Innovation Elementary School

Kindergarten Handbook 2022-2023

Welcome to Kindergarten!

We are excited to welcome your child (and you) to Innovation Elementary. Kindergarten is an amazing and exciting time of growth for your child. You will enjoy seeing them make new friends and develop a love of learning.

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Important Information

Innovation Main Office Contacts
703-228-2700

Claire Peters, Principal	Claudia Tavera, Principal's Assistant
Kathryn White, Asst. Principal	Rachel Hunter, Attendance

School Hours: 9:00am - 3:50pm

Students may be dropped off between 8:45am and 9:00am.

Walkers and bike riders may enter at the Veitch Street gate or the Adams St gate. Car riders should be dropped off at the Key Blvd gate. There is no entry to the Innovation parking lot between 8:30am and 9:00am. See map below.

Countdown to Kindergarten

July	Kindergarten meetings with Mrs. Peters
August	All health documentation, including physicals and immunization records should be submitted to the school. Students cannot attend in person until these documents have been received. PTA Kindergarten playdates at Innovation - Aug. 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th from 5-6:30pm and Aug. 25th from 4-5:30pm.
Week of August 22nd	Welcome letters mailed to families with teacher assignment, bus routes, and first week of school information
August 25th	Families invited to meet teachers at Innovation Open House from 3-4pm
August 29th	First day of school
September 8th	Innovation Back to School Night

A Day in Kindergarten

A kindergarten day will include a balance of large group, small group, and center activities. There will also be many opportunities for movement, active play, and hands-on investigations. The following sample is one way of organizing a kindergarten day. The actual plan will vary according to teaching styles, classroom needs, and special programs. Any schedule must be flexible enough to allow for the “teachable moment,” unplanned events, and time of year. For example, at the start of the year students will be building community and relationships, as well as stamina for learning.

● Arrival
● Morning Meeting (whole group); attendance, calendar, weather, greetings, morning message, music and movement, plan for the day
● Language Arts (whole group); phonemic awareness and phonics instruction, shared reading, and introduction of writing skills
● Individual and small group work, and centers; children are working at centers independently or in small groups with an adult based on their individual needs
● Lunch
● Recess
● Math (whole group); number sense routines, music/movement related to numbers and counting, introduction of new concepts
● Snack
● Individual and small group work, and centers, related to math
● “Specials” such as art, music, PE, and library, and special projects. School counselors will also push into classes for social-emotional learning opportunities.
● Closing Circle (whole group)

Our Teaching Philosophy

We believe that the kindergarten program should be adaptable to each child's needs, interests, and level of development. A variety of activities tailored to individual needs help children grow socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually.

Our kindergarten program:

- Focuses on oral language development and phonemic awareness as the basis for reading, writing, and thinking.
- Builds on, improves, and increases the knowledge and skills that children bring to school.
- Promotes an appreciation of the similarities and differences among people.
- Incorporates active learning through body movement activities, manipulation of learning materials, and interaction with others.
- Uses ongoing performance assessment to observe, document, and analyze children's learning behavior in the areas of language arts, math/science, and fine and gross motor skills.
- Encourages a love of learning.

Children learn, grow, and develop at different rates. The Arlington County Public Schools' early childhood curriculum takes into consideration these differences in young children. Through customized instruction, all students will progress at their own rates of development. We want each student to experience success and build a positive self-concept.

In the elementary years, a sound foundation in speaking, writing, reading, and mathematics prepares students for future academic success. Wherever possible, concrete objects and materials introduce concepts to students. Activities that include learning experiences using real objects help young children understand concepts and ideas prior to the introduction of abstract symbols.

Tips for a successful day

Get plenty of rest - there are no naps in kindergarten. Especially at the beginning of the year, it will be a long day for your child. Expect them to be tired when they arrive home.

Create a regular routine at home - consistency helps your child feel safe and comfortable. Pack backpacks and choose outfits the night before to make mornings easier and reduce stress for everyone in the household.

Eat a nutritious breakfast at home or at school.

Kindergarteners should be able to button and zip on their own. You can help them learn to tie shoelaces or have them wear velcro or slip on shoes if they are still working on that skill. If they bring their lunch, they should be able to open packages or containers on their own.

A parent/guardian's primary role is one of encouragement and reinforcement. Parents/guardians can enhance what is experienced at school and foster a sense of excitement and a love for learning. It is normal for your child to express frustration or to cry as they adjust to new routines and a new environment. Continue to be supportive and encouraging as you help them build their independence and confidence.

Students may bring a water bottle that can be refilled throughout the day.

Teach your child good hand washing techniques. We will continue to practice frequent handwashing to prevent the spread of germs at school. Each kindergarten classroom has a sink in the room.

Kindergarten readiness is...

