



District of Columbia
International School

Student and Family Handbook 2015-16

Letter from School Leadership

Welcome to DC International School! As the most diverse secondary school in Washington, DC, we are committed to providing a socially just, international education for all students. This handbook is a guide to the many policies, practices, and regulations that govern our school community. It is not intended to be a complete collection of all guidelines related to students and families.

The International Baccalaureate’s Middle Years Program ([IB MYP](#)) provides the organizing framework for our education program. Similarly, the [IB Learner Profile](#) provides the organizing framework for this handbook. It is a set of ten characteristics we aim to develop in our students. Each section begins with the definition of the Learner Profile characteristic. There is also an index at the end of the handbook so that you can find specific information when you need it.

It is important that every student and parent/guardian read and understand the policies in this handbook. If you have any questions or need additional information, please talk with one of us or your child’s advisor.

We require that all students and parents/guardians sign and return the “Student and Family Handbook Agreement” you received with this handbook. The student should bring the signed Agreement to the advisor on the first day of school.

We are so pleased you are on this journey with us. Our mission statement reads: “DC International School inspires inquiring, engaged, knowledgeable and caring secondary students who are multi-lingual, culturally competent, and committed to proactively creating a socially just and sustainable world.” On behalf of all members of DCI’s faculty and staff, we look forward to achieving this mission with you and your child.

Sincerely,

Simon Rodberg, Principal

Mary Shaffner, Executive Director

Inquirers

“We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.”

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB MYP)

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) provides an advanced academic experience in grades 6-10. IB MYP students gain both academic and real-world experience and skills. In grades 11-12, students are provided with the coursework to earn the IB Diploma and/or one or more IB subject-specific certificates and/or the IB Career-Related Certificate (IBCC). Students will be able to achieve the rigorous and world respected IB MYP Certificate, IB Diploma, and/or IB Career Certification. Students who continue on the language track from their elementary education may also attain the IB Bilingual Diploma.

The MYP is implemented from grades 6-10: students are eligible to receive the MYP certificate at the end of 10th grade. Both the IBCC and DP Programmes follow in grades 11-12. Students take exams to earn either or both the certificate and degree at the end of 12th grade. DCI International School is a candidate school for the IB MYP. We hope to achieve authorization as an IB World School within the next three years.

The IB MYP, for students aged 11 to 16, provides a framework of academic challenge, encouraging students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world and become critical and reflective thinkers. The MYP consists of eight subject groups for student study: their “mother tongue” or “best-spoken language”, a second language, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, arts, physical education, and design. In the final year (grade 10), students engage in a long-term personal project allowing them to demonstrate the understandings and skills they have developed.

Language Partial Immersion Program

All DCI students participate in our partial immersion program by taking their target language class every day. This class focuses on explicit language and literacy instruction during their time at DCI. Students who are new to language learning at DCI will be afforded a beginning language pathway in one of DCI’s target languages. While we try to honor application preferences, all application students will begin and maintain a language pathway once they enter DCI. Students who enter through a member school feeder pattern will continue in their member school language pathway.

Students are grouped by target language and target language proficiency based on member school recommendation and school assessments. These groupings are designed to allow for a variety of levels of student target language proficiency.

Students are grouped by target language proficiency for their Humanities classes, since these are taught (with varying degrees of support) in target languages as well. At least one other content class is available to students in their target language. There are scaffolded levels of language instruction in these classes.

All students have the option to add additional languages to their program of studies through elective classes. Our goal is to have students reach the maximum target language proficiency possible during their time at DCI.

Knowledgeable

“We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.”

Contact Information

DC International School
3022 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20010
Tel: 202.459.4790 Fax: 202.787.3995
Website: dcinternationalschool.org
Email: info@dcinternationalschool.org
[Facebook.com/dcinternationalschool](https://www.facebook.com/dcinternationalschool)
[Twitter.com/dcischool](https://twitter.com/dcischool)
Staff and student email addresses: first.last@dcinternationalschool.org

Daily Schedule

The school day runs from 8:15 to 4:00, and we follow an “A day”/”B day” alternating school day on Monday-Thursday. On Friday the school day runs from 8:15 to 1:00. ACE activities follow each day’s regular programming.

Students attend English, Math and Language (the student’s target language) every day. Societies, Science, PE, Arts (Drama and Visual), and electives meet on alternating days. All students will take a Design class as a mandatory elective either 1st or 2nd semester; students take three other electives over the school year.

Our “core subject areas” or core classes include English, Math, Language B, Societies, Science, PE, Arts, and Design, in keeping with the IB approach.

Families have been provided a [calendar](#) for the year and are also encouraged to check the [DCI Google Calendar](#) (and add our calendar to your own electronic calendar).

Religious Holidays

DC International School understands that the families of its students practice a variety of religions observing diverse holidays. The school respects and accepts these needs and asks parents to inform us in advance of planned absences or special observances/customs that the child adheres to so that learning is not compromised.

Emergency Closures

We will follow the [DCPS closings](#) in the event of weather emergencies. In the event of other emergencies during non-school hours, DC International School families

should check our website. Additionally, parents/guardians will be contacted through email and telephone by an automated alert messaging service.

Highly Qualified Teaching Staff

DC International School is committed to providing quality instruction for all students and does so by employing the most qualified individuals to teach and support each student in the classroom. Our teachers were chosen based on language ability, IB and/or secondary teaching experience, and their commitment to our mission. The school currently employs approximately 28 well-qualified and experienced classroom teachers, teaching aides, other faculty, coordinators and office staff members.

The Federal *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 requires school districts that receive federal Title I funding to notify parents of their right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers and paraprofessionals who instruct their child. Specifically, you have the right to request the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers and/or paraprofessionals:

- Whether the teacher has met State/District qualification and licensing criteria (charter school teachers are exempt from state licensure requirements) for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency license.
- The teacher's college major, attainment of advanced degree(s) and/or certification(s), and the field of discipline of the degree(s) and/or certification(s).
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.

If you would like to receive any of the information listed above for any of your child's teachers, please contact Denise Lyons, our Business and Compliance Director.

Thinkers

“We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.”

Student Support Services

DC International School uses a *Response to Intervention (RTI)* model for addressing student instructional concerns. Designed to reduce inappropriate referrals to, or placement in, special education, RTI ensures that struggling learners are identified, supported and served early and effectively. RTI is a multi-tiered approach to help struggling learners. Students’ progress is closely monitored at each stage of intervention, which may include small group instruction, to determine the need for further research-based instruction and/or intervention in general education, in special education, or both. Students who are already identified as requiring special education or English Language Learning (ELL) services may be served in small groups, individually within the classroom, in a smaller setting or through a combination of all of the above, in accordance with their needs.

The Student Support Services staff is comprised of Melody Maitland, our Director of Student Support Services, and our learning support teachers. They provide services for literacy needs, ELL needs and special education needs, as well as provide booster services as part of the RTI needs.

Parents/guardians are welcome to contact Ms. Maitland (melody.maitland@dcinternationalschool.org) with any questions regarding the special education referral process.

DCI will ensure that all eligible students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 110-325), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-446) and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110). DCI will ensure that English Language Learners receive equal access to all educational programs and extra-curricular opportunities according to Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (PL 107-110).

Notice of Procedural Safeguards and Grievance Procedures

Parents and guardians who want to learn more about their rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act can obtain a copy of their procedural safeguards from the Section 504 Coordinator, Melody Maitland, at melody.maitland@dcinternationalschool.org. Anyone who believes that DC International School has violated the regulations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act can submit a complaint with the Section 504/ADA coordinator pursuant through DC

International School's Grievance Procedures. A copy of the grievance procedures can be obtained by request through Ms. Maitland

Chromebooks

Device Purpose

DCI is supplying students with a Chromebook device. This device is property of DCI. The supplied device will provide each student access to educational materials needed for each student to be successful. The Chromebook allows student access to ManageBac, Google Apps for Education, educational web-based tools, as well as many other useful sites. The supplied device is an educational tool not intended for gaming, social networking or high end computing. DCI can and will monitor all communication on this device.

