



STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025

Dear Families,

We are very excited to have your family returning and our new families joining us here at Dickens Sanomi Academy and look forward to a wonderful school year! As you will find, we will do everything we can to provide a warm, caring, and safe environment for your child (children). This Parent/Student Handbook is designed to help you with the protocol we have at the school and serve as a reference guide for when you have questions.

Please take a few minutes to read this handbook in its entirety to become familiar with our school's Policy and procedures. As always, we are here to answer any questions or concerns you may have about the contents of the handbook. Please contact us any time if you need clarification on any of the enclosed information.

We look forward to seeing you at DSA!

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE:

Head of School: Juliet Sanomi (email: jsanomi@dickenssanomiacademy.org)

Assistant Head of School: Nikia Brooks
(email: nbrooks@dickenssanomiacademy.org)

Director of Operations: Woody Gracia
(wgracia@dickenssanomiacademy.org)

Dean of Students & Director of Therapy Services: Harlens Michell
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Office Manager: Nicky Badoo (email: nbadoo@dickenssanomiacademy.org)

Accounts: billing@dickenssanomiacademy.org

ESE Specialist: Yannery Rogers (yrogers@dickenssanomiacademy.org)

School Accountant: Ese Jack (ejack@dickenssanomiacademy.org)

ARRIVAL

It is important that students are at school each day prepared to learn. **Our instructional day begins promptly at 8:10am each day. Students may be dropped off no earlier than 8:00am. Early care is provided from 6:45am to 8:00am, please sign up if needed. Students arriving after 8:15am are considered tardy and need to be signed in by a parent or guardian in the main office before proceeding to class. Please note, class will begin promptly at 8:15am.** Please make sure morning routines are in place at home to help with a safe and timely arrival to school each day.

TARDIES/EARLY CHECK OUT

Being at school on time is one of the best ways to get your child off to a good start for the day. School hours are 8:00am – 3:00pm with instruction beginning promptly at 8:10am. **If your child arrives after 8:15am, a parent/guardian must sign in at the main office where the tardy student will receive a tardy pass to enter class.**

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is an important factor in student success in school. DSA attendance policy requires students to be in school by 11:45 am to be counted present. If you check your child out before 11:45 am, he or she will be counted absent for that day. The policy further states that parents will be notified after a student has accumulated three (3) unexcused absences in the school year. Notification of excessive absences is warranted after an accumulation of six (6) and ten (10) absences. Families may lose their scholarships based on excessive absences. Absences must be accompanied by a call to the school or a note to the teacher. Excessive absences may require validation such as a doctor's note.

EARLY DISMISSAL

DSA sets aside 5 Early Release days for staff development. School is dismissed at 12:15 pm on these days. Please make arrangements to have your child picked up on time or go to after school if/when after school care is offered. If your child does not regularly attend after school program, you will need to register for care on early release days if needed. Please adhere to these deadlines and processes to ensure your child is taken care of on the early release days.

DEPARTURE

All students are dismissed at 3pm. This time of the day is just as busy as the arrival time with students looking forward to the second half of their day. Students signed up for after school program with **DSA Enrichment Center** will be escorted to the **Aftercare room**. Students being picked up by parents will be escorted by a teacher to the car line on the rear end of the building to be handed to their ride.

To facilitate a safe departure for all students and to make sure we know who students are leaving with, we ask that you adhere to the following guidelines. Thank you for your patience as we work to supervise and get students home safely.

COMMUNICATION

We encourage you to keep in touch with your child's teacher about his/her progress and classroom happenings. There are several ways to have effective communication between

home and school. These include the standard written notes, email, Messages through School Family Portal, emails and by phone. You should expect staff members to respond to emails and other written communication within 24 hours. Teachers are not available to have unscheduled conferences or to answer extended questions either first thing in the morning or at any time during the school day. If you need to speak to your child's teacher about concerns or questions, please schedule a conference. When you have questions or concerns about your child's progress, behavior, grading practices, peer issues, and/or other classroom issues, you should first contact your child's teacher with your concerns/questions.

Day-to-Day Communication

Please make sure your child is aware of after-school pick-up plans or transportation arrangements before leaving home each day. In the event of changes please send a written note to the teacher. If someone else is to pick your child up from school, a written note with your instructions is required and a valid ID card. **If your child is not signed up for after school care, they MUST be picked up at 3pm. Students will be registered in afterschool care after 3:15pm, and parents are required to pay the fees of \$45 for that day.**

CONFERENCES

Teachers will schedule at least two conferences with each student's parent during the school year. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher at any time with questions or concerns. Regular communication between the home and school is critical.

-SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS AT A SCHOOL CONFERENCE:

1. Decide in advance what you want to ask the teacher. Write down questions to prepare for the conference.
2. Ask the child if there is anything he/she would like you to discuss with the teacher.
3. Share information about your child with the teacher. We are more effective in working with your child when we know about him/her.
4. If you have a concern, remain calm until you and the teacher have had time to discuss it thoroughly.
5. Ask the teacher how you can help meet some of your child's needs at home and try some of the suggestions.
6. *Schedule conferences in advance.* Teachers cannot interrupt their classes during the day.

The principal is available to discuss parent concerns or questions at any time; however, *PARENTS SHOULD TALK TO THE TEACHER FIRST UNLESS IT IS AN EMERGENCY OR URGENT MATTER.*

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Give your child's teacher the names and phone numbers of a relatives, neighbors, or friends who can be contacted in case of an emergency when you cannot be reached. If this situation changes during the year, please notify the office. This information should be provided on your child's "Personal Data Sheet". This form will be email or can be picked up at open house. Please return them as soon as possible.

ILLNESS

Children should be kept at home when the following symptoms are present: **Fever, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, red and watery eyes with drainage, severe headache,**

and/or undiagnosed rash. If a child has a fever of 100.6 or higher, they **must be picked up from school.** Please note: *CHILDREN SHOULD REMAIN AT HOME UNTIL FEVER-FREE FOR 24 HOURS.*

PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE

Law prohibits teachers and other school personnel from giving prescribed medication to students without the following criteria having been met:

1. A medical form must be filled out by your child's doctor stating the medication to be given, the dosage, and the time of day the medication is to be taken. This form is available at your doctor's office or at the school. The completed form must be brought to the school office or faxed to us.
2. You, the parent, must present a prescription bottle containing the prescribed medication to the school office.
3. At the designated time each day, your child will report to the office where we will give the medication. The date and the time medication was taken will be recorded with our signature.
- 4.

WE CANNOT GIVE OR ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO TAKE OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION WHILE AT SCHOOL UNLESS WE HAVE AN OCS MEDICAL FORM. THIS INCLUDES ASPIRIN, COUGH DROPS, ACETAMINOPHEN, ETC.

The responsibility of dispensing medication remains with the principal's office staff. Due to a wealth of responsibilities, it would be better if parents before and/or after school could dispense medication. For example, if a medication needs to be taken three times a day, it can be taken when the child wakes up and the second dose after school hours.

BULLYING

We recognize that bullying is disruptive, damaging and sometimes violent, and has a negative effect on school climate. Students who are intimidated and fearful cannot give their education the single-minded attention they need for success. Every student has the right to learn and achieve high academic standards in a safe and civil school environment. DSA will not tolerate any acts of bullying of students on school grounds, in school transportation or at any school-sponsored function.

Bullying is a form of aggression, which involves one or more students verbally, physically, and/or psychologically harassing another student repeatedly over a period of time. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, acts based on race, gender, color, national origin, sexual orientation, physical characteristics or mental capacity. Bullying behaviors can make another person feel hurt, afraid, or uncomfortable.

DISCIPLINE

We believe in:

- *Honesty with kindness and compassion;*
- *Being responsible for our own actions;*

- *Respecting ourselves, others and property; - Working together as one team; and*
- *Always striving to do our best!*

Parents will be notified if student's behavior habitually interferes with teaching and/or learning or is unsafe to peers and other adults in the classroom. Behavioral intervention may be necessary to address extreme behaviors. Parents will also be notified of acts of kindness and good behavior. We know that positive reinforcement goes a long way. ☺ We also know that an engaging curriculum along with strong relationships (with both students and parents) will set the stage for both academic and social success.

UNIFORM POLICY

Students must arrive to school in complete uniform (Khaki or Blue pants or shorts, and DSA logo Polos or PE shirts). It is the policy of DSA to have All our students dressed neatly and tidy in school uniform. Students are not allowed to come to school in the following: Ripped jeans, sweatpants, ripped shirts, crocs, or slippers.

