



Family Guidebook

2014-15

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to iLEAD Lancaster Charter School! You are part of a ground-breaking, innovative program designed to meet your child's individual needs and to foster in them a love of learning.

iLEAD may be different than some of your child's previous educational experiences. First, your child will participate in an interdisciplinary academic learning environment where they will make connections among various areas of study including language arts, history, science, math, art, and music. This setting will allow them to move at their own pace through inquiry-based learning strategies. Your child will also learn experientially through many field trips visiting local parks, beaches, organizations, businesses, and museums. Participation in these experiences will help your child apply their classroom learning. Finally, your child's growth will be measured along a continuum and in a variety of ways that demonstrate learning. In essence, your child will be empowered to take ownership of their learning experience.

Your experience as a parent at iLEAD may also be different than what you have experienced at your previous schools. To make the transition a smooth one for your learner(s) and yourself, we encourage families to keep updated and informed about school events and parent programs. We encourage and depend upon our parents to be actively engaged both in and outside of their learner's classroom. You will work harder here as a parent, but your rewards will be tenfold.

The Family Guidebook is designed to share iLEAD's philosophy, expectations for learners and families, and other school information.

SECTION 1: EDUCATIONAL OVERVIEW

MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

iLEAD empowers learners to become conscientious, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world. In this process, we inspire them to become creative thinkers and leaders, with a lifelong love of learning. We accomplish this through individualized instruction, active learning methods, collaborative efforts and opportunities for self-directed learning. We celebrate and foster each child's individuality and support them in discovering their highest potential.

CURRICULUM

The research-based instructional approach at iLEAD is differentiated to engage learners through hands-on, in-depth, authentic experiences across subject areas. This methodology allows facilitators to address learners' individual differences, variations in learning styles, intelligences and abilities. Rather than rely on any one series of books, textbooks or guides, we employ multiple materials, resources and strategies to best meet the needs of individual learners.

Curriculum is implemented with the following best practices in education:

- *Global Understanding* - 21st Century learners are faced with the challenge of engaging in an increasingly interdependent world where knowledge is constantly developing and evolving. Rigorous curriculum covering global connectivity will give learners a sense of belonging in our ever changing world and prepare them to thrive in the global marketplace upon graduation and post-college. Exploring diverse cultures will give learners a positive attitude toward learning and greater understanding of the world around them.
- *Engaging Curriculum* - Our curriculum delivers the California content standards through relevant learning experiences that engage learners' interests as they discover underlying concepts and develop deep understanding of subject matter. Learners are active participants in meaningful exploration, engage in hands-on activities and experiences that build on their prior knowledge. Projects are used as a teaching tool to focus on higher order thinking and real world skills. We will encourage learners to apply their understanding in projects that gradually introduce more complexity, and more learner-driven choice of topics and products. The goal is to foster self-motivation and self-directedness, as each learner discovers her or his unique strengths.
- *Multi-age Groupings* - Research supports environments with two or more grades that allow learners the flexibility to progress at their own pace along a continuum of achievement. As such, select grade levels at ILEAD may be multi-age environments.
- *Facilitator Continuity (Looping)* - Multi-year relationships between facilitator and learner provide for deeper knowledge to guide instructional decisions and familiarity with the social-emotional health of learners (Anderson and Pavan, 1993).
- *Advisory/Morning Meetings* - Research shows that when learners feel connected to their school, they do better academically. One of the ways we achieve this is with classroom meetings. In small group settings, we explore the causes and effects of cultural, personal, and community events. This allows our learners an opportunity to witness and display social problem solving skills and interactions. These meetings provide learners with the forum to develop social and emotional skills needed to thrive in a collaborative environment.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN (ILP)

Each year, learners along with their facilitator(s) create an ILP to guide instruction. Each learner, along with his/her family and facilitator, work together to monitor the ILP and make adjustments, as needed. The primary goal of the ILP is to ensure that each child will be treated as an individual and therefore will be working toward attainable goals appropriate to his/her individual development.

Throughout the year, learners will review learning outcomes and set individual goals. They will learn to evaluate their progress toward those goals, starting at a basic level when they are younger and improving their ability to self-assess over time. Throughout the year, learners will meet with their facilitator(s) and their parent(s) to look critically at what they have accomplished both in formal settings as well as at home with their families. Near the middle of the spring semester our learners will present their progress in the Student Led Conference (SLC) Presentations.