Children entering kindergarten demonstrate a variety of learning behaviors. Indicators of kindergarten success include the following:

Oral language, reading, writing

•Says his/her first name	•Identifies colors
•Follows simple directions	•Identifies some letters of the alphabet
•Answers simple questions	•Writes his/her own first name
•Recites some nursery rhymes	•Discusses a favorite story
•Retells a familiar event or story	•Pretends to “read” a book
•Participates in word play	•Attempts writing by using scribbling, print-like symbols, or strings of letters

Mathematics

•Identifies some shapes
•Matches objects like socks, shoes
•Notices similarities, differences
•Sorts and classifies objects
•Tries to count to 10
•Touches or points at objects when counting
•Arranges objects from shortest to tallest
•Uses math language like bigger, smaller, tallest, shortest

Social-emotional, physical

•Makes choices, takes turns	•Tries new things, finishes new tasks
•Uses self-help skills (dressing, toileting, eating)	•Hops, jumps, gallops, runs, leaps, climbs, balances
•Shares with others	•Throws and catches a ball
•Helps with chores at home	•Buttons and zips
•Begins to demonstrate independence and show self-confidence	•Alternates feet when walking up steps •Expresses thoughts, feelings

Transportation

Bus Riders

APS provides bus service for children who live more than one mile from school or where walking is hazardous. Schedules for bus riders are mailed to each student before the first day of school. You can find the Walk Zone map on the Innovation website here.

A parent or designated adult must be present at the bus stop in the afternoon to receive the kindergartner or the child will be returned to the school. An older elementary sibling is not allowed to take the place of an adult to accompany the student home.

Walkers

Walkers should travel to and from school with a parent, older sibling or adult from their neighborhood. A crossing guard may be available to assist walkers in crossing Veitch Street at Wilson Blvd. Patrols in yellow belts are also stationed around the school. Walking parents should plan to meet their children at the Veitch St or Adams St exits at dismissal. Look for the sign that designates the gathering place for kindergarten students.

Bike Riders

Bicycles may be ridden to school by students in kindergarten, but children must be accompanied an adult. You may leave your child's bicycle at school, but please remember to bring a lock and park it at one of our bike racks.

Car Riders

We really encourage bus riders to ride the bus and "walkers" to walk, but if you must drive your child to school, parents should drop their child off along Key Blvd. Pick up will be in the same location. Please be mindful of the parking signs along Key Blvd and pull all the way forward if you are early for drop off or pick up. The parking lot for the school is closed to car access during arrival and dismissal.

Discharge your child on the passenger side closest to the sidewalk so he/she does not cross traffic. Innovation staff members and safety patrols will be outside to assist you and your child.

For the safety of families and students, cars may not make a U-Turn on Key Blvd. Please proceed to N. Veitch St. as you exit the drop off/pick up line. Please remember to drive slowly, be aware of pedestrians and bikers, and follow all posted traffic signs.

Changes in Transportation Arrangements

Changes in daily transportation should be avoided whenever possible. Consistency of routine is important for young children. Arrangements to visit friends should be scheduled after children arrive safely at home in the afternoon. In the event that your child will walk or ride in a car home with a friend, we ask that each child bring a note to school confirming both parents' approval of this arrangement.

All changes to transportation home from school must be made by 3pm by calling the main office at 703-228-2700.

Authorizing others to pick up your child

Be sure to list those persons who may pick up your child on the Emergency Care Form, which is completed online through ParentVUE. This is especially important if your child becomes ill at school or misses the bus, or if you are delayed in traffic. **Update this information throughout the year as necessary.** The school cannot release your child to neighbors or relatives unless they are listed in our Student Information System.

Resources

APS Extended Day Program
https://www.apsva.us/extended-day/
703-228-6069

Extended day services will be offered at Innovation before and after school. Before school care begins at 7am and after school care runs until 6:00pm. Fees for the extended day program are on a sliding scale. More information can be found on their website.

School Health

Clinic - 703-228-2719

Clinic services in the school, including the administration of medication and modified first aid, are performed by the school nurse, clinic aide, and office staff. According to state regulations, the clinic staff may provide care only for minor illnesses and injuries. If the child's condition requires more attention, the parent will be contacted.
Forms for medication and other health related needs can be found here:
https://health.arlingtonva.us/public-health/school-health/

Cafeteria

Lunch menus - https://apsva.nutrislice.com/

The cafeteria serves both breakfast and lunch. Families may create an account for their children by visiting the APS Food & Nutrition website:
https://www.apsva.us/food-and-nutrition-services/online-payment/

Families who may qualify for free or reduced price meals must complete the application for school meal benefits every year. That form can be completed online here:
https://www.myschoolapps.com/

If you pack your child's lunch, be sure that they can open all containers and bags. Please do not send glass containers in the lunch box. Children should bring a water bottle.

Innovation PTA

https://innovation.apsva.us/pta-welcome/

All families are welcome and encouraged to join the Innovation PTA. A strong family-school connection is vital to the success of our school and our students.

Parent Resource Center

https://www.apsva.us/special-education/parent-resource-center/

703-228-7239

The APS Parent Resource Center offers a variety of supports, class offerings, and information to families.