

**INNOVATION ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL
FAMILY HANDBOOK
2024-2025**



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Arlington, VA 22201**

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**Claire Peters, Principal
Kathryn White, Assistant Principal**

**<https://innovation.apsva.us/>
[@Innovation_APS](#)**

Important Dates for 2024-2025 Academic Year

[APS Calendars](#)

August 28 – First Day of School, K-5
August 27 - First Day of School, PreK
August 20 - Sept 2 – Labor Day Weekend, No School
September 11 – Back to School Night, 6:30-7:45 pm
September 6 - Innovation Spirit Day
September 13 - PTA Ice Cream Social
September 17 – First PTA Meeting, 7pm in the library & virtual
October 3 - Rosh Hashanah, No School
October 4 - Innovation Spirit Day
October 10-11 – Parent Teacher Conferences (10/10 early release, 10/11 no school)
October 14 – Professional Learning Day, No School
October 15 - PTA Meeting, 7pm in the library & virtual
October 16 - Unity Day, wear orange
October 23 – Innovation Math Day
October 25 - School Picture Day
October 25 – PTA Bingo Night, 6:30pm
October 30 - Early release, 1:30pm
October 31 - Halloween Parade
November 1 – Diwali, No School
November 4 - Professional Learning Day, No School
November 5 – Grade Prep Day, No School
November 8 - Heritage Night, 6:30pm
November 11 – Veterans Day Observed, No School
November 19 - PTA Meeting, 7pm in the library & virtual
November 27-29 – Thanksgiving Break, No School
December 6 - Innovation Spirit Day
December 11 - Early Release, 1:30 pm
December 23-Jan 3 – Winter Holiday Break, No School
January 10 - Innovation Spirit Day
January 16 - Fine Arts Night. 6:30pm
January 20 – MLK Holiday, No School
January 21 - PTA Meeting, 7pm in the library & virtual
January 30 - Professional Learning Day, No School

January 31 – Grade Prep Day, No School
February 5 – Early Release, 1:30 pm
February 6 - Winter Concert, 6:30pm
February 7 - Innovation Spirit Day
February 17 – Presidents’ Day Holiday – No School
February 18 - PTA Meeting, 7pm in the library & virtual
February 21 - PTA Movie Night, 6:30pm
February 28 - Encore Stage Performance, 6:30pm
March 3-7 - Spirit Week and Book Fair
March 5 - Early release, 1:30pm
March 6 - Literacy Night, 6:30pm
March 13-14 – Parent Teacher Conferences (3/13 early release, 3/14 no school)
March 15 - 22 - PTA Online Auction
March 18 - PTA Meeting, 7pm in library & virtual
March 31 - Eid Al-Fitr, No School
April 4 - Innovation Spirit Day
April 14-18 - Spring Break
April 21 – Grade Prep Day – No School
April 22 - PTA Meeting, 7pm in the library & virtual
April 24 - STEM Night, 6:30pm
May 1 - Spring Concert, 6:30pm
May 2 - Innovation Spirit Day
May 26 – Memorial Day Holiday, No School
May 31 - PTA Huskyfest
May 12 – June 13 – SOL Testing Window (approximate)
May 20 - PTA Meeting, 7pm in the library & virtual
June 4 – Early Release, 1:30 pm
June 6 - Innovation Spirit Day
June 11 - Early Release, 1:30pm
June 13 – Field Day
June 16 – Gr. 5 Promotion Ceremony, 10:00 am
June 18 – Last Day of Academic Year, Early Release @ 1:30 pm

INNOVATION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

Building Information.....1

- School Hours
- Early Release Days
- Building Hours
- Parking

Attendance.....2-4

- Attendance Policy
- Drop-off and Pick-up of Students
- Late Arrival/Early Departure
- Release During the School Day
- Before School Arrival Procedures
- Emergency Closing
- Snow/Inclement Weather Days

Transportation.....4-6

- Arrival and Dismissal Map
- Bus riders
- Walkers
- Bikers
- Car Riders
- Changes to dismissal

Expectations.....7-9

- Behavior Expectations
- C.A.R.E.S.
- Dress Code
- Homework
- Items from Home
- Lost and Found

Safety.....9-10

- Bus Safety
- Glass Containers
- Traffic Safety Rules
- Money
- Valuables at School

Technology.....11

- Philosophy
- Responsibility & Safety
- Personal Electronic Devices
- Social Media
- Instructional Technology Coordinator

