trained staff only if left in the original container and only according to the instructions on the container.

IDEA staff and/or nurse will not administer any nonprescription medication without a note from the physician. Please cooperate by not asking our staff to administer drugs without instructions from a physician.

Students must secure all remaining medication by the last day of school from the school nurse. Any medication left after the last day of school will be discarded.

**Scholar Support Services**

The Counseling Team is part of the Scholar Support Services Department at IDEA. We work with scholars, staff, and families to support scholars’ social emotional needs, so scholars are available for learning and are able to successfully navigate the boarding program. Once the referral is received, a member of the counseling department will complete an assessment and will determine if counseling services are warranted. The Counseling Team services are available to all enrolled scholars on an as needed basis.
The Counseling Team's services include: Individual and group counseling, social, emotional, and behavioral supports and interventions. The Counseling Team will follow up on all referrals within two weeks. Referral forms can be completed online on IDEA’s website or using the Parent Referral Form. Scholars may self-refer for counseling. Parents/guardians, teachers, and any IDEA staff can also refer a scholar for counseling.

Parental Notification

If a scholar self-refers for counseling services or is referred by an IDEA staff member, the parent/guardian will receive notification of the referral and the outcome of the initial counseling assessment. If a scholar participates in more than three counseling sessions, the scholar’s assigned counselor will follow up with the parent/guardian by phone, email, or in person. Please note that counseling services are voluntary and scholars are not required to attend sessions, with the exception of scholars who have been identified by a counselor as being in crisis (i.e., suicidal ideation or attempt). At such times, counseling becomes mandated. Services are also mandated if specified in a scholar’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan.

Suicide Prevention/Crisis Intervention

If a scholar is observed or heard speaking about harming themselves or others, the following steps will be taken: An immediate report of the incident will be filed and given to a supervisor and a member of the Counseling Team. A member of the Counseling Team will complete a risk assessment and notify the parent/guardian. All recommendations will be shared with administrators. Further assessment may be recommended, which may require that parents/guardians follow up with outside resources. If a scholar is removed from the IDEA community for an assessment, it is mandatory that the scholar returns with official documentation from a doctor or qualified mental health professional releasing his/her to return to the IDEA community. IDEA reserves the right to contact and use the services provided by CHAMPS, when required. The parent/guardian will be notified prior to CHAMPS being contacted. CHAMPS (Child and Adolescent Mobile Psychiatric Service) is a mobile emergency service for families and children experiencing an emotional or mental health crisis in the District of Columbia. CHAMPS staff will assess the crisis and link the scholar and family to appropriate services. This service is provided at no cost to District residents and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for children and youth ages 6 to 18.