1. RECEIVING YOUR CHROMEBOOK:

School Owned/Issued Chromebooks

- Chromebooks will be distributed at the beginning of each school each year to DCI students. Parents/Guardians and students **MUST** sign and return the Chromebook Agreement before the Chromebook can be issued to their child. This Chromebook Policy outlines the procedures and policies for student use and for students and families to protect the Chromebook investment for DCI. Chromebooks will be collected at the end of each school year and students will be reissued the same Chromebook every year while they are still enrolled.

Student Owned Chromebooks

- Only DCI-issued Chromebooks will be permitted for use at school.

2. RETURNING YOUR CHROMEBOOK:

- Students leaving DCI must return Chromebooks to the DCI Information Technology Department on or before their last, full school day.
- Any Chromebook not returned at the end of the year or when the student is no longer enrolled will be considered stolen property and law enforcement agencies will be notified.
- Chromebooks will be examined for damage and fees may be issued if damage is found to be beyond normal wear and tear.

3. TAKING CARE OF YOUR CHROMEBOOK:

Students are responsible for the general care of the Chromebook they have been issued by the school. Chromebooks that are broken, or fail to work properly, must be submitted to the IT Help Desk as soon as possible so that they can be taken care of properly. *Do not take DCI-owned Chromebooks to an outside computer service for any type of repairs or maintenance.*

3a: General Guidelines

- Students must provide a hard-shell cover identified by the school to protect their Chromebook. In addition, a soft sleeve should be purchased for transporting the Chromebook in a backpack.
- Chromebooks must have a DCI asset tag on them at all times and this tag must not be removed or altered in any way. If tag is removed disciplinary action will result.
- No food or drink is allowed next to your Chromebook while it is in use.
- Cords, cables, and removable storage devices must be inserted carefully into the Chromebook.
- Never transport your Chromebook with the power cord plugged in.
- Never store your Chromebook in your carry case or backpack while plugged in.
- *Students should never carry their Chromebooks while the screen is open.*
- Chromebooks must remain free of any writing, drawing, or stickers except on hard shell cover provided by student. In other words, nothing directly on the Chromebook!
- Vents CANNOT be covered.
- Chromebooks should never be left in a car or any unsupervised area.
- Students are responsible for bringing completely charged Chromebooks for use each school day.

3b: Carrying Chromebooks

- Transport Chromebooks with care. Carry in backpack with a soft sleeve around the Chromebook.
- Chromebook lids should always be closed and tightly secured when moving.
- Never move a Chromebook by lifting from the screen. Always support a Chromebook from its bottom with lid closed.
- Always carry your Chromebook in two hands
- Case use is required when transporting the Chromebook to and from the buildings and from classroom to classroom.

3c: Screen Care

Chromebook screens can be easily damaged! The screens are particularly sensitive to damage from excessive pressure on the screen.

- Do not lean or put pressure on the top of the Chromebook when it is closed.
- Do not store the Chromebook with the screen in the open position.
- Do not place anything near the Chromebook that could put pressure on the screen.
- Do not place anything in a carrying case or backpack that will press against the cover.

- Do not poke the screen with anything that will mark or scratch the screen surface.
- Do not place anything on the keyboard before closing the lid (e.g. pens, pencils, or disks).
- Do not place the device near magnets or anything with high electric current.
- Clean the screen with a soft, dry microfiber cloth or anti-static cloth.
- Be cautious when using any cleaning solvents; some individuals may have allergic reactions to chemicals in cleaning solvents and some solvents can even damage the screen. Try to always use water dampened towel or a highly diluted solvent.

4. USING YOUR CHROMEBOOK AT SCHOOL

- Chromebooks are intended for use at school each and every day.
- In addition to teacher expectations for Chromebook use, school messages, announcements, calendars and schedules may be accessed using the Chromebook.
- Students must be responsible to bring their Chromebook to all classes, unless specifically advised not to do so by their class teacher, whereupon they must keep the Chromebook in their backpacks.

4a: Chromebooks Left at Home

- If students leave their Chromebook at home, they will be allowed to phone their parent/guardian to bring it to school. This should occur before the school day starts or at Brunch time to reduce distractions during the school day.
- If unable to contact parents or guardian to bring the device to school, the student can request a Chromebook loaner from their first period teacher who will notify the Help Desk. Loaners are on an as available basis and are not guaranteed.
- Repeat violations of this policy could result in disciplinary action.

4b: Chromebooks Needing Repair

- Chromebooks needing repair will need to be assessed by the IT department. Students can request a status update from the System Administrator on when they should anticipate their repair to be completed.
- Students and families should never attempt to fix a broken Chromebook nor should they have anyone else attempt to fix their Chromebook.
- Loaner Chromebooks may be issued to students when their Chromebook is at the Help Desk for repair. Loaner Chromebooks will not be taken home.
- Students using loaner Chromebooks will be responsible for any damages incurred while in their possession.

- Students will be required to reimburse DCI if a loaner Chromebook is lost or stolen. The replacement cost of a loaner is the same as the standard DCI-issued Chromebook

4c: Charging your Chromebook

- Chromebooks must be brought to school each day fully charged.
- Students need to charge their Chromebooks each evening.

4d: Passwords and Background Images

- Take care to protect your password. Do not share your password.
- Inappropriate media may not be used as a screensaver or background.
- Presence of guns, weapons, pornographic materials, inappropriate language, alcohol, drug, gang related symbols, pictures or anything else deemed inappropriate by DCI staff will result in disciplinary actions.

4e: Audio Restrictions

- Sound must be muted at all times unless permission is obtained from the teacher for instructional purposes.
- Headphones should be used at the discretion of the teacher and each student is responsible as described in the school supply list to provide and bring headphones/earbuds to school every day (under \$20)

4f: Printing from your Chromebook

In an effort to honor our environmental stewardship focus and save on printing costs from paper to ink, DCI is encouraging digital transfer of information by sharing and email information, papers, etc. A student printing station will be available at teacher discretion where students will be able to print files from their Google Drive or from removable media such as a flash drive.

4g: Account Access

- Students will only be able to login using their *@dcinternationalschool.org email account.
- Account login information can be supplied to students by faculty, staff, and the IT help desk.

5. MANAGING and SAVING YOUR DIGITAL WORK WITH A CHROMEBOOK

- Google Apps for Education is a suite of products which includes Gmail, Calendar, Sites, word processing, presentations, drawings, spreadsheets, forms, etc. that lets students create different kinds of online documents, collaborate in real time with other people, and store documents, as well as other files, in the cloud.
- With a wireless Internet connection, you can access your documents and files from any Chromebook, anywhere, at any time, no matter where you are.

- All items will be stored online in the Google Cloud environment.
- Prior to leaving DCI, or graduating, students that want to save any work need to use Google Takeout to transfer any work to a personal Gmail account. Please follow instructions.

6. OPERATING SYSTEM ON YOUR CHROMEBOOK

Chromebooks run a modified version of the Chrome browser. It connects to web resources, apps and extensions provided on the Internet. It does not run Windows application software or Mac application software.

6a: Updating your Chromebook

When a Chromebook starts up, it updates itself automatically, so it has the most recent version of the Chrome operating system without you having to do a thing. No need for time-consuming installs, updates, or re-imaging.

6b: Virus Protections and Additional Software

- With defense-in-depth technology, the Chromebook is built with layers of protection against malware and security attacks.
- Files are stored in the cloud, so there's no need to worry about lost homework.