CELL PHONE POLICY:

DSA is a no phone zone. Students are not allowed to have their phones in their book bags, or classrooms. "All PHONES" must be checked in at the front office and picked up at dismissal. At DSA, we take pride in instructing our students without the distraction of cell phones in our classrooms. Any cell phones found on a student, will be taken by administration, and held for 3 weeks. If a student, refuses to comply with handing over their cell phone, the student will be disciplined with internal suspension,, along losing the phone.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum focus at Dickens Sanomi Academy is aligned with and exceeds Florida State BEST Standards. The teachers at DSA emphasize the importance of both an academic and a social curriculum. All students in grades k -12th will participate in all core subjects, and at least one of the following specials listed below:

- Art
- Drama
- Physical Education
- Technology
- Ed Options
- School Clubs

Weekly Classroom Updates:

A student work folder, including work produced during the prior week, will be sent home each week. Parents should review the weekly progress of the student and make arrangements for a conference with the teacher if necessary. Parents should keep the material that is in the folder. We make an effort to include any special bulletins or announcements in this folder, so be on the lookout for these important communications.

FIELD TRIPS

Current educational philosophy recognizes the desirability of using the total community environment as a learning laboratory. To this end, School administrators and teachers may schedule field trips for their classes. These trips are always arranged **for their educational value** and serve to broaden the student's total educational experience and enable students to see people at work. Every effort will be made to assure both the suitability of any trip

away from school and the reasonableness of any cost involved in the trip. For this reason, all field trips must have the approval of the field trip committee. Transportation is provided by bus only. Before a student can go on a field trip, a signed permission sheet from the parent must be on file in the office. **Verbal permission is not accepted.** A field trip is defined as any planned activity that necessitates the student leaving the school grounds during the instructional hours. Some trips may use coach buses and extend outside the normal school hours.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

When weather conditions (Storms, hurricane, etc) threaten the safety of the students, it may be necessary to close school for the entire day, delay opening of school, or dismiss school earlier than usual.

In the event of inclement weather, listen to the local radio and news stations for school delays and/or closings. When school is delayed for students, staff may often work on a delayed schedule as well. Please do not drop your child off earlier than the times stated. If bad weather begins during the school day, the district office will make a decision and notify schools as well as send notification to you or other people listed on your child's emergency card. Please do not call the school to inquire about closings because our lines need to remain open for communication.

*Please make sure that we have current, working phone numbers for you and other emergency contacts for your child. Inform us of any changes to these numbers. We need a reliable way of getting in touch with you or another person responsible for your child at all times.

LUNCH

All students are encouraged to bring healthy lunches. Student can also purchase hot lunches provided by vendors. DSA and its staff **will not heat up any lunches** brought from home, unless a signed waiver is in place. High school students are allowed to heat up their lunches in the microwave provided in their building. Please note, DSA and its members are not liable for any High school student over heating their food or any injuries resulting from over heating their food.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We understand how important parent involvement is to the success of our students. Simply stated, *we can't succeed without parent support.* All volunteers are required to have a level 2 fingerprint before they can volunteer at the school.

VISITORS TO CAMPUS

All visitors, including school and classroom volunteers, must first sign in at the main office before going to classrooms or other areas on campus.

CONTRACT

DSA is utilizing a School Contract for the 2024-2025 school year. The statements reinforce individual responsibilities that support the collective goal of ensuring our mission and vision. Students will be learning about the Contract during the first weeks of school and will have an opportunity to sign once the lessons are complete.

Teacher Agreement:

I will give my best effort every day.

I will foster an inclusive classroom/school community that is physically and emotionally safe, reflective of high expectations and celebratory of individual and classroom accomplishments.

I will respect and celebrate diversity.

I will provide regular, timely, honest, clear and individualized communication in a manner agreed upon by the parent and teacher (newsletter, email, meeting, phone call, etc.).

I will engage students in relevant, challenging, hands-on instruction that is aligned with the state curriculum, involves 21st Century Skills (research, collaboration, leadership, self-assessment, technology, etc.) and promote a joy for learning.

I will clearly communicate and model my expectations for student learning and behavior.

x_____Teacher's Signature. Date: _____

Parent Agreement

I will encourage my child to give his/her best effort every day.

I will regularly communicate with my child's teacher in a manner that is open, timely and honest.

I will work with my child to ensure a system for homework completion and for assignment (and/or daily school experiences) review/discussion with an adult.

I will see that my child is punctual and attends school regularly.

I will notify the teacher of any changes/circumstances that might impact my child's learning.

I acknowledge receipt of the school's handbook.

x_____Parent Signature. Date: _____

Student Agreement

I will give my best effort every day to complete class and homework and to participate in class.

I will work with my teacher to make sure I am always challenged.

I will use words that are kind and respectful.

I will be friendly and helpful to everyone.

I will follow directions wherever I am. I will ask my teacher or another adult at school for help if I need support with my schoolwork, my feelings, and/or my peers.

x_____Student Signature

Date _____, 2024

This page must be sign and returned to your child's teacher.