Portfolio-based SLCs will help ensure that learners are accountable to themselves, their families, their teachers, and the school community as a whole. Additionally, the experience creates a powerful incentive for learners to develop their skills, through the communication of high expectations, public display of meaningful work, and opportunities to showcase talents in modalities that best suit learners' distinct learning styles.

SECTION 2: GENERAL OPERATIONS

OFFICE HOURS

7:30 am to 4:30 pm

Front Desk Phone Number: (661) 722-4287

SCHEDULE

See the iLEAD website at www.ileadcharterschool.org for the most up to date hours, including break and lunch schedule.

INSTRUCTIONAL CALENDAR

See the iLEAD website at www.ileadcharterschool.org for the current year's Instructional Calendar.

STAFF

See the iLEAD website at www.ileadcharterschool.org for upcoming staff listings and biographies.

SECTION 3: DAILY OPERATIONS

DROP OFF AND PICK UP VALET PROCEDURES

iLEAD offers a convenient valet drop off system. **This is the safest and most efficient way to drop off your learner(s). We strongly encourage all families, regardless of the learner's grade level, to use the valet system.**

In the morning

Please enter Avenue K-4 from the west and pull into the driveway at the west end of our school. (You'll see a valet attendant in a bright vest to direct you.) Drive around the back of the school where another valet attendant will open your car door and help your children exit the car. The learners will enter the building through the double doors (under the green awning). Please do not park in this area. If you would like to come into the school, please park in our parking lot and enter through the reception area.

In the afternoon

Please enter Avenue K-4 from the west. Pull in the driveway at the west end of our school. **Do not turn left into the driveway, as it blocks traffic.** (You'll see a valet attendant in a bright vest to direct you.) Have your bright-orange valet card (available at Meet the Facilitator Day and on the first day of school) on the driver's side of your dash. An iLEAD staff member will read the last name written on your valet card and use a walkie-talkie to have your child come out to your car. We will be loading cars in the order in which they are in line. After picking up your child(ren), drive slowly out to the front of the school and **turn right onto Avenue K-4.** This will help prevent traffic congestion. Please be patient the first week while we work out the kinks in the system and get to know the cars/learners.

Please help us keep the valet line safe and efficient by following these guidelines:

- In the morning, have your child seated so that he/she can exit quickly
- In the morning, be prepared. Have your child ready to exit with backpack/school work/lunch in hand.
- In the morning, please pull forward and wait for a valet attendant before having your child exit the vehicle.
- In the morning, make sure your child has exited safely and all valet volunteers are at a safe distance away from your vehicle before you drive away from the valet drop off area.
- Please proceed slowly at all times.
- If you need to get something out of your trunk, please park in the parking lot.
- Please do not pass the car(s) in front of you!

If you choose to walk your child into the school building, we ask that you follow these parking lot procedures when driving your child to the iLEAD campus.

- Drive slowly and watch for families and children walking through the parking lot.
- Do not use your cell phones while driving in the parking lot.
- Give your attention to driving and exiting safely.
- Primary grade children should be accompanied through the parking lot by a parent or older sibling.

ATTENDANCE

We try to make every minute of school engaging for the learners, and our expectation is that all learners will be at school on time and for the entire course of the school day. Learners arriving late could miss important beginning of the day information that is relevant to their education.

Absence - If your child is going to be absent, please call the school at: (661) 722-4287 on the morning of the first day of the absence. You may leave a voicemail message when the office is closed.

Tardiness – Attendance is taken 15 minutes after the start of school. We ask that you contact the school if you know your child is going to be tardy. Consistent tardiness will result in learners missing valuable time with their classmates and may require them to make up missed activities.

Truancy - Learners are expected to be in school every school day. Any learner who is absent from school without a valid excuse (46010, 46010.3, 48205 Ed. Code) is considered truant. Missing a class period without a valid excuse is also considered truancy. Truancy is a serious offense and may lead to serious consequences.

Illness - Any child who becomes ill while at school will be taken to the Health Office and parent(s) will be called to pick up the sick child.

Medication - If your child needs to take prescription medication on a temporary or permanent basis while at school, an authorization to administer medication must be on file at the school. This form is available at the front desk.