Clinic/Health..... 12-14

- Illness
- Medication Policy
- School Nurse
- Communicable Diseases and Head Lice
- Health (Vision) Screening

Food and Nutrition Services.....14-15

- Breakfast and Lunch
- Lunch with Your Child

Communication15-16

- Backpack mail
- Conferences
- Teachers
- Teacher Work Days
- Report Cards
- eFriday Folder

PTA/Parental Involvement.....17-18

- Parent-Teacher Association

Book Fair
Calendar
Grade Level Coffee Chats
Room Parents
School T-Shirts
Silent Auction
Student Directory
Visitors
Volunteers
Website

Administration.....19

Principal's Office Hours
School Board Meetings

School Activities.....19-23

Back-To-School Night
Birthday Observance
Class Parties
Counselors
Field Trips
Fundraising at Local Grocery Stores
Halloween Expectations
Instrumental Music
Library
Performances
Reflections Contest
Safety Patrols
Scholastic Books
School Grounds
School Picnic
School Pictures
Social Worker
Student Council
Yearbook

Extended Day.....23-24

Tips For Helping Your Child To Have A Successful

Year.....24-25

Innovation Elementary School Family Handbook

BUILDING INFORMATION

School Hours

Students may be dropped off beginning at **8:45am**. The instructional day begins at **9:00am**. School is dismissed at **3:50 p.m.**

Early Release Days

The dismissal time for early release days (professional learning and conferences days) will be at **1:30 pm**. See list of dates above for this year's early release days.

Building Hours/Entrance to Building

Building hours are from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. **Visitors must report to the office to sign into our visitor management system.** Your cooperation is needed to maintain security in the building. The external doors of the building are locked at all times and the button to the right of the doors must be pushed in order to enter the building.

Parking

Parents/families may park in the visitor spaces in the parking lot or on the street, as signage permits. No vehicles are permitted in the parking lot between **8:30-9:00 am and 3:30-4:00 pm.**

ATTENDANCE

Attendance Policy and Practice

Innovation students are expected to attend school every day that school is in session unless they are sick or there is a family emergency (i.e. death in immediate family.)

Research shows that daily participation in classroom activities is important to academic and social success.

Please leave a message on the attendance line at 703-228-2734 or send an email to innovation.attendance@apsva.us if your child will be late or absent for the day. You may also report an absence in ParentVUE. When your child returns to school a note explaining the absence is required.

After three or more consecutive days of absence or twenty total excused absences, **a doctor's note is required.**

Excused absences are illness, quarantine, doctor or dentist appointment; death in the family; observance of a religious holiday; summons to a court of law; violent storms or state of emergency; suspensions; severe family emergencies; or other absences approved in advance by the principal. The excused absences will be noted on the report card.

If a pattern of absenteeism or tardiness develops, the principal, assistant principal and/or social worker will call and develop a plan to ensure that your child is at school to receive instruction. Family vacations should be planned for times when school is not in session. Family vacations during scheduled school days are unexcused.

Late Arrival/Early Departure

When arriving after 9:00am, you **must** bring your child to the office before the child goes to class. A parent/guardian needs to sign in the student for attendance and safety purposes.

If your child needs to leave before the regular dismissal hour, the school office should be notified in writing that morning. When you arrive to pick your child up, the office will call the classroom for your child.

Release During the School Day

To take a child out of school during the school day, a parent or guardian must come to the office and sign the child out.

Parents are not permitted to go directly to the child's classroom. The teacher should be notified in writing that morning regarding your plans. If a student is to be picked up by someone other than the parent or guardian, parents must send a written note to school stating why, when, and with whom the child will be leaving. Children will not be released to anyone without parent or guardian permission.

It is important that children understand the necessity of arriving on time and attending school daily. Therefore, we ask that you limit excused absences and tardiness. **Your positive support is very important!**

Before School Arrival Procedures

Students will be permitted to enter the building starting at 8:45am. They may get breakfast in the cafeteria and make their way to their classroom. Please do not leave your child(ren) unattended outside of the school prior to 8:45am.

Emergency Closings

In case of snow, ice, or other dangerous conditions, Arlington Public Schools' officials may decide to change the normal school schedule. Information about school schedule changes and emergency closing will be posted on the website, sent out via SchoolTalk, and publicized to local TV stations.

