



STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026

Dear Families,

We are very excited to have your family joining us here at Dickens Sanomi Academy and we look forward to a wonderful school year! As we strive to provide a warm, caring, and safe environment for your child (children), we would like to provide you with this Parent/Student Handbook. This Handbook is designed to serve as a reference guide for all our policies and protocols, ensuring that there is a collaborative approach during this academic journey.

Please take a few minutes to read this handbook in its entirety and become familiar with our school's policies and procedures. As always, we are here to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

We look forward to seeing you at DSA!

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE:

Principal: Juliet Sanomi

Assistant Principal: Nikia Brooks(nbrooks@dickenssanomiacademy.org)

Director of Admissions: Nicky Badoo (nbandoo@dickenssanomiacademy.org)

Office Manager: Monica Rodriguez (mrodriguez@dickenssanomiacademy.org)

Director of Campus Operations: Justine Avila (javila@dickenssanomiacademy.org)

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

ARRIVAL

It is important that students are at school each day prepared and ready to learn. **Our instructional day begins promptly at 8:00am each day. Students may be dropped off no earlier than 7:45 am. Please note, class will begin promptly at 8:00am.** 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

Starting school on time is one of the best ways to get your child off to a good start for the day. School hours are 7:45am - 3pm with instruction beginning promptly at 8:00am. **If your child arrives after 8:15am, a parent/guardian must sign in at the front office.**

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is an important factor in student success in school. DSA attendance policy requires students to be in school by 11:00 am to be counted present. Additionally, if you check your child out before 12:30pm 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) or more 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 and a note to the front office and / or teacher. Excessive absences will require validation, such as a doctor's note.

EARLY DISMISSAL

DSA sets aside 5 -6 Early Release days for staff development. School is dismissed at 12:00 pm on these days. Please make arrangements to have your child picked up on time. It is important that you adhere to these deadlines and processes to ensure your child is taken care of on the early release days.

DEPARTURE

Students are dismissed between 2:45pm – 3:15pm. This time of the day is just as busy as the arrival time with students looking forward to the second half of their day.

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.

1. Arrive on time and use our Carline loop.
2. Be respectful to staff and other families during Carline.
3. Always have your Carline sheet with the student's name.

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 regular emails, attending Parent-Teacher Conferences, and telephone calls. Please understand that teachers are not available to have unscheduled conferences or to answer extended questions throughout the school day. We ask that you please allow 24 – 48 hours turnaround time for Staff to respond to your requests. 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

In the event of changes to your child's scheduled routine, this may include someone else picking them up or even a late pick-up or early release, please inform our Office Manager. If someone else is to pick your child up from school, they **MUST** be placed on our emergency contact list and a valid ID card **MUST** be presented (and copied for our files). **Student's not picked up by 3:15pm will incur a \$50 fee daily. This fee will be billed to your account.**

CONFERENCES

Teachers will schedule at least three [3] 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 class during the day.

Our administrative team is available to discuss parent concerns or questions. If a meeting with the Principal and / or Assistant Principal is requested, please note it will have to be scheduled. *However, PARENTS SHOULD TALK TO THE TEACHER FIRST UNLESS IT IS AN EMERGENCY OR URGENT MATTER.*

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Please ensure that your family portal is updated with the names and phone numbers of 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 and / or update your family portal.

ILLNESS

Children should be kept at home when the following symptoms are present:

Fever, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, red and watery eyes with or without drainage, severe headache, and/or rash.

Please note: ***CHILDREN MUST REMAIN HOME UNTIL FEVER-FREE FOR 24 HOURS.***

PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE

Law prohibits 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 the front office. The completed form must be brought to the school office.

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 an authorized personnel member will administer the medication. The date and the time the medication was taken will be recorded with our signature.

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

The responsibility of dispensing medication remains with the school'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 behavior habitually interferes with teaching and/or learning. 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 at school in complete uniform (Khaki or Blue pants, shorts, or skirt, DSA logo Polos, and sneakers). 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, slippers, or jackets with big logos).

CELL PHONE POLICY:

DSA is a NO phone zone. Students are not allowed to have their phones in their book bags, or classrooms. We ask parents to ensure that students leave their phones at home. Students who are found with a cellphone will be directed to check it in. The phone will be available to pick up during dismissal.

If a student refuses to comply with handing over their cell phone, a parent conference will be held to discuss disciplinary actions

CURRICULUM

Dickens Sanomi Academy follows the Florida State BEST Standards. All our books are aligned with these 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 4 core subjects, and at least two electives. Electives vary based on availability.

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 slip is required. **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 school 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, refer to your email, as 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. Middle School and 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 upper school student overheating 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*. We encourage our families to join us during special events. Families interested in assisting in the classrooms **MUST** have a level 2 fingerprint before they can volunteer in the classroom.

VISTORS TO CAMPUS

All visitors, including school and classroom volunteers, **MUST** sign in at the front office before going to classrooms or other areas on campus. **You will be given a Visitor's Pass and is expected to return that pass before leaving.**

CONTRACT

DSA utilizes and implements an annual School Contract. The statements below 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

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.

x_____ Parent Signature

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

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