Long Term Absence - Learners who are absent for an extended period of time (2 or more days) are encouraged to participate in the short term independent home study program. Please see your learners' facilitator for more information on this process.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM (CHILDCARE)

iLEAD Lancaster has an Extended Day Program for those families that need before school and/or after school childcare. This service is available for a small fee. If you are interested in this service, please email: childcare@ileadcharterschool.org.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Please send your child to school with lunch. Learners will be able to purchase lunch at school in a few weeks. Information will be included in the Monday Message.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

iLEAD plans to offer several enrichment classes. For a list of extra-curricular offerings, please watch the iLEAD Newsletter and website.

SECTION 4: LEARNER / STUDENT CONDUCT

EXPECTATIONS

iLEAD strives to present our learners with opportunities that exceed those available at most traditional schools. Our learners also accept a sense of responsibility that in many ways exceeds that which is expected at a traditional school. We expect each child to do their best, both academically and behaviorally. If there's a problem, we personally speak with the child, discuss the options for making good decisions, set appropriate consequences, and strive to help the learner internalize the importance of taking responsibility for their own learning and behavior. As a framework for this, we have expected learning results.

iLEAD, with its emphasis on the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, by Steven Covey, prepares graduates for the 21st Century by teaching them to be:

- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable thinkers
- Communicators
- Principled
- Open-minded
- Caring
- Risk-takers
- Balanced
- Reflective

At iLEAD we utilize Love and Logic as we embrace each learner's uniqueness while modeling and expecting appropriate behavior. Our iLEAD expectations for school behavior are:

- I will do nothing to harm myself or others.
- I am responsible for my behavior.
- We are each other's keepers.
- I take pride in myself and in my work.
- I will leave it better than I found it.
- We will have fun!

At the beginning of the school year, and at intervals throughout the year, we discuss these goals and principles with the learners, come to a common understanding of what they mean and why they are important, and then help our Learners to incorporate them into their daily lives.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the Love and Logic and other courses offered at ILEAD throughout the year.

CONSEQUENCES

There are consequences for not adhering to the behavior guidelines. Family and staff will work together to make decisions that are in the best interest of the child. The following consequences allow flexibility for individuals and varying situations. If the behaviors escalate, so will the consequences.

1. Warning and reminder: This may take place in or out of the classroom.
2. Reflection time: This allows children to cool off and the situation to diffuse before it becomes a larger issue. A reflection time may take place in the office or outside of a classroom.
3. A respectful, related consequence: This step allows the flexibility for a child or adult created consequence. For instance, if a child wrote on a desk, the consequence may be to clean the desks in the classroom during lunch.
4. A disciplinary referral to the office: This consequence reflects the seriousness of the situation. At this time, the learner will meet with an administrator, describe what happened, what she or he could have done differently, and what could be changed at the school that could prevent this from happening again.
5. In-house suspension: The child would come to school and do schoolwork in an alternative environment.
6. Suspension/parental supervision: The child would not be allowed to attend school. This would include extra-curricular activities during the suspended time period.

SECTION 5: TECHNOLOGY

ELECTRONICS

Cell phones and other electronic items are often used for instructional practices. We are guiding our learners in appropriate use of technology, helping them to make appropriate choices concerning these items. We realize that many parents give their children cell phones for safety and convenience. We ask that learners limit use of the phones during the school day to academic purposes only. Families may contact their child in an emergency situation by calling the school office and learners may use cell phones or school phones to contact families in an emergency. Learners should respect their facilitator's requests regarding appropriate time to use technology.

INTERNET USAGE

iLEAD computers have access to the Internet. The school works diligently to protect our Learners from inappropriate content. The iLEAD staff work closely in training our learners as to the appropriate use of the Internet. Before using the Internet, parents and learners should read the following “Network Use Guidelines.” All parents and learners must also sign a Learner & Parent/Guardian Network Responsibility Contract.

NETWORK USE GUIDELINES

Please read the following carefully. This will give you information about the privileges and responsibilities of using the Internet as part of your educational experience. The Internet is an electronic highway connecting thousands of computers all over the world and millions of individual people.

Learners will have access to:

- Electronic mail (email) communication with people all over the world.
- Information and news from a variety of sources and research institutions.
- Public domain and shareware software of all types.
- Discussion groups on a wide variety of topics.
- Many university libraries, the Library of Congress, and more!
- Educational Software.

Giving our learners the skills to thrive in the 21st Century means giving them access to technology. With computers as part of every classroom curriculum, iLEAD uses very strong guidelines for Web usage and Internet security. We comply with the level of security that the Children’s Internet Protection Act requires. While we have filters at the network level for inappropriate Web sites, there are still instances when those Web sites can come through. Please be assured that iLEAD remains committed to restricting the use of such Web sites.