Delayed Opening

If morning weather conditions exist, schools will open one or two hours later than usual. **Bus schedules are adjusted by one to two hours to correspond with the delayed opening.**

PARENTS MAY NOT BRING STUDENTS TO SCHOOL EARLIER THAN 15 MINUTES BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS. All field trips are canceled. Extended Day will be delayed as well.

Early Dismissal

Schools will close early if weather conditions require. Dismissal times will be announced via SchoolTalk, social media, and local TV stations. Buses will run their regular routes, and Extended Day will close at 4:00 p.m. Afternoon and evening activities will be canceled. It is important that parents provide specific instructions about where children will go when school is dismissed early unexpectedly. You will enter this information at the beginning of the school year as part of the first day packet on ParentVUE. **Please do not call the school to make day of arrangements. Telephone lines must be kept open to receive emergency information.** Children cannot be permitted to make telephone calls to arrange transportation.

Schools Closed

All school buildings will be closed and all activities will be canceled, including evening sports, recreation programs and Extended Day. If possible, the decision to close schools will be made by 5:00pm the evening before. In some cases, the decision will be made by 5:00am the day of closure. Instructional hours for the first ten equivalent days lost are not made up. Instructional hours missed will be monitored.

APS SchoolTalk

This service provides emergency and school closure information by email and/or text message.

Instructions for how to sign up can be found here:
<https://www.apsva.us/schooltalk/>

TRANSPORTATION

[Click here for the Innovation Arrival and Dismissal Map](#)

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 will be available on ParentVUE the week of August 21st. You can find the [Innovation Bus Eligibility map on the APS website here](#).

A parent or designated adult must be present at the bus stop in the afternoon to receive students in Pre-k, kindergarten and 1st grade 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.

APS uses the Where's My Bus app to allow families to track their child's bus. [More information can be found on the APS Transportation website](#).

Walkers

Walkers may enter the school grounds at either the N. Adams St gate or the N. Veitch St gate. Kindergarten and 1st grade students need to be accompanied by an adult. Students in grades 2 - 5 may walk to and from school alone with parent permission. [You can provide permission on this Google Form](#). A crossing guard may be available to assist walkers in crossing at the intersection of Veitch St and Wilson Blvd. Patrols in yellow belts are also stationed around the school. **At dismissal, walking parents should plan to meet their children at the same gate where they dropped off their children in the morning.**

Bike Riders

Bicycles may be ridden to school by students. Please remember to send your child with a lock and park bikes at our main bike rack at door C5.

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 if 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 and emailing innovation.extendedday@apsva.us (if your child is in the extended day program).

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.

EXPECTATIONS

Behavior Expectations

Innovation Elementary is a Responsive Classroom school. We believe that it is important to explicitly teach and model expected behaviors for students. We will establish routines in our classrooms, use interactive modeling to demonstrate expected behaviors, and use reminding and reinforcing language as students practice these expected behaviors. We will not provide rewards for meeting behavior expectations.

Our school assesses social-emotional competencies using the C.A.R.E.S. framework. Teachers will explicitly teach, model, and practice behaviors that help students meet these standards. You will see your child's progress on these standards on each report card.

The C.A.R.E.S. standards are:

Cooperation: includes working smoothly with others, as well as working collaboratively in groups and following classroom rules.

Assertion: includes confidently putting forth your ideas and opinions, as well as demonstrating self-motivation and overall effort, as well as participating in discussion.

Responsibility: includes taking charge of yourself and working hard at your learning, as well as following directions, checking work, working independently, organizing materials, beginning and completing work in a timely fashion, and using technology appropriately.

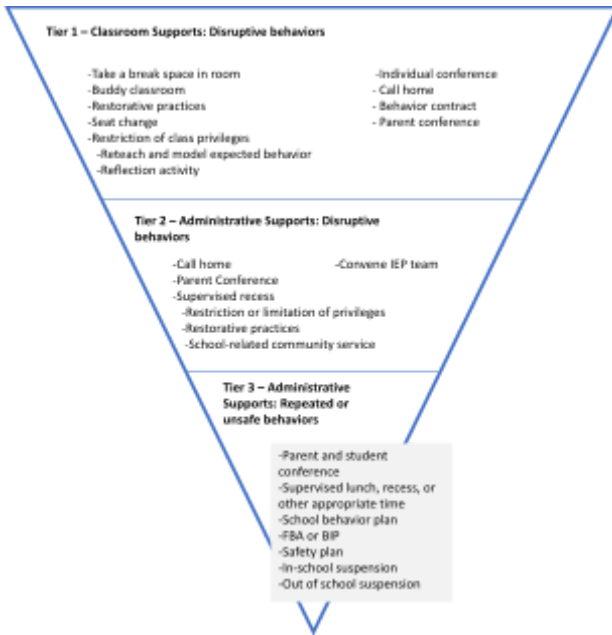
Empathy: includes listening to others and understanding how they might respond to words or actions.