6c: Procedures for restoring your Chromebook

If your Chromebook needs technical support for the operating system then it needs to be submitted to the DCI IT support staff.

7. ACCEPTABLE USE GUIDELINES

7a: General Guidelines

- DCI Acceptable Use Policy applies to all student use of Chromebook devices
- Students will have access to all available forms of electronic media and communication, which is in support of education and research and in support of the educational goals, and objectives of DCI.
- Students are responsible for their ethical and educational use of the technology resources of DCI.
- Access to DCI technology resources is a privilege and not a right and can be revoked at any time.
- Transmission of any material that is in violation of any federal or state law is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to the following: confidential information, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, and Chromebook viruses.
- Any attempt to alter data, the configuration of a Chromebook, or the files of another user, without the consent of the individual, building administrator, or technology administrator, will be

considered an act of vandalism and subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy, student handbook and other applicable school policies.

7b: Privacy and Safety

- Do not go into chat rooms or send chain letters without permission. If applicable, teachers may create discussion groups for communication among students for educational purposes.
- Do not open, use, or change files that do not belong to you.
- Do not reveal your full name, phone number, home address, social security number, credit card numbers, password or passwords of other people.
- Do not use your school email for personal email communication.
- Remember that storage is not guaranteed to be private or confidential as all Chromebook equipment is the property of DCI.
- If you inadvertently access a website that contains obscene, pornographic or otherwise offensive material, exit the site immediately.

7c: Legal Property

- Comply with trademark and copyright laws and all license agreements. Ignorance of the law is not immunity. If you are unsure, ask a teacher or parent.
- Plagiarism is a violation of the student policy. Give credit to all sources used, whether quoted or summarized. This includes all forms of media on the Internet, such as graphics, movies, music, and text.
- Use or possession of hacking software is strictly prohibited and violators will be subject to discipline. Violation of applicable state, federal or local law will result in criminal prosecution or disciplinary action by DCI.

7d: Google Account

Google accounts and access will be given to all students utilizing Chromebooks. This is a requirement that gives them access to sign into the device and participate in communication with peers and staff for educational use. Students under 13 ordinarily need parent permission to have Gmail accounts, however COPPA allows DCI to act as the parents' agent and approve the accounts on their behalf. To be COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) compliant, we must provide an opt out process and have done that (see section 7e) so all students *will* have Google Apps accounts (including Gmail) built into the private student domain.

7e: Google Opt-Out

DCI wants students to be interested and excited in learning and parents to be involved with their student's education. To discuss how Google Apps for Education will be used at your child's school, please call the school. A staff member from the

school will be happy to answer your questions and help you to understand your options. If you choose to opt out of Google apps then your child will not be able to utilize these tools and will not be able to take part in the program of study. In other words, if opted out, a students will not be able to successfully engage with the curriculum at DCI.

7f: E-mail and Electronic Communication

Google accounts and access will be given to all students utilizing Chromebooks. This is a requirement that gives them access to sign into the device and participate in communication with peers and staff for educational use. Always use appropriate and proper language in your communication.

- Do not transmit language / material that may be considered profane, obscene, abusive, or offensive to others.
- Do not send mass e-mails, chain letters or spam.
- E-mail and communications sent / received should be related to educational needs.
- E-mail and communications are subject to inspection by the school at anytime.

7g: Consequences

- The student, in whose name a system account and/or Chromebook hardware is issued, will be responsible at all times for its appropriate use.
- Non-compliance with the policies of this document will result in disciplinary action.
- Electronic mail, network usage, and *all stored files shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated DCI staff to ensure appropriate use.*
- DCI cooperates fully with local, state or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to violations of computer crime laws.

7h: At Home Use

- The use of Chromebooks at home is required for many assignments. Comcast provides low-cost internet to students who qualify for free or reduced meals through its Internet Essentials program (www.internetessentials.com). Public libraries also offer free internet access. Students may pay/stay for after school homework time where there is internet access too.
- Chromebook care at home is as important as in school, please refer to the care section.
- Transport your Chromebook in a case or protected backpack.
- DCI-supplied filtering is provided for at home to ensure the device is used safely.

8. PROTECTING and STORING YOUR CHROMEBOOK

8a: Chromebook Identification

- Student Chromebooks will be labeled in the manner specified by the school. Chromebooks can be identified in several ways:
- Record of DCI asset tag and serial number
- Individual user account name and password
- MAC address of the Chromebook
- User tag attached to the Chromebook transport case

8b: Account Security

- Students are required to use their dcinternationalschool.org domain user ID and password to protect their accounts and are required to keep that password confidential. Do not give anyone your password or log in using another person's password. This will result in disciplinary action.

8c: Storing Your Chromebook

- When students are in school and are not using their Chromebook, they should store them in a padded sleeve in their backpack.
- Use of the transport case when not in use is mandatory to prevent damage
- Nothing should be placed on top of the Chromebook
- Students are required to take their Chromebooks home everyday after school, regardless of whether or not they are needed for homework and charging purposes.
- Chromebooks should not be stored in a student's vehicle at school or at home for security and to prevent temperature related issues.

8d: Chromebooks left in Unsupervised Areas

- Under no circumstances should Chromebooks be left in an unsupervised area.
- Unsupervised areas include the school grounds and campus, the community room, unlocked classrooms, dressing rooms and hallways.
- Any Chromebook left in these areas is in danger of being stolen.
- If an unsupervised Chromebook is found, notify a staff member immediately.
- Unsupervised Chromebooks will be confiscated by staff and taken to the IT Department. Disciplinary action may be taken for leaving your Chromebook in an unsupervised location.

9. REPAIRING/REPLACING YOUR CHROMEBOOK

Students should submit Chromebooks that need repair, with the transport case, to DCI IT help desk and the help desk will start a repair ticket for the device.

9a: Chromebook Repair Costs and Customer Care

Chromebook repair costs are described below, though subject to change. Students and student families will be responsible for all damages to their DCI issued Chromebook. If a device is lost or stolen the student and student family will be responsible to replace the Chromebook.

Required Replacement Charges

Replace Damaged Chromebook--\$ 279.00

Replacing Screen--\$ 60.00

Replacing Power cord--\$ 32.00

Other replacement parts – student/family responsibility for payment

Chromebooks fall under a 1 year warrantee through the manufacturer (covering parts and manufacturer defects). This does not include broken screens or damage due to misuse/neglect. Parents are responsible for the cost of shipping to send chromebook back for repairs if needed.

10. CHROMEBOOK TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Technical support is available as follows. If repair is necessary for a Chromebook, then the DCI IT department will submit a repair ticket for the device.

Technology Staff members will provide:

- Hardware maintenance and repairs
- Password resets
- User account support
- Coordination and completion of warranty repairs

11. CHROMEBOOK FAQ's

Q. What is a Chromebook?

A. "Chromebooks are mobile devices designed specifically for people who live on the web. With a comfortable, full-sized keyboard, large display and clickable track pad, all-day battery life, light weight and built-in ability to connect to Wi-Fi and mobile broadband networks, the Chromebook is ideal for anytime, anywhere access to the web. They provide a faster, safer, more secure online experience for people who live on the web, without all the time-consuming, often confusing, high level of maintenance required by typical computers." (Google)

Q. What kind of software does a Chromebook run?

A. "Chromebooks run millions of web-based applications, or web apps, that open right in the browser. You can access web apps by typing their URL into the

address bar or by installing them instantly from the Chrome Web Store.”
(Google)

Q. How are these web-based applications managed?

A. Each Chromebook we provide to students will be a managed device. Members of DCI’s Technology Department will maintain devices through our Google Apps for Education account. As such, the school can pre-install web- applications as well as block specific web-applications from a centralized management console.