Our school is taking reasonable precautions to restrict access to “harmful matter” and to materials that do not support approved educational objectives. However, on a public network it is impossible to control all materials.

“Harmful matter” means matter that, taken as a whole by the average person applying contemporary statewide standards, describes in a patently offensive way material which lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors (Penal Code, section 3 13). The facilitators/staff will choose resources on the Internet that are appropriate for classroom instruction and/or research for the needs, maturity, and ability of their learners. iLEAD takes no responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information from Internet sources. Use of any information obtained through the Internet is at the user’s risk.

The purpose of schools having access to the Internet is to support research and education in and among academic institutions by providing access to unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. The use of the Internet must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of iLEAD.

Transmission of any material in violation of any federal or state law is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, the distribution of:

- Any information which violates or infringes upon the rights of any other person.
- Any defamatory, inappropriate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, or illegal material.
- Advertisements, solicitations, commercial ventures, or political lobbying.
- Any information which encourages the use of controlled substances or the use of the system for the purpose of inciting crime.
- Any material which violates copyright laws.
- Any vandalism, unauthorized access, "hacking," or tampering with hardware or software, including introducing "viruses" or pirated software, is strictly prohibited (Penal Code, Section 502).
- The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of these privileges.

NETIQUETTE (Network Etiquette)

The use of the Internet requires that you abide by accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Be polite. Do not send abusive messages to anyone.
- Use appropriate language. In all messages, do not swear or use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language. Anything pertaining to illegal activities is strictly forbidden.
- Maintain privacy. Do not reveal the personal address or phone numbers of yourself or other persons. Before publishing a learner's picture, first name, or work on the Internet, the school must have on file a parent release authorizing publication.
- Respect copyrights. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be the property of the author and should not be reused without his/her permission.
- Do not disrupt the network. Do not use the network in a way that would disrupt the use of the network by others.
- Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If you feel you can identify a security problem, you must notify iLEAD staff.
- Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.

SECTION 6: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ATTIRE

We do lots of walking, running, sitting on the carpet, art, etc. Therefore, our parents and Learners have found that loose-fitting, comfortable clothing and closed-toed sneakers or comfortable walking shoes work best at our school. Distracting clothing is discouraged.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

It is always our intent to resolve concerns in the simplest manner for all. If a parent has a classroom concern, it is expected that he/she will try to resolve the concern with the classroom facilitator. If the concern is not resolved, please bring your concern to the school administration. Every effort will be made to find a fair resolution through a personal conference or a meeting between the parties involved.

FIELD TRIPS

Throughout the school year, learners will take many trips, often planned through facilitator and parent collaboration. These trips are a part of iLEAD's project-based curriculum and may include walking trips, trips by private or school vehicles, and buses. Participation is a vital part of the learning process and is strongly encouraged.

A walking field trip permission slip is completed as part of the enrollment packet. Signing the form indicates you have granted your child permission to participate in iLEAD's ongoing walking field trip program throughout the school year.

Field trip permission slips will be required for all field trips. Learners must have a permission slip on file in order to participate in a field trip.

Approved volunteers* are encouraged to accompany your child's class on a field trip. Facilitators will inform parents of the need for field trip volunteers in advance of each trip.

*See Family Participation Expectations (pg. 12) for information on the volunteer process.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- *Drills* - Emergency drills, such as earthquake and fire drills, are conducted during the school year. Drills are serious practice so that everyone will be prepared should an emergency occur. Procedures are reviewed with all staff who in turn teach them to learners.

If an emergency occurs during regular school hours, learners will be directed by their facilitator to follow emergency procedures for the specific event. If an emergency occurs when the learners are not on-site, learners will be directed to the supervising aide, parent volunteer or other school staff member. These supervisors will call iLEAD to provide an update and next steps.

- *Actual Emergency* - If an emergency extends beyond the end of the school day, learners will not be released until it has been determined that it is safe to do so. In the case of an emergency, parents or an emergency contact are expected to sign learners out, regardless of grade.

If damage is extensive, we ask that you park your car away from the valet areas and walk to the designated location to pick up your child. It is important to keep the fire lane open for emergency vehicles only.

When you arrive at the school, an emergency response team (made up of public servants, staff and volunteers) will direct you to the appropriate check out area to sign out your child. If the school building is not considered safe, learners will be congregated in the parking lot away from all buildings. A phone message will be sent to your primary phone number with directions on where to pick up your child. Please do not leave the school without signing out your child.