Self-Control: includes thinking before acting, as well as staying on task.

It is understood that children will struggle with behavior at times. When this happens, it is important to step in quickly to get children back on track using simple, respectful, and matter-of-fact redirection.

Open communication and a positive relationship with families is important so that children receive a consistent message about expected behaviors. We will work together with families if there are repeated negative behaviors or if more support is needed for a child to achieve success at school.

We are a No Place for Hate school. Students will sign a pledge at the beginning of the year and take part in activities throughout the year to ensure Innovation is a safe and welcoming place for all students.



Dress Code

Innovation students should wear clothing suitable for school activities. Clothes should be appropriate for the weather and

activity and manageable by the student. In addition, clothes must cover students adequately. It is required that all children have sneakers appropriate for Physical Education (PE) classes and recess; flip flops are not appropriate. Children may not wear hats inside the school. In cases where clothing is deemed inappropriate by school staff members, counseling will be provided on an individual basis to those students and to their parents if necessary.

Homework

The only homework that students will have is to read or study. Occasionally, students in the upper grades may have specific assigned projects that require research or collaboration outside of class time. In these cases, the teachers will communicate directly with families.

Items from Home

Toys from home should not be brought to school unless a special activity is pre-approved by the classroom teacher (i.e. stuffed animal day). This includes sports balls, unless given specific permission by the principal.

Gum and candy (including lollipops) are not allowed in school or on the bus.

Lost and Found

Each year children lose many pieces of useful and valuable clothing. Please clearly mark your child's belongings. The "lost and found" closet is located in the Multipurpose Room. Please check the lost and found periodically throughout the year for lost items. **The "Lost and Found" closet is emptied quarterly and items are donated. An email with photos will be sent two weeks prior to this date.**

SAFETY

Bus Safety

Children are asked to remain in their seats and talk quietly while on the school bus. No electronic devices should be used on the bus. Any child who persists in behavior that represents a threat to the safety of others will be denied bus transportation. The school office will advise parents that such action is being taken. For more information about bus routes and schedules see [the Transportation website](#) or call the Arlington County Transportation Call Center at **703-228-6640 or 703-228-8670**. **NOTE:** Cars in both directions must stop when a school bus has its stop sign out or lights flashing.

Glass Containers

For safety reasons, please **do not** send any glass containers to school in lunch boxes or backpacks. Broken glass could lead to serious injuries.

Traffic Safety Rules

Only buses (**no cars**) are allowed in the parking lot from 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. and from 3:30 to 4:00 p.m. Cars may enter the lot and park in visitor spaces at other times. The drop off/pick up zone is on Key Blvd. Please drive slowly and carefully around the school, following all traffic rules and laws.

Money

The school is not responsible for lost money.

Valuables at School

Children should not bring toys, **cell phones, smart watches, or other electronic devices** or valuables to school. We do not have the capacity to safeguard valuable belongings at all times of the day, especially since our classroom cubbies are located in the hallway. If there is a special occasion for bringing an unusual item to school, please be certain that you clear this with your child's teacher.

Weapons

Look-alike weapons or weapons of any kind are not allowed at school.

TECHNOLOGY

Philosophy

We believe that technology should be used as a tool to enhance learning, not as the sole learning platform. Please plan for iPads to stay at school, in classrooms, unless there is a specific purpose when it would be needed at home.

Responsibility & Safety

All parents and students must sign the APS **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)** at the start of each school year before they may use school devices.

The use of the iPad and other instructional technology is a privilege. Students are expected to use their devices appropriately and to be good digital citizens. For example, students may not use devices to take photos or videos that are unrelated to an instructional activity. School applications, such as Teams, are only to be used for school activities. Students are also responsible for taking care of iPads and other technology that they use at school. As with other classroom behaviors, teachers will take time to model the appropriate use of technology at the start of the year.

The school has the ability to track a lost device using GPS as long as the device is charged. If your child loses their device, please let the school know ASAP.

