

# SMMEIIS INSTITUTE

INSPIRE • EMPOWER • ACHIEVE



## FAMILY HANDBOOK

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS, GUARDIANS & STUDENTS



STRONG  
PARTNERSHIPS



STUDENT  
SUCCESS



SAFE & SUPPORTIVE  
COMMUNITY

*Together, We Learn. Together, We Grow. Together, We Succeed.*



## Purpose of This Handbook

While micro schools operate outside of traditional regulatory frameworks, we are committed to upholding high standards of education and student welfare. Therefore, we have adopted the following policies to ensure a safe, inclusive, and academically enriching environment for all students. These policies reflect our dedication to fostering a community of learning that prioritizes excellence, accountability, and the holistic development of each learner.

## Our Mission

**SMMEIIS Institute** is an accredited micro school rooted in arts, culture, mediation, and humanitarian learning. We are committed to nurturing the whole child through project-based learning, social-emotional growth, and real-world exploration.

## Our Leaders & Location

### Executive Director:

Clinnesha Dillon Sibley

☎ Phone: (601) 810-2393

✉ Email: [smmeiis.thecreativeplace@gmail.com](mailto:smmeiis.thecreativeplace@gmail.com) or [learn@smmeiis.org](mailto:learn@smmeiis.org)

### Director of Operations:

Keith D. Sibley

☎ Phone: (769) 204-0777

✉ Email: [learn@smmeiis.org](mailto:learn@smmeiis.org) or [sib8n01@yahoo.com](mailto:sib8n01@yahoo.com)

### School Location:

Community of Believers Cultural Fellowship

719 3rd Street

McComb, MS 39648

### School Hours:

Monday–Thursday: 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Friday: 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

\*Morning Mingle: 7:30-8:30 daily

\*Chapel: 8:45-9:15 Fridays

\*After school: Starting Fall 2026

## How We “Light the Way” for Children and Families

At SMMEIIS Institute, we believe education should do more than move students through a system. It should help children imagine futures bigger than their circumstances — and equip them with the tools, character, creativity, and compassion to help transform the world around them.

We understand that not every child flourishes in traditional educational environments. Some students need flexibility. Some need restoration. Some need a challenge. Some need space to heal, rebuild confidence, and begin again.

Our model was intentionally created to provide a different kind of learning experience — one rooted in possibility, creativity, accountability, innovation, and human connection.

### A Personalized Learning Journey

Through our online academic platform and hybrid learning approach, students are able to move at a pace that supports their individual needs and goals.

For some students, this means:

- Catching up academically and rebuilding foundational skills
- Receiving targeted support in areas of struggle
- Learning in a calmer and more focused environment
- Regaining confidence after difficult school experiences

For others, this may mean:

- Advancing beyond grade level expectations
- Exploring accelerated pathways
- Graduating early as part of a family’s long-term vision
- Developing independence, discipline, and future readiness

We believe children thrive when learning becomes intentional, personalized, and purpose-driven rather than one-size-fits-all.

### A Restorative Educational Space

SMMEIIS Institute is also a place of restoration.

We recognize that students, families, and even educators may come to us carrying disappointment, frustration, trauma, burnout, or discouragement from previous educational settings.

Our goal is not simply to “fix behavior” or “improve grades.” Our goal is to help rebuild trust in learning, community, and personal potential.

We strive to create an environment where:

- Students feel seen, challenged, and supported
- Families feel heard and valued
- Educators can teach creatively and meaningfully
- Mistakes become opportunities for growth
- Accountability is paired with compassion

*We believe fresh starts matter.*

## **Conflict Resolution & Human Connection**

In today's world, children must learn more than academics. They must learn how to navigate relationships, disagreements, differences, and emotions with maturity and empathy.

At SMMEIIS Institute, we intentionally teach:

- Peer-to-peer conflict resolution
- Communication skills
- Emotional regulation
- Perspective-taking
- Collaboration across differences
- Community responsibility

Students are challenged to find common ground, work through conflict respectfully, and become people who contribute positively to the spaces they enter.

We ask students to think deeply:

- How do I respond when someone disagrees with me?
- Can I listen with empathy before reacting?
- How do I repair harm after conflict?
- What kind of friend, classmate, or leader do I want to become?

## **Supporting Executive Functioning & Whole-Child Growth**

Some children need additional support with focus, organization, time management, emotional regulation, social interaction, or learning confidence.

We understand that academic struggles are often connected to deeper challenges involving executive functioning and social-emotional development.