Q. What devices can I connect to a Chromebook?

Chromebooks can connect to:

- USB storage, mice and keyboards
- SIM cards
- SD cards
- External monitors and projectors
- Headsets, earsets, microphones

Q. Can the Chromebook be used anywhere at anytime?

A. Yes, as long as you have a WiFi signal to access the web. Chrome offers the ability for users to work in an "offline" mode if WiFi is unavailable.

Q. Do Chromebooks come with Internet Filtering Software?

A. DCI is providing onsite and offsite filtering. There are several filter options:

1. Filtered General Access with Email and Chat

This is what the general DCI student body has: we filter things like adult content and social media; students have their DCI email address and google chat

1. Filtered General Access with DCI Email only (+2 parents) and no Chat

. The above, except:

- i. No Google chat
- ii. Students can only email within DCI domain + 2 parents

2. Restrictive with Email and Chat

In addition to the normal filters, Games and Health topics are filtered.

Includes responsive Filtering (we are actively building a stronger filter on gaming and media - e.g. Tanki and Netflix - for this group)

3. Restrictive with DCI Email only and no Chat

See above, plus:

No google chat

Only email within DCI domain + 2 parents

Students are automatically enrolled in option 1 above. If you would like your students option to change, please contact the school.

There is no perfect filter, but we will do what we can to continue to improve our filtering for DCI students.

Q. What is the battery life?

A. Chromebooks have a rated battery life of 6.5 hours. *We expect that students will charge them each evening to ensure maximum performance during the school day.*

Q. How often are students' eyes on screens in the classroom?

A. We asked a representative group of students to track how often they are working on their computers while at school. The result is - less than 50% of the day students were on their computers in the classroom. Much of this is collaborative with other students.

Q. Do you allow access to computer games on the Chromebook?

A. Students are only allowed to play games at lunch and brunch. The access to online games is allowed, in part, to enable our computer programming class and apps/coding/games clubs to occur. Many of our students do not have access to this aspect of contemporary culture and entertainment anywhere else. Students typically do not spend their entire brunch or lunch period gaming. Survey results show that over 95% of our students value these periods most highly because it affords them access to their friends. Students who engage in off-task computer use during class (chatting, gaming) lose their privilege to have access to these features at all during the school day after one warning.

We also have a rich assortment of lunchtime time programming that includes various clubs and activities that meet without screen time.

Fewer than 20% of our students use computers during brunch and lunch (some on games typically in a group with other students, and some doing work).

Q. Do you employ a curriculum to promote healthy and safe use of technology?

A. We use the Digital Citizenship curriculum from Common Sense Media. We recommend their parents guides as well, at

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/parent-concerns>

Communicators

"We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspective of other individuals and groups."

Family-Teacher Communication

As families, you have trusted us with your children. You are valued partners and resources for our students' education. We value communication with you in all its forms.

We encourage you to use your child's advisor as your first contact for questions and concerns. During the school year, email is usually the best way to reach advisors and other teachers. During the school week, teachers and other school staff will reply to emails within business 24 hours. Families can also call the school office and leave a phone message for a teacher response within 24 hours.

Because of the demands on their schedule, teachers cannot meet families for unscheduled meetings. If you would like to meet with a teacher, please contact that teacher to schedule a meeting. In general, nobody at the school is available for meetings between 8am and 9am due to student arrival, Community Meetings, and the Approaches to Learning classes.

Teachers will post a brief weekly update to families on their class website. These updates will include a summary of topics and homework for the week, as well as relevant deadlines. Families should also check ManageBac, our online portfolio and grading site, regularly. We will provide more detailed guidance for how to use these online systems during the school year.

DC One Card

Students are expected to wear their DC One card on lanyards each day. This card also gets students into other DC facilities (recreation centers, libraries) and should be treated with care. The card from the previous year is still valid. Replacement cards cost \$5.

Dress Code

The purpose of our dress code is to encourage focus on academics, rather than fashion, and to emphasize a scholarly atmosphere while at school. Families have received the complete dress code separately and it is available on our [website](#).

Families will be required to bring appropriate clothes to school if the student does not come dressed according to the dress code.

Personal Electronics

Students are not allowed to use cell phones within the school building except during brunch and lunch. Once students have entered the DCI building in the morning, these devices must be kept turned off and concealed except during these times. Any devices in violation of this policy will be confiscated. Parents must come to school to retrieve student devices that have been confiscated.

The contents of an electronic communication device may be searched to determine ownership or to identify emergency contacts. Upon reasonable suspicion that a school rule or the law has been violated through the use of such a device, an administrator may also search for evidence of suspected wrongdoing. Any refusal on the part of a student to comply with a request to surrender the device may result in disciplinary action.

Transcripts and Letters of Recommendation

DCI and its staff members provide transcripts and letters of recommendation for students. Please request the transcript and/or letter of recommendation two weeks in advance of the deadline. Requests later than this may not be fulfilled on time. Teachers and other staff members commit to providing honest recommendations. If a staff member cannot write an overall positive letter, the staff member will not agree to write the recommendation; however, we will not share the letters with students and families, and we will answer questions on recommendation forms honestly.

Principled

“We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.”

Academic Honesty

At DCI we place a high value on honesty and this extends to work submitted for assessment. Our expectations are set out below. All members of the community need to

be aware that the school treats academic dishonesty - *malpractice* with intent, and *misconduct* which may be inadvertent - as a very serious matter.

DCI subscribes to the International Baccalaureate’s definitions of *malpractice* and *academic misconduct*, which include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism (the representation, intentionally or unwittingly, of the ideas, words or work of another person without proper, clear and explicit acknowledgment)
- Collusion (the act of collaborating with someone else on an assessment exercise which is intended to be wholly your own work, or the act of assisting someone else to commit plagiarism or other malpractice)
- Taking unauthorized material into an examination room
- Stealing examination materials
- Disruptive behaviour during examinations
- Disclosure of information about the content of an examination paper within 24 hours after a written examination

The academically honest student does:

- Acknowledge help from parents, older students and friends
- Acknowledge the source of direct quotations
- Acknowledge information taken from books, the Internet and other media
- Acknowledge reference materials in a bibliography
- Know what constitutes cheating and abides by the rules
- Follow all exam rules

The academically honest student does not:

- Use notes during a test unless allowed by a teacher
- Copy from another student during a test
- Copy from the homework of another student
- Hand in work as his/her own that has been copied
- Do homework for another student
- Give another student his/her own work to copy

In a cohesive and comprehensive way, students will receive instruction in:

1. Use of the Library and Internet.
2. Basic note taking skills.
3. Simple paraphrasing and adaptation of source material.
4. Ways to acknowledge informally in writing and speech.
5. Relevant use of direct quotations and citations.
6. Simple ways to acknowledge information derived from electronic sources.
7. Writing a bibliography.
8. What constitutes cheating.

In keeping with the philosophy and practices of the International Baccalaureate, particularly the Learner Profile and Approaches to Learning, and our restorative justice approach to discipline, instances of academic dishonesty will be discussed at a meeting between the teacher, student, parent, and the principal or a designee. The meeting will generate a restorative set of consequences. Consequences will always include a redo of the affected work or task. The student's ATL grades will be affected.

In that spirit: Portions of this handbook have been adapted from the handbooks of other schools including Alice Deal Middle School, Washington Yu Ying Public Charter School, and the Community Charter School of Cambridge. The academic honesty policy has been adapted from several policies currently shared on the IBO OCC, used in schools around the world, *Academic honesty: guidance for schools, September 2009 (updated 2011)* and the position paper *Academic Honesty in the IB* by Jude Carroll (July 2012).