Your child should not share their password with anyone. If your child forgets their password, our staff can reset it. Please let your child's teacher know if your child needs a password reset.

Arlington Public Schools is committed to helping students stay safe online. The resources presented on the website below are intended to compliment information and instruction provided to students at school and to extend available

resources for use by parents and the community. Here is the website for you to review and share with your child(ren): <http://www.apsva.us/internet-safety/>.

Personal Electronic Devices

Students are not to bring personal electronic devices to school (cell phones, electronic games, smart watches). They are disruptive to the classroom, and we are not responsible if they are lost or stolen. If your child does bring an electronic device to school, it will be kept in the Principal's office until the parent can pick it up.

All students who use personal email and social media sites are responsible for the content of their emails and posts. Students are to use appropriate communication that is safe and kind. Parents are responsible for monitoring their child(ren)'s use of technology at home.

Social Media

While Innovation does use social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to communicate events and activities with parents, we do not use social media sites in our program of instruction with students. All email communications are conducted with parents. For further information, go to the APS website under School Board and see APS policy G-1.4.

Instructional Technology Coordinator

Our Instructional Technology Coordinator is Melissa Hyatt. You can contact her via email at melissa.hyatt@apsva.us. Ms. Hyatt's main role is to support teachers' use of technology to enhance their classroom instruction. She is also the point of contact for questions about the APS issued iPads.

CLINIC / HEALTH

Innovation will continue to follow APS policies and procedures for maintaining the health and safety of our

students and families. Please do not send your child to school if they are sick.

Children will be sent to the school clinic if they become sick at school. If your child is too sick to remain in school or has a fever, parents or the person named by you on the emergency card will be notified to take the child home. Students must be picked up from the clinic within one hour of the phone call from the clinic.

It is important to remember that school staff members **cannot administer any type of medication to children** (without written permission), **remove deep splinters, or probe wounds**. We can do such things as check temperatures, clean cuts, and apply bandages. **Doctor-prescribed and over-the-counter medicines can be administered after a permission slip is filled out by both the doctor and the parents (see "Medication Policy").** In such cases, contact the nurse, Athena Cassidy, (703-228-2734) or the clinic aide (703-228-2735), who will administer the medication. In their absence, Ms. Peters, Ms. White, or Ms. Tavera will administer approved medication.

Please make certain that your child is well before returning to school. If there is a fever or remaining symptoms of illness, it is advisable to keep your child home for an additional school day. Students must be fever free for 24 hours without medication before he/she returns to school.

Medication Policy

Arlington County Public Schools' policy for administering prescribed medication to students is as follows:

- No medication may be given without a physician's order.
- Long-term medication orders, valid for one year only, must be completed and signed by both physician and parent.

- Short-term medication forms, valid for ten days, must be completed by a parent for each physician-prescribed medicine.
- All medicine must be sent to school in a current pharmacy-labeled container with the child's name for that prescription.
- The parent or guardian is responsible for submitting a new form to the school clinic whenever there is a change in the dosage or time administered.
- No child may carry medication on his/her person except those children who have permission from their physician.
- All medication in the school will be stored in a locked area accessible only to authorized personnel.
- For students requiring daily medication, every effort should be made to have the dosage schedule adjusted so that it will not be necessary to take medicine during school hours.

School Nurse

A school nurse, Athena Cassidy, is assigned to Innovation Elementary on a part-time basis. A nurse's assistant is on duty daily. The Clinic can be reached by calling 703-228-2735. Please contact the Clinic and office if any phone numbers change for you or your emergency contact. Hours of operation are 8:45 am – 4 pm.

Communicable Diseases & Head Lice

If your child has a communicable disease (easily transferred from person to person) or head lice, please notify the school promptly so that controls can be set to prevent the spread of the infection. Please call the Clinic at **703-228-2735** or the school office at **703-228-2700**.

The list below includes a few reminders about illness and infection among children. Following these simple guidelines can help protect your child and others from becoming ill.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF YOUR CHILD HAS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Has had a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher within the past 24 hours. Children must be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Has been diagnosed with a contagious illness and has not yet received medication for a minimum of 24 hours (or longer if recommended by your doctor).
- Has received medication for the required 24 hours but still has a fever.
- Has vomited the night before or in the morning before going to school.
- Has diarrhea, stomach pain or cramping.
- Is complaining of generally not feeling well.
- Has nasal drainage requiring constant wiping and blowing.
- Has frequent coughing throughout the day or night.
- Has any combination of the above symptoms.
- Has received a positive COVID test or has been a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID.