SECTION 7: COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION METHODS

Website - The best way to keep updated with current events and activities at iLEAD is via the website – www.ileadcharterschool.org

Monday Message - Each Monday, school information and reminders are sent home via the Monday Message. You can sign up using a link on the iLEAD website homepage.

School Newsletters – Newsletters are sent out regularly to iLEAD families. Newsletters are designed to revisit the mission and vision of the school.

Class Newsletters / Website - Most facilitators/grade level teams have an informational website. Your learner's facilitator will provide this website information at Back to School Night.

Phone / Text /Email- You will receive periodic phone calls, texts, and/or emails from our automated notification system. These messages will contain important information and reminders. In the event of inclement weather or an emergency, we will also utilize this system. Please make sure that we have your current phone number in our system at all times. To update your information, email: office@ileadcharterschool.org

Email - All staff can be reached at their school email address, generally firstname.lastname@ileadlancaster.org

SECTION 8: FAMILIES AND iLEAD WORKING TOGETHER

FAMILY PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

iLEAD seeks to make education a community passion. To this end, parent participation is essential to the success of the education process. Parents are expected to participate in the operation of the school as an integral part of the staffing and support team and with the charter staff in the development and successful completion of the individual learning plan for your child.

It is because of families like you that we are able to offer such a unique program for our children here at iLEAD. Families attending iLEAD agree to the following:

- Each family will commit to 4 hours per month or 40 hours per year of participation.
- Recording hours and meeting the yearly obligation is the responsibility of the parent.
- Visit the iLEAD website or Monday Message for school wide volunteer opportunities and/or speak with your child's facilitator.
- Families having difficulties meeting the participation commitment should contact information@ileadcharterschool.org.

EXAMPLES OF iLEAD FAMILY VOLUNTEER WORK

- In-class support as an educator aide
- Adult workshops – parents teaching other parents
- Outside research in support of specific school projects
- Driving on field trips (must register as driver)
- Hosting an activity in your home or business
- Coaching or operating an after school enrichment class
- Organizing a community service project for learners
- Supervising at the school – lunch periods, front desk
- Operation support – maintenance of the campus
- Recruiting event participation (booths, fairs, marketing materials)

NOTE: All volunteers working with children must have a current TB test on file, as well as a LiveScan background check. While a TB is valid for only 4 years, a LiveScan is required only once and can be obtained at various LiveScan locations. Please see the office for more information and required forms.

RECORDING VOLUNTEER HOURS

Volunteer hours are recorded through our electronic system (Raptor) in the front office. Please make sure you are signing in and out. Hours completed off-campus can be forwarded to office@ileadcharterschool.org.

ANNUAL FAMILY GIVING

Annual Family Giving is a tradition at many charter schools in California. As a charter school, iLEAD receives significantly less per child funding from the state than a traditional school would get. In addition to reduced funding, iLEAD directly pays the lease for our buildings.

The iLEAD Annual Family Giving Campaign donations directly benefit every learner by providing playground equipment, hands-on curricula, state-of-the-art technology, art materials, professional development, and the day-to-day operating expenses that are not funded by the state of California.

Annual Family Giving Campaign is an important part of strengthening your child's school as well as demonstrating our collective commitment to iLEAD. While family giving is voluntary, our school expenses are mandatory, and no financial gift is too small.

SECTION 9: GOVERNANCE

HISTORY

iLEAD's Governing Board is comprised of community leaders passionate about providing innovative educational opportunities within the Antelope Valley. They serve with the vision and ability to create and maintain a successful school. For a list of current board members, please visit the iLEAD website.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

iLEAD is governed by a California public benefit corporation with IRS 501c3 tax-exempt status. The school is subject to the Bylaws of the corporation. While iLEAD's charter authorizing agency is the Lancaster School District, we are self governed, manage our own operations and maintain our own board of directors.

The Board of Directors of iLEAD members for the 2013-2014 school year will be comprised of:

- iLEAD Lead Administrator
- 1 Teacher
- 1 Parent
- 1 Founder
- 2-3 Community Members

Decisions made by the Board will be on a majority basis. The Board will oversee iLEAD's policies and operations, and will receive regular reports on the school's academic financial, and operational progress.

Governing board meetings are open to the public and held monthly on the campus of iLEAD. For a current schedule, please see the iLEAD website.