Safety, Order, and Student Discipline

DCI has adopted policies, procedures and plans to ensure a safe and supportive school environment that:

- Emphasizes care, effective communication and quality relationships based on mutual respect;
- Values effort, presents achievable but challenging expectations, builds self esteem and encourages students to be responsible and independent learners; and
- Promotes the development of knowledgeable, morally and socially responsible citizens who are self-determined.

DCI will only consider student suspension or expulsion for serious/repeated conduct that violates the rights of others in the school community to feel safe, learn, or maintain property. DCI aims to be a low-suspension/no expulsion school.

We believe in consequences that have the student making restitution rather than being excluded from learning. DCI will observe the tenets of restorative justice and positive behavior interventions and supports because it believes that students a) belong in school, and b) that punishment does not change behavior, but intervention

does. DCI will include restorative justice practices such as restorative conferences, peace circles, family conferences, and peer juries in order to be proactive about preventing suspension or expulsion. The discipline provisions of IDEA are observed regarding consequences for students with disabilities.

- For short-term suspensions (10 days or less) the decision to suspend a student shall be made by a Principal or Administrative Designee with or without the recommendation of the student's teacher or other school employee. The Principal or Administrative Designee will determine the number of days for suspension based on the severity of the infraction, the age of the student, and previous infractions. The suspension shall become effective immediately unless otherwise stated by a Principal or Administrative Designee. After three suspensions from school within the same school year for the same or different chronic infractions, expulsion will be seriously considered. The DCI requires that a parent/guardian attend a meeting with a Principal or Administrative Designee and at least one of the student's teachers before a student may return to school. Upon notification of suspension, a parent/guardian should contact a Principal or Administrative Designee to schedule this meeting.
- Any student involved in a very serious discipline incident (e.g. Level 3, defined below) may be a candidate for long-term suspension (more than 10 days, maximum of 20 days) or expulsion. IDEA discipline provisions are observed in cases regarding students with disabilities
- Prior to the determination for a long-term suspension or expulsion, the family will be invited to participate in a School Judiciary Committee meeting so that the family, student and school administration can better understand the incident and determine if a long-term suspension or expulsion is warranted. The School Judiciary Committee meeting is an opportunity for the student and family to engage in a dialog about the incident in order to share all pertinent information about the incident and/or student's situation and the family is encouraged to bring mentors or other individuals who might support the family.
- If, after the School Judiciary Committee meeting, the school administration determines that it may still take actions to suspend or expel the student, a Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion Determination meeting will be scheduled with the Head of School and appropriate school personnel. The goal of this meeting will be to summarize the incident and offer the family an opportunity to present evidence of extenuating circumstances for consideration in the final determination. Only the Principal, CEO, or COO may make the decision for suspensions exceeding ten days or expulsion.
- The decision to suspend or expel a student shall be made in writing and given to the parent/guardian. The student's parents/guardians have five school

days to challenge the suspension or expulsion by submitting an appeal of a Principal's or CEO or COO's decision, in writing, to the Head of School and Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will issue a decision in writing to the parents/guardians and the school administration within 5 school days after receiving the appeal. The Chair of the Board of Trustees shall convene a special meeting of the Board of Trustees to consider the appeal of the suspension or expulsion. The student and his or her parents/guardians, the student's teachers, a Principal or Administrative Designee, CEO or COO and other school staff may be invited to participate in this special meeting as the Board sees fit. The decision of the Board of Trustees in affirming or reversing a Principal's or CEO or COO's decision is final.

- The basis for disciplining, suspending or expelling students with disabilities shall be no different than the basis for such actions taken against students without disabilities. Reasonable accommodation of a student's disabilities shall not prevent DCI from disciplining, suspending or expelling students when behavior not related to the disability threatens the health, safety or welfare of a student, teacher or staff member or repeatedly impairs instruction for the student's classmates. However, under IDEA 2004 students with disabilities are entitled to certain additional procedural protections during the discipline process. These protections include, but are not limited to, requirements for a meeting to determine if behaviors resulting in expulsion or suspension longer than ten (10) days are a manifestation of a student's disability.

DCI will have zero tolerance policies with regard towards the intent to distribute drugs, possession of weapons, or physical violence/ serious threats of violence.

DCI students are expected to demonstrate the attributes of the Learner Profile to ensure that they follow our general school rules:

- Follow directions of all staff
- All communication should be positive and constructive
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself
- Respect self, others, and property
- Remain actively engaged in learning at all times

Parents and guardians also play an integral role in creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment. Parents/guardians have the right to:

- Be a partner in a supportive and safe school environment that fosters quality relationships, mutual respect and effective communication;
- See their child experiencing success through meaningful and relevant curriculum;
- Feel safe;
- Be treated with care, cooperation, courtesy and respect.

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to:

- Actively support and contribute to the development of a safe and supportive school environment;
- Support and encourage their children to participate to the best of their ability in all aspects of the curriculum;
- Behave in a way that respects and supports the safety and well being of self and others;
- Treat others with care, cooperation, courtesy and respect.

Parents and Guardians are encouraged to

- Inform the school of any situation or information that is relevant and concerns their children's behavior;
- Encourage their children to follow the school Rules and Learner Profile;
- Support their children in taking responsibility for their behavior by using problem solving strategies;
- Attend any meetings arranged by the school to discuss their children's behavior; and
- Work in partnership with DCI to develop a safe and supportive school environment.

The following are categories of inappropriate behaviors and the attending consequences to support behavior change:

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
<p>Low level, minor, infrequent behaviors that do not significantly interrupt the teaching and learning of others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off task Not finishing work or homework Non compliance Inappropriate moving around the school Using inappropriate language Chewing gum Littering Spitting Bringing inappropriate items to school Being late Being in an inappropriate area 	<p>Persistent behaviors that disrupt teaching and learning, or repeated Level 1 Behaviors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non compliance Defiance or disrespect Swearing or other verbal abuse Sexual or racial harassment Threats Teasing or bullying Physical abuse, fighting Unsafe play Theft Vandalism or graffiti Leaving school without permission, truancy Inappropriate use of computers Cheating Possessing tobacco, alcohol or other chemical products Possessing or accessing pornographic material Computer hacking, trashing or interfering in any way with another persons' work or intellectual property 	<p>Repeated Level 2 Behaviors, Extreme Violence, Dangerous or Illegal Behaviors while under school jurisdiction: Extreme violence towards self, others or property Using (on school property during the school day) or Distributing alcohol or other chemical products. Possessing dangerous items or weapons Repeated bullying or cyberbullying</p>
<p><u>Possible Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logical/Restorative Consequence • Time Out/Loss of privileges • Family Conference 	<p><u>Possible Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of privileges • Time in an alternate setting • Family Conference • Individual Behavior Plan/Counseling • Restitution mutually agreed upon by student/family/affected party • Suspension for no 	<p><u>Possible Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Conference • Restitution mutually agreed upon by student/family/affected party • In-School Suspension • Drug testing (urine testing) • Suspension for no more than 20 days • Expulsion

	more than 2 days	
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Public Displays of Affection

Students are not to engage in inappropriate public displays of affection while at school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities. Inappropriate touching with hands or other parts of the body is not permitted.

Bullying

A key responsibility of DC International School is to educate students in a respectful and positive environment. Acts of bullying, harassment and intimidation are an attack on core DCI values. In keeping with our mission, DCI has established a comprehensive bullying prevention policy. This policy protects the dignity and safety of the DCI community and describes DCI’s prevention strategies to identify and prevent incidents by connecting youth to necessary services. DCI will promptly report and investigate all incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation and provide appropriate remedies for victims of an incident.

The full bullying prevention policy is available on our [website](#) or by request.

Personal Materials

DCI does not have lockers in our temporary location at 3220 16th Street NW. Students have hooks on which to hang jackets or other outerwear. Nothing of value should be left in jacket pockets. Students must carry backpacks and other belongings with them during the school day. Please avoid bringing large equipment such as athletic gear to school. While we aim to provide a secure school, DCI is not responsible for loss or theft of student property.