Health (Vision) Screening

On several days in the fall, the nurse and her assistant conduct vision screening for all first, third, and fifth graders. Parents are notified if their child's results warrant a professional vision evaluation.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

Breakfast and Lunch - This year breakfast and lunch will no longer be free for all students. The price for breakfast is \$1.80 and for lunch is \$3.10. [If you think you may qualify for free or reduced meals based on income, you must complete the application here.](#) Students will enter their student ID number to purchase meals. [You can have them practice using the printable key pad here.](#) Support will be provided for our youngest learners as they adjust to this new-to-them process.

Breakfast. Each morning breakfast is served to students who wish to participate. Students will bring their breakfast to their classrooms to eat.

Lunch. A hot lunch is served daily. [Lunch menus can be on the Nutrislice website](#). Hot lunches are prepared on site, and therefore it is important for children to inform us each morning if they are getting school lunch in the cafeteria. The cafeteria manager needs to know how many lunches to cook each day. Teachers will ask students in the morning if they need lunch that day.

You may also choose to send your child to school with lunch from home. Please send food in containers that your child is able to open on their own. Do not send candy or soda.

We are an allergy-aware school. Please let us know if your child has a severe allergy or other dietary need so that we may handle them as a class, grade level, and school community.

Lunch with Your Child

If you would like to eat lunch with your child, please contact your child's teacher to let them know. You must sign in at the main office as a visitor and display your visitor badge at all times.

COMMUNICATION

We believe it is important to maintain open communication throughout the year between families and the school. We are a team, and we can best support your children when we work together. Please reach out to us via email or phone call at any time. We are required to respond to any communication within 48 business hours.

Innovation Learning Log

The Learning Log is a weekly communication from the school and grade levels. It is sent via email and text on Friday

evenings and available online. Please be sure that your contact information is correct in ParentVUE so that you can receive this information.

Friday Folder

Notices from the school, the teachers, and the PTA may be sent home with your child on Fridays in their Friday Folder. Please check this folder and return any required information.

APS also sends home communication electronically using ParentSquare and [PeachJar](#).

Conferences

There are two opportunities during the year for families to meet with teachers at a formal parent teacher conference. The fall conferences are in October and the spring conferences are in March. Students will have an early release day on each Thursday and no school on the Friday of conferences. School is closed while teachers meet with parents to discuss their children's progress in school.

Teachers will send home notices at least a week in advance to schedule conferences. Teachers make their best effort to accommodate everyone's needs, within the obvious limitations.

Report Cards

We are a standards based grading school. Report cards will report your child's progress toward mastery of standards across content areas. Report cards are issued for grades K-5 four times a year after the end of the marking period.

PTA / PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

All Innovation parents are invited and encouraged to join the Parent Teacher Association. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Meetings will be held in

the Innovation library. There will also be a virtual link available. They generally include a 30-minute instructional presentation followed by a business meeting where updates are given and topics discussed. For specific dates and further information please visit the PTA website.

A list of PTA Executive Committee members and their contact information appears on the PTA Website. Please contact the appropriate committee chair when you have questions or wish to volunteer for a PTA activity.

Calendar

The PTA calendar provides a handy reference for important school dates. It is available online and updated monthly.

Communication

The PTA will use ParentSquare to keep families informed about events and ways to support our students and the school. These emails will generally be sent out on Tuesday mornings. A copy of each week's Notes from the PTA will also be sent home in Friday Folders.

Grade Level Coffee Chat

The PTA will sponsor grade level coffee chats with Mrs. Peters and other school staff during October and February. More information will be sent out via ParentSquare.

Room Parents

Parents who volunteer to organize and help with class activities are called room parents. Generally, 1-2 parents are designated as lead room parents. Your child's teacher will send information about how to sign up to be a room parent during the first few weeks of school. The PTA room parent coordinator will keep a list of all room parents and support as needed.

School T-Shirts

You can order an Innovation Husky t-shirt and other spirit gear through the PTA. Go Huskies!

School Auction

The PTA plans to hold a Silent Auction in the spring. The auction will be one the main fundraisers for the school. More information will be provided by the PTA.

School Grounds

The PTA has a grounds committee, who are dedicated to maintaining and developing outdoor spaces in collaboration with Innovation and APS. If you are interested in being a part of this group, please contact the PTA.