Our team works to provide:

- Structure and guidance
- Accountability with encouragement
- Mediation and redirection
- Organizational support
- Opportunities for reflection and growth
- Creative and arts-integrated learning experiences

We believe children deserve support systems that help them succeed academically while also developing confidence, resilience, and self-awareness.

## **Preparing Children for the Digital Age**

The future will require more than memorization and test scores.

Our focus is on helping students become:

- Creative thinkers
- Effective communicators
- Responsible digital citizens
- Compassionate leaders
- Problem-solvers
- Community-minded individuals

Through arts integration, project-based and real-world learning, storytelling, performance, collaboration, and leadership opportunities, students are encouraged to develop the soft skills and human-centered abilities that technology cannot replace.

## **Questions for Reflection**

As families begin this journey with us, we encourage thoughtful reflection:

- What does success truly look like for our child?
- Does our child need acceleration, restoration, structure, flexibility, or a combination of these?
- How can school and home work together more intentionally?
- What kind of future are we preparing our child for?
- How do we want our child to treat people who are different from them?
- What habits, values, and leadership qualities matter most to our family?
- How can we help our child become both academically capable and emotionally healthy?
- What does it mean to “light the way” for the next generation?

## STUDENT REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

*Families must provide the following information at enrollment or no later than Friday, July 10, 2026:*

- Full name and date of birth (**birth certificate**)
- Medical information (**shot records**, allergies, conditions, medications)
- Emergency contact details (minimum two contacts required)
- Signed medical release form (form provided)
- Signed media release form (form provided)
- Pickup Authorization (form provided + Boys and Girls Club Pickup Authorization for Members provided)
- Community Learning Consent & Student Transportation Authorization (form provided)
- Handbook Acknowledgement (form provided)
- \$100 Registration Fee (cash, check, or online payment)

## REQUIRED HOMESCHOOL DOCUMENTATION

*For students transitioning from public school into homeschool:*

- Parents must file necessary intent-to-homeschool documents with the state (form provided). This form must be completed each year by August 15th.
- The original should be turned in to the attendance officer of the student's assigned district and a copy should be submitted to SMMEIIS for recordkeeping and compliance.

## School Structure & Learning Pods

To support personalized learning, age-appropriate development, and meaningful community building, students at SMMEIIS Institute are organized into learning pods rather than traditional grade-level classrooms.

Our current pod structure includes:

- **Elementary Pod:** Grades 2–4
- **Middle School Pod:** Grades 5–7
- **High School Pod:** Grades 8 and Up

This structure allows students to learn within smaller, relationship-centered communities while still receiving individualized academic support, collaborative learning experiences, and enrichment opportunities appropriate for their developmental stage.

## FAMILY COMMUNICATION PLATFORM: CLASSDOJO (2026–2027)

SMMEIIS Institute uses ClassDojo as our primary family communication platform. ClassDojo helps families, students, and staff remain connected, informed, and engaged throughout the school year.

Through ClassDojo, families may receive access to:

- School announcements and reminders
- Direct communication from teachers and administration
- Classroom updates and photos (when applicable)
- Event reminders and important deadlines
- Attendance or academic-related communication when needed

ClassDojo allows our school community to communicate in a timely, organized, and family-friendly way while helping strengthen the partnership between school and home.

Families are expected to regularly monitor ClassDojo for important updates and communication regarding school operations, student expectations, events, and announcements. Support with account setup and platform access will be provided as needed.

Please note that SMMEIIS Institute will also maintain internal, in-house attendance records outside of the ClassDojo platform for official school documentation and operational purposes.

## **EMERGENCY & INCLEMENT WEATHER PROTOCOLS**

At SMMEIIS Institute, the safety of our students, staff, and families is our highest priority. We have clear procedures in place to respond to emergencies and inclement weather:

### **Tornado & Fire Procedures**

- Drills: Tornado and fire drills will be conducted monthly throughout the school year to ensure that students are familiar with safe and orderly procedures.
- Evacuation: In the event of a fire, students will be evacuated to a designated safe zone outside the building. For tornado warnings, students will shelter in pre-identified interior spaces away from windows.
- Communication: Families will be notified through Class Dojo as soon as it is safe to do so.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

- In cases of severe weather (ice, snow, flooding, or storms), SMMEIIS Institute may delay opening, dismiss early, or close entirely.
- Families will be informed through email, text message, and social media by 6:30 a.m. on the day of the weather event.
- If McComb School District closes due to inclement weather, SMMEIIS Institute will typically follow suit, unless otherwise announced.