Rollerblades, skateboards, and scooters are not allowed on school property. Any rollerblades, skateboards or scooters ridden on campus will be confiscated. Students may not bring these items into the school, as we do not have a place to store them.

The school's policy is that, in cases of accidents that happen in the normal course of the school day, we do not pay and do not try to facilitate parents paying for other students' materials. (For instance, if, in a basketball game, a student’s glasses are accidentally knocked off and broken, the school will not take responsibility for the

Annual Notification of FERPA Rights

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records.

These rights are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to DCI's FERPA Administrator (Denise Lyons) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The FERPA Administrator will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the FERPA Administrator, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate. If the FERPA Administrator decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the FERPA Administrator will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by DCI as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom DCI has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by DCI to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Any questions, concerns or requests to inspect or review records should be sent to:

FERPA Administrator
DC International School
3220 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20010
info@dcinternationalschool.org

Open-Minded

“We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.”

Diversity

DCI is an incredibly diverse community. We see diversity as one of our greatest strengths. Respect for each other’s cultural backgrounds, and for those of students and families, is of paramount importance. At all times, we seek to positively use students’ backgrounds on behalf of their learning. Disrespect for or denigration of other cultures will not be tolerated.

Family Partnership

At DCI, we believe family partnership is critically important to our students’ and our school’s success. Both families and school staff have responsibilities in this area.

Parents/Guardians and Supportive Family Members will:

- Contribute 20 hours per year of volunteer time to the school
- Work towards establishing and maintaining positive, solution-centered Family-School partnerships;
- Ensure that students are prepared, willing and able for learning each day through:
 - Monitoring and supporting students' nightly, in-home learning
 - Holding students accountable for their in-home learning, nightly studying, homework, reading, etc.
 - Monitoring daily nutrition, hygiene, and sleep
- Ensure that students are dropped off on time for school and that students are picked up promptly at the end of school or after-school clubs and activities;
- Strive to provide students with waste-free, healthy lunches;
- Communicate any unique difficulties or situations to the teachers and/or administrative staff in a timely and respectful fashion;
- Return forms, permission slips, etc. in a timely manner;
- Establish and maintain two-way communication with teachers and administrators;
- Actively support DCI's development, volunteering, and fundraising initiatives;
- Actively support and participate in DCI sponsored events;
- Actively promote DCI in public forums and spaces

School Staff will:

- Reach out to families to schedule home visits

- Initiate consistent, positive contact with all families
- Make themselves accessible to families at flexible times that are clearly communicated and provide multiple ways for families to get in touch
- Use information about families' backgrounds, strengths, and preferences to differentiate communication to families
- Create proactive systems for soliciting and responding to families' feedback, suggestions or concerns
- Create plans to address families' feedback and follow-up on the plan accordingly
- Use information about families' backgrounds, strengths, and preferences to enrich learning and curriculum.
- Provide frequent information on student academic performance

Field Trips

Our city and area provide fantastic opportunities for our students to connect with our curriculum. We aim to use frequent field trips to increase student learning. As part of our opening Agreement with families, we ask parents/guardians to sign a blanket permission slip for trips within Washington, DC using Metro bus, subway, walking, and/or licensed school bus. Information about trips will always be communicated in advance as well, and families can opt out of field trips.

In future years, we aim to provide opportunities for international language travel for all of our students.

Caring

"We show empathy, compassion, and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference."

Counseling

DCI aims to create an environment that supports the academic, social, and emotional well-being of all students. DCI provides preventative and intervention services within the school, and also provides students and families with relevant information on community-based resources.

Our mental health team is accessible to students and families. In collaboration with the school counselor, students and families can explore support service options ranging from school-based support to a referral for support at a community agency or with your primary care physician. Should a mental health crisis occur during the school day, it will be handled in the same manner as a medical emergency. A parent/guardian will be contacted first. In the event that a parent cannot be located, school officials may choose to take action independently, as they would in a medical emergency.

If a student is a danger to him/herself or to another person or is at risk of being harmed by someone, by law, the counselor is required to report information to the appropriate agencies. In other circumstances, the counselor will observe appropriate student confidentiality policies.

Advising

We believe it is important for every student to have one faculty member who is in touch with her/him personally on a regular basis and is well-informed of the overall academic and social status within the school. Our advisory program has a teacher-student ratio that allows all students to personally know an adult in the school who cares about them and who acts as a mentor, role model and advisor.

Advisors are the primary point of contact for students' families and do the primary outreach to them; they advocate for the student and seek to connect the student to opportunities within the school; they stay on top of student academic and social progress and problem-solve as necessary.

Families are encouraged to use the advisors as their first point of contact for questions and concerns.

Community and Service

Environmental stewardship and social justice ground our students' learning in the local community and the planet. While the IB naturally incorporates these principles, DCI will make these more visible and explicit in instructional design and activities. Using the IB's interdisciplinary approach and projects, students and faculty will delve deep into environmental and social issues that affect their community and planet.

All students participate in community and service activities aimed at improving our city and our world and at increasing the relevance of student learning.

Dispensing of Medication

We have trained medication administrators on staff. No student is permitted to carry any over-the-counter or prescription medications on his/her person or in the bag he/she brings to school during the school day. The exception to this is prescription inhalers for asthma and an injection of epinephrine for anaphylaxis. The school office is happy to store extra emergency medication for any student. Please contact the school prior to arrival on the first day if you have any specific medical questions or a condition that requires management at school. The school does not stock any cold remedies such as cough drops or vitamins. We cannot administer any medication without proper documentation/authorization. Please visit <http://dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/In+the+Classroom/Health+and+Wellness#4> for the following forms:

- [Medication and Treatment Authorization Form](#)
- [Asthma Action Plan](#)
- [Action Plan for Anaphylaxis](#)

Vaccines & Annual Medical Exam

Every student is required to have on record up-to-date immunizations and medical exam as required by D.C. law. A student may be excluded from school for lack of immunizations.

Medical Dismissal

School leaders may dismiss an ill or injured student during the school day if we are unable to house the ill or injured student adequately. Families must respond promptly when called to pick up their children for a medical reason. A parent may authorize the student to return home on his/her own if the school deems that the student is well enough to manage the travel. The school reserves the right to call emergency transport and/or 911 to care for any student deemed to have an emergent illness or injury, whether or not the school can contact the parent or guardian. In such an event, the school makes every effort to locate and communicate with a family member immediately.

Sexual Health Education

DCI offers sexual health education as a part of its curriculum. For each student who is slated to receive sexual health education, parents/guardians will receive an opt-out letter offering the option of exempting their children from any portion of the sex education curriculum through written notification to the school. No child so exempted shall be penalized by reason of such exemption. To the extent practicable, program instruction materials for said curricula shall be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians, educators, school administrators, and others for inspection and review.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are a very serious part of the school routine. Whether in a drill or a fire, the actions that students and staff take are the same. Students will be trained in where to go and what to do during a fire drill. Misbehavior will be considered a threat to the safety of others as it would be in an actual fire situation.

Searches of Student Items

To ensure the safety of students and staff, DCI maintains the right to search students and their property if there is reason to believe a school rule or state law has been violated. To that end, school officials may search student coats, backpacks, or other personal belongings.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

DC International School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to education. Denise Lyons, Business and Compliance Director, has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies.

Risk-Takers

“We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.”

Success at DCI

We are strong believers in the “growth mindset.” When students and educators have a growth mindset, they understand that intelligence can be developed. Students focus on improvement instead of worrying about how smart they are. They work hard to learn more and get smarter. Based on years of research at Stanford University, we know that students who learn this mindset show greater motivation in school, better grades, and higher test scores.