Visitors

Visitors must report to the office when entering the school to maintain building security and must wear a "Visitor" tag at all times. Your cooperation is appreciated.

All first time visitors must show their drivers license and be entered into our visitor management database. After your initial visit, you will be able to scan your drivers at our sign-in station in order to print your visitor tag.

Volunteers

Parents can volunteer to help in the classroom, to participate in fundraising activities, to help maintain and improve the grounds, and many other activities. If you are interested in volunteering in the classroom, please reach out to your child's teacher. If you are interested in supporting the school as a whole, please reach out to the PTA

Volunteers and chaperones must be approved through the online APS application process. The process takes approximately two weeks and is good for three years.

ADMINISTRATION

Principal's Office Hours

Mrs. Peters invites you to meet with her whenever you have a question or concern. Please call 703-228-2701 to make an appointment. Her official office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. She is also available via email.

School Board Meetings

The Arlington County School Board meets at 7:00 p.m. on the first and third Thursday of each month at Syphax Education Center, 2110 Washington Blvd. Meetings are open to all interested parties. Sessions are broadcast live on Arlington cable, Comcast Cable Channel 70 and Verizon FiOS Channel 41, and at <https://livestream.com/AETVaps>. Reruns are on the following Friday at 9 PM and the following Monday at 7:30 pm.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Back-To-School Night

During the first week of September, Innovation will have Back-To-School Night (BTSN) from 6:30pm - 7:45pm. BTSN will be in person. Teachers will offer their presentations twice, once from 6:30pm - 7:00pm and once from 7:15pm - 7:45pm. This is a time for parents to meet their child's teachers and to learn about the expectations and curriculum of that grade level.

Birthday Observances

No food (treats) should be brought in for birthdays. Many students have dietary restrictions and significant allergies. Thank you for your compliance.

If you would like to give out birthday party invitations at school, you must have an invitation for every student in the class.

Class Parties

Classes celebrate parties at various times throughout the year. Often these parties are tied into the curriculum. “Room Parents” may collaborate with teachers to support these parties.

Counselors

The school counselors, Ms. Carrie Strohl and Ms. Amanda Luong, work with students individually and in groups to assist them with academic, social, and behavioral concerns. They also make counseling presentations in the classrooms and have lunch groups. They may be reached at 703-228-2711 and 703-228-2712.

Field Trips

Field trips may be planned by teachers to support their curriculum.

Permission slips and accompanied forms must be signed by a parent/guardian for each child taking a field trip. Field trips offer a great way to extend learning outside the classroom. Our location provides us many opportunities for walking, Metro, and bus field trips. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to chaperone their child's field trips. Siblings may not attend field trips.

All field trip forms must have an emergency contact person's cell phone number within Arlington in order to participate in any field trip.

If you wish to chaperone a field trip, you must have completed your online volunteer application and received approval.

Halloween Expectations

On October 31st students will participate in a Halloween parade. If you do not want your child to participate, please inform his/her classroom teacher **one week** in advance and alternate activities will be provided.

If your child participates and would like to wear a costume, he/she must bring all components of the costume in a separate bag. **NO part of the costume is to be worn to school.** All parts of the costume must be able to be put on by the student. Make-up, hair gel, swords, knives, lasers, sharp objects, artificial nails, high heels, or scary costumes are not permitted. Please call Ms. Peters if you have any questions.

Instrumental Music

Students in grades 4 and 5 may attend classes for brass, string, or woodwind instruments during the school day. Some instruments can be rented from the county. The commitment for instruments is yearly. If your child begins studying an instrument he/she is expected to complete the program.

Innovation students will perform two evening concerts for families and two daytime concerts for student peers. More information will be communicated via ParentSquare and our music teachers.

Library

The Innovation library is designed to encourage children to develop the lifetime skills and habits associated with library use, research, and reading for pleasure.

Children are allowed to check out books to take home. The teacher and the librarian will help students determine how many to check out at one time. Reference books must be used in the library unless a student has special permission from our librarian.

Students are expected to return books within a reasonable length of time. If a book is lost, the student must pay for it. Student responsibility for books is important. Parents are asked to support good reading habits by encouraging library use.

Ms. Melody Johnson is our librarian and can be contacted at melody.johnson@apsva.us and Ms. Macarena Aristegui is our librarian assistant at macarena.aristegui@apsva.us.