With a growth mindset:

- Teachers collaborate with their colleagues and instructional leaders, rather than shut their classroom doors and fly solo. They truly believe that all students can learn and succeed—and show it.
- Parents support their children’s learning both inside and outside the classroom. They partner with teachers, and respond to outreach. They worry less about advocating for their children to get good grades and focus on making sure kids are being challenged and put in the effort needed to grow.
- Students are enthusiastic, hard-working, persistent learners. They take charge over their own success.

We know that we are all learners. The harder we work and the more open we are to improvement, the more we will learn and the stronger we will become.

(Some material adapted from mindsetworks.com, which we are using in our ATL curriculum.)

Tutoring

If parents are interested in obtaining the services of a tutor for their child, they should first discuss this with their child’s classroom teachers to confirm that the need really exists. During the school year, parents/guardians are welcome to approach any staff member who does not currently teach his or her child to arrange tutoring. During summer vacation, any willing teacher may be approached for tutoring. The tutoring, however, may not occur on the DCI campus at any time.

Balanced

“We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives— intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.”

ACE (Athletics, Citizenship, and Engagement)

Every school day, from 4:15 - 6pm, we offer a variety of great clubs and sports for DCI students. Descriptions of each club and their meeting dates will be communicated in advance of signups for each quarter.

Students may sign up for clubs and interscholastic sports Mondays through Thursdays. Most sports and some clubs will be held two days a week while some clubs may be held one day a week. Monday through Thursday, we offer ACE Homework and Recreation. ACE-HR can be a pre-registered option and it is what any student who stays for "drop-in" days will participate in after school. ACE-HR will include homework help, study skill development, interactive games and activities both indoors and out.

Friday, we have special ACE offerings.

We built our initial offerings based on student and staff preferences; however, students are welcome to propose new clubs! To start a new club, a student needs five friends also willing to join and an adult sponsor.

We have created ACE to ensure your child has an excellent after school experience with DCI. Our clubs, activities, sports, and travel will provide a safe, supportive and fun atmosphere of learning and cooperation for all students.

Attendance

Regular school instruction hours are Monday - Friday, 8:15 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Students are expected to be in school on time and stay for the entire day, every day that school is in session.

Tardiness & Absences

Attendance and tardiness will be recorded in each class throughout the school day. If a student must be absent, families should notify the school and provide a note/email containing the reason for the absence within two weeks of the absence in order to have it be excused. Families will be contacted if their child is absent without explanation. Excessive tardiness will result in tardy reflections and other disciplinary consequences.

Please contact the front office at (202) 459-4790 or email reception@dcinternationalschool.org by 8:30 am, should your child be absent or tardy. Please include the student's name, date of absence, reason for absence or tardiness, and contact number for parent/guardian.

Upon your child's return to school from an absence, a written note, with your student's name, date of absence and reason of absence must be turned into the Front Office. All notes should be submitted to the front office in person or by email to reception@dcinternationalschool.org. If your child is absent 4 or more consecutive days due to illness, you must submit a doctor's note to mark absences excused. If no documentation is submitted, the absence will be considered unexcused. Reporting the absence does not automatically excuse the absence. Excused absences are granted in accordance with school policy. Valid reasons for absence from school include:

1. Illness of the student or doctor's appointment;
2. Exclusion due to quarantine, contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other condition requiring separation from other students for medical or health reasons;
3. Illness or other immediate family emergency which requires the presence of the student outside the school;
4. Death in the student's immediate family;
5. Necessity for a student to attend any judicial proceeding as a party or witness;
6. Observance of religious holy days;
7. Suspension or expulsion from school by an administrator;
8. Temporary closing of the school facility or suspension of classes due to severe weather, official activities, holidays, malfunctioning equipment, unsafe or unsanitary conditions, or other conditions requiring the closing of the school facility or suspension of classes; and
9. Other absences approved in advance by an administrator upon the written request of a parent/guardian.

Extensive absences significantly diminish the ability of the student to learn. Families are expected to schedule recreational activities and vacations only during designated school breaks. Please note no more than 10 absences may be excused without a doctor's note or principal's permission.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences are when school-aged students are absent from school without a valid excuse, with or without parental approval. Examples of unexcused absences include babysitting, doing errands, cutting classes, shopping, and oversleeping.

Consequences of Unexcused Absences

The District of Columbia Compulsory School Attendance Law 8-247 and DC Municipal Regulations Title V Ch. 21 govern mandatory school attendance and the ways schools must intervene when students are truant. Students who have an unexcused absence may be subject to the following: Individual/group counseling to address attendance needs; participation in the creation of, and adherence to, an Attendance Intervention Plan; parents of students with five unexcused absences will

be requested to participate in a truancy conference; middle school students with ten or more unexcused absences will be referred to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) for suspected educational neglect; twenty five or more unexcused absences will result in a student/parent referral to the Office of the Attorney General or Court Social Services. Course grades or year-end promotion may be affected.

The Compulsory School Attendance Law states that parents/guardians who fail to have their children attend school are subject to the following: Truancy charges may be filed against the student or parent; Neglect charges may be filed against the parent; Parents may be fined or jailed; School-aged students may be picked up by law enforcement officers during school hours for suspected truancy; Students may be referred to the Court Diversion and other community-based interventions; and Parents and students may be assigned community service and placed under court supervision/probation.

Our grievance and appeals process, described at the end of this handbook, applies to attendance determinations and consequences.

Early Dismissal

Should a student need to leave the school day early, please send a written note to the front office or email reception@dcinternationalschool.org. Notes must include student name, date of early dismissal, time of early dismissal, parent/guardian name and reason for early dismissal.

Homework

At DCI, the purpose of homework is to encourage student independence and extend learning time. Homework supports learning in one of four ways: pre-learning (introductory activities); checking for understanding (feedback for the teacher on what the student knows or can do); practice; and processing (to reflect on or apply new concepts).

We recognize that students have varying responsibilities outside of school; that parents have varying abilities to help children with their homework; and that parents have varying resources to purchase or locate supplies, etc. Homework should, therefore, be doable by all students without adult assistance or resources other than those provided by the school. Because we believe that teachers are crucial to student learning, students should not be expected to master new concepts through homework.

We believe that students should lead *balanced* lives: homework time for middle school students should total no more than 1.5 hours per school night, and we do not give homework over winter or spring vacations. In general, teachers will provide 10-15 minutes' homework per class.

Accountability and Advising for Homework

All of our grades in content-area classes are mastery grades: we grade students on what they know and are able to do. Homework is not part of these grades. Our grades and feedback in Approaches to Learning include homework effort and completion.

During the Approaches to Learning period each day, advisers will ask students whether they have completed their homework. We expect students to be *principled* in response to this question; if students tell their advisors they have not completed their homework, advisors will expect students' presence in their advisory room during Brunch and lunch if necessary to complete homework. (If students are not honest about homework completion with their advisors, the dishonesty becomes a matter for our restorative discipline process.) If incomplete homework is a persistent issue, the adviser will work with the student and family on a long-term solution.

The Role of Parents in Homework

Parents are encouraged to...

- Ask their child about what the child is studying in school
- Ask their child to show them any homework assignments
- Assist their child in organizing homework materials
- Help their child create a plan for completing homework
- Provide an appropriate space for their child to do homework

Parents may, if they wish...

- Help their child interpret assignment directions
- Proofread their child's work, pointing out errors
- Read aloud required reading to their child
- Give practice quizzes to their child to help prepare for tests
- Help their child brainstorm ideas for papers or projects
- Praise their child for hard work on homework

Parents should not...

- Feel required to teach their child concepts or skills the child is unfamiliar with (please encourage the child to ask the teacher for additional help)
- Complete assignments for their child
- Allow their child to sacrifice sleep to complete homework

(Language and examples used here come from *Rethinking Homework: Best Practices That Support Diverse Needs* by Cathy Vatterott (ASCD, 2009).)

Food and Drink

In general, students can drink water from a water bottle at any time and place during the school day. Teachers or other staff may restrict water drinking during certain times. Students can only eat, or drink beverages other than water, during Brunch and Lunch, and only in specified locations. No candy, gum, soda or other high-caffeine/high-sugar beverages, or sunflower seeds are allowed at school. DCI may also ban other food or drink products for health, learning, and cleanliness reasons.

DCI is not a nut-free school. Students are expected to understand and manage their allergies through self-advocacy.

The school will provide a healthy breakfast, served from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. (note that students arriving after 8:15 a.m. are late), and lunch, with purchase options following D.C. regulations. There are no refrigeration, cooking, or water-heating options available for food and drink brought from home.

Reflective

“We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and development.”

Grading

Our grades tell students and parents two important things: How the student is doing in *learning each subject area*, and how the student is doing in *learning to be a student*.

Traditional grades mix these things, and end up not being clear about either: is a student getting a B+ because he did all the homework, because the teacher likes her, because she’s a good test-taker, because he participates in class, because she knows 88% of the material?

We are using a version of what is sometimes called “mastery” grading, in which the subject-area grades convey how well the student mastered the content. They are not an average of the grades the student got during each quarter (with, for example, 20% for homework, 30% for tests, and so on). Instead, they convey, like a rubric, how well the student has learned the major objectives of each subject.

In addition, students will get grades and narrative comments on the elements of the IB Approaches to Learning -- the elements of “learning to be a student.” This is where things like homework and participation are graded. (You can, after all, learn math without doing any homework, or do all your homework and still not learn math -- but both learning math and doing homework are important!) While the grades are given by the student’s Approaches to Learning advisors, they reflect students’ work across the subject areas.

Grading in subjects: There is one final grade for each quarter, based on an average of grades on the IB subject objectives. For instance, in English (Language and Literature), students get one grade which is produced by their grades on the four objectives: Analyzing, Organizing, Producing Text, Using Language. These grades are according to the MYP criteria, so grades are out of eight possible points for each objective, which converts to a seven-point final grading scale with general descriptors. There is no “A/B/C/D/F” scale and no conversion to one. Parents can check grades during the quarter using the online ManageBac system.

Grading in Approaches to Learning: Students get a grade of Almost Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, or Almost Never, for each of the **five ATL skill clusters**: *Communication, Collaboration, Self-Management, Research, Critical and Creative Thinking*. The grades are based on students’ work across the subject areas. The

advisor also writes a narrative comment about the student's strengths and areas for improvement. Homework effort and grades will be reflected in this section.

Student-Led Conferences

After each of the first three quarters, we have student-led portfolio conferences. The student prepares a portfolio of work across subjects showing their progress in each of the ATL skills. The student, parent/guardian, and advisor meet together to review the portfolio. Student-led conferences move the student to the center of the report process as opposed to being a passive bystander. Moreover, they allow students to use and demonstrate the interdisciplinary skills that they are learning in a real and significant context.

This way of doing conferences emphasizes the Approaches to Learning skills as the topic of discussion, rather than the subject grades. This is intentional: in the middle years, we want students (and their families) focused on the cross-cutting skills they are learning in all of their courses.

Promotion and Course Repeat Policy

There is not a specific grade that is "failing." Decisions about repeating courses, and/or staying at the same grade level for a second year, will be discussed collaboratively by the subject teacher, the advisor, the counselor, the student, and the parent. The principal makes final decisions about course repeating and promotion/retention.

Grievance Policy

It is the policy of DC International School that all employees, students, parents, and visitors, have the right to voice their complaints or grievances about matters pertaining to its schools. DCI recognizes the meaningful value and importance of full discussion in resolving misunderstandings and in preserving good relations between management and employees and between the School, its students and their families. Accordingly, the following grievance procedure should be employed to ensure that complaints receive full consideration.

What May Be Grieved

DCI's grievance process should be used as follows: (1) to deal with complaints and concerns pertaining to educational environment, employment arrangements, or interpersonal conflicts; and (2) to resolve complaints of discrimination and harassment based upon race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or other protected status.

Who May Grieve

The procedures set forth below may be used by grievants, who can be employees, students, parents, or visitors.

Other Remedies

The existence of this procedure does not bar grievants from also filing claims in other forums to the extent permitted by state or federal law. The filing of a grievance under this procedure does not toll or extend the time periods set by federal, state or local law to file external complaints or charges.

Informal Grievance

Because most difficulties can be resolved by communicating a concern to someone, grievants, are encouraged to discuss their concern or harassment complaint promptly and candidly with their immediate supervisor, the Business Manager or School Administration. The grievant is not required to discuss his or her complaint with any alleged harasser or perpetrator in any manner or for any reason prior to initiating a formal grievance.

Formal Grievance

Within ninety (90) days of encountering the harassment, discrimination, or incident that is the subject of the grievance, a grievant shall file a written notice with the School Administration. The written notice shall identify the nature of the complaint, the date(s) of occurrence, and the desired result, and shall be signed and dated by the person filing the grievance. In the event of a grievance being filed on behalf of a student by the legal guardian or parent of the aggrieved student, both the student and the legal guardian and/or parent shall sign and date the grievance.

School Administration will immediately initiate an adequate, reliable impartial investigation of the grievance. Each formal complaint will be investigated, and depending on the facts involved in each situation, will be decided after receiving information from the appropriate sources. Each investigation may include interviewing witnesses, obtaining documents, and allowing parties to present evidence.

All documentation related to the investigation and discussions held in this process are considered EXTREMELY CONFIDENTIAL and are not to be revealed to or discussed by any participant with persons not directly involved with the complaint, its investigation or with the decision-making process. This provision does not include discussions with the governmental authorities.

Within thirty (30) business days of receiving the written notice, the School Administration shall respond in writing to the grievant (the "Response"). The Response shall summarize the course of the investigation, the relevant factual findings and the appropriate resolution. If, as a result of the investigation, harassment, or a valid grievance is established, appropriate corrective and remedial action will be taken.

Appeals

If the grievant is not satisfied with the Response, the grievant may appeal in writing to the DC International School Board of Trustees (or designee) within thirty (30) days of the date of the Response summarizing the outcome of the investigation. The written appeal must contain all written documentation from the initial grievance and the grievant's reasons for not accepting the Response. The appeal, in letter form, may be sent to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Within fifteen (15) days from receiving the written appeal, the Board of Trustees will respond in writing to the appellant as to the action to be taken and the reasons therefor.

Prohibition Against Retaliation

DCI pledges that it will not retaliate against any person who files a grievance in accordance with this policy, or any person who participates in proceedings related to this policy. In addition, DCI will not tolerate any form of retaliation against any person who makes a good faith report or complaint about perceived acts of harassment, discrimination, or concern, or who cooperates in an investigation of harassment, discrimination, or a concern. Any person who is found to be engaging in any kind of retaliation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Modification

DC International School may approve modification of the foregoing procedures in a particular case if the modification (a) is for the good cause, and (b) does not violate due process rights or policies of DC International School.

Board of Trustees

DC International School is a non-profit corporation 501(c)(3) with an appointed Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees plays a key role in setting forth the vision for the school and ensuring the school's mission is fulfilled. The Board, as the governing body of DC International School selects, evaluates and supports school leadership; provides strategic direction for the school; and ensures adequate financial resources and legal compliance. In doing so, the Board of Trustees ensures the success of the academic program, faithfulness to the terms of our charter, and long-term viability. A list of current Board Members is available on the DCI [website](#).

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