Reflections Contest

The National PTA sponsors an annual contest every fall to encourage creativity in school children. Any student may submit entries in any or all of the four categories: music, art, literature, and photography. Submissions will be judged in two categories: Preschool through Grade 2 and Grades 3 through Grade 5. Further information will be sent home via Friday Folders.

Safety Patrols

Fourth and fifth grade students who are trained to encourage safe crossing of streets and good bus behavior are safety patrols for the school. Patrols are stationed at the entrances to the school and help walk younger students to class. Each school bus is monitored by bus patrols that arrive at their bus stops before the bus is scheduled to arrive. Bus patrols assume hall duty once the children are off the bus. Children should not arrive at bus stops or walk to school too early, as no supervision is provided.

Please contact our PE teachers for more information.

School Pictures

This year school pictures will be taken in October. The make-up day will be in December. Specific information is sent home in the backpacks. The PTA receives a percentage of the profits from the sale of student photos, however, no purchase is necessary to have your child's photo taken for the yearbook.

Social Worker

Innovation has a part-time social worker, Samantha Gift-Atttoh, who can support families in making connections with community resources. You can reach her at 703-228-2714 or samantha.giftatttoh@apsva.us

Yearbook

Innovation produces a yearbook with student photos arranged by class, as well as many candid photos. Yearbooks are distributed at the end of the school year. If you have pictures from school events that you would like to share, please contact Ms. Hyatt at melissa.hyatt@apsva.us.



EXTENDED DAY

APS Extended Day childcare is available before and after school. A variety of planned activities and homework supervision are provided. Fees are calculated on a sliding scale based on family income and the number of sessions a child attends. The before-school session begins at 7:00 a.m. and the after-school session operates from school dismissal until 6:00 p.m. Application forms are available from the County's Extended Day office at **703-228-6069**. If school opens one or two hours late, Extended Day will open late as well. If school closes early, Extended Day will close at 4:00 p.m. If school is closed all day, Extended Day will be closed.

The supervisor at Innovation is Lisa Lambert, and she can be reached at 703-228-2717 or emailed at elizabeth.lambert@apsva.us.

TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL YEAR

The following are some tips for supporting your child(ren) this school year.

(Some tips adapted from Positive Discipline)

1. PROJECT A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Through your words and your body language, you have the power to instill confidence in your child in their ability to have a successful and joyful year. Children are watching us, as the adults, and pick up on the messages we give out. Examples

might be: “It’s going to be a positive day.” “The school is a safe place.” and “You belong in this school community.”

2. ESTABLISH HOME ROUTINES

Typical routines may have changed out of necessity this past year. As we approach the start of school, this is a good time to reestablish routines around bedtime, meals, and mornings. Packing backpacks and choosing clothes the night before can help ease the stress of everyone in the mornings. Children thrive and find comfort and safety in routines. One routine that research has found to be correlated with success is family dinner. As often as possible make dinner time a family time when your family talks and enjoys being together.

3. AVOID MAKING SCHOOL A COMPETITION

There’s lots of competition out in the world. Help prevent competition from taking over your child’s school experience and leading to anxiety and stress. Focus on your child’s gifts and talents and avoid comparison with others.

4. MAKE READING AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR CHILD’S LIFE

At Innovation, we are committed to assigning no other homework than reading. How often you read to your child and how many books you keep in your home will have a significant impact upon your child’s success in school. Begin reading to children from birth on; continue as long as they are interested. Seeing you read can also be motivating for your children. Unlock the magic of books together!

5. WORK WITH YOUR CHILD’S TEACHER

Establish friendly and collaborative relationships with your child(ren)’s teachers early. Drop the teacher a note in the fall to indicate your willingness to help. Before a parent-teacher conference, think about what you want to learn about your child’s progress and let the teacher know ahead of time so they can be prepared to discuss those topics. Let the teacher express their opinion, but do not be afraid to express your

opinions. When we work together, we can provide the best support to your child.

6. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

We have heard the advice to put on your own oxygen mask before helping others. It's important that as parents we are taking care of ourselves to best take care of our children.

When our cup is full, we can help our children find the joy in learning and fill their cups, too.

7. ASK OPEN QUESTIONS TO ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO TALK ABOUT THEIR DAY

When we ask our children questions that allow for a yes/no or other one word response, it can be difficult to get much information from them about their day at school. Instead of asking "How was your day?", you can try asking "What's something your teacher said today that made you smile?" or "Tell me something that you did today where you had to work with other students in your classroom."