Please ensure that your contact information is always up to date so we can reach you in the event of an emergency or schedule change.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION, NOTIFICATION & REUNIFICATION PLAN**

- Parents will be notified via call or text and email through our emergency system.
- In case of evacuation, families will be directed to a designated reunification site (details provided at enrollment).
- Staff will escort students to safety following practiced evacuation protocols.

## **CAMPUS SAFETY & LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES**

SMMEIIS Institute is committed to maintaining a calm, prepared, and safety-conscious learning environment while also helping students understand the importance of emergency awareness, cooperation, and responsible decision-making.

To help ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors, SMMEIIS Institute maintains lockdown procedures for situations involving potential intruders, neighborhood disturbances, nearby emergencies, or safety threats within the surrounding radius of the school campus.

Staff members are trained on lockdown and emergency response protocols and will participate in routine safety drills throughout the school year. Students will also receive age-appropriate instruction on how to respond calmly and safely during emergency situations.

A lockdown may be initiated in response to:

- An intruder or unauthorized individual on or near campus
- Suspicious activity within the surrounding area
- Neighborhood disturbances or nearby law enforcement activity
- Community emergencies or threats that may impact campus safety
- Any situation determined by administration to require heightened security measures

During a lockdown:

- Exterior doors will be secured immediately
- Students and staff will remain inside designated safe areas or classrooms
- Movement throughout the building may be restricted
- Normal campus operations, transitions, or dismissals may be temporarily paused
- Staff will follow established emergency procedures until an official all-clear is given

Parents and guardians will be notified as soon as reasonably possible once students are confirmed safe and the situation is stabilized. In emergency situations, families are asked not to come directly to campus unless instructed to do so, as doing so may interfere with emergency personnel or safety procedures.

## **CHECK-IN AND CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES**

Student safety is a top priority at SMMEIIS Institute. To ensure secure and efficient dismissal, we use a computerized check-in and check-out system. Each authorized adult will be assigned a unique code to enter upon arrival. Only individuals listed on the student's approved pickup list will be granted access. Please note:

- A valid ID may be requested at any time.
- If someone not listed will be picking up your child, families must notify the school in advance via email or Class Dojo.
- Midday pickups should be communicated early to help us plan transitions smoothly.

This system allows us to maintain accurate records and provide peace of mind for families.

## **Appearance, Grooming & Safety**

Students may not bring materials intended for cosmetic application or beauty services into the learning environment unless approved for a special project or event.

Because SMMEIIS Institute is a shared learning environment that includes close collaboration, movement, food spaces, technology use, art materials, and hands-on activities, certain grooming practices and products may create hygiene, sanitation, allergy, distraction, or safety concerns for students and staff. The use or sharing of cosmetics, adhesives, brushes, combs, styling tools, nail products, or similar items during the school day is not permitted.

## **CONTINGENCY PLANS**

- In case of illness or emergency among staff, qualified volunteers or substitutes will be contacted. Families will be notified and updated schedules via text or Remind/ GroupMe.

## **FOOD ALLERGY MANAGEMENT**

- Parents must disclose any allergies on registration forms.
- Staff will be trained on food allergy protocols.

- If necessary, food allergy postings will be made in classrooms/ kitchens. Case-by-case plans will determine whether a child can share space with others during meals.
- Students may not share food with one another. The school will occasionally provide lunch, and parents may send food that is packaged/sealed only.

## **HEALTH SERVICES & MEDICATION POLICY**

To help support the overall wellness, safety, and emotional well-being of students, SMMEIIS Institute maintains basic student support procedures through designated staff members, including our school nurse/caregiver and counseling support team.

### **Medication Administration**

SMMEIIS Institute staff do not administer medication to students. Parents/guardians are responsible for coming to campus to administer medication when necessary unless otherwise required by law or arranged through an approved medical accommodation plan.

Medications brought to school will be stored securely in a designated locked area when applicable. Certain medically necessary items, such as inhalers, EpiPens, glucose monitoring supplies, or other approved emergency medications, may be kept on a student's person for self-administration with documented parent/guardian awareness and school approval when appropriate.

Parents are encouraged to communicate any medical concerns, allergies, emergency health needs, or medication changes directly with the school to help ensure student safety and proper support.

### **Student Health & Care Support**

Our school nurse/caregiver support team may assist with:

- Basic first aid and non-emergency care
- Monitoring minor illnesses or discomfort
- Parent communication regarding student wellness concerns
- Assistance with medication procedures
- Supporting student health, hygiene, and general well-being during the school day

In the event of serious illness, injury, or medical emergency, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. Emergency medical services may be contacted when necessary.

## **First Aid Supplies**

SMMEIIS Institute maintains standard first aid supplies which may include:

- Bandages and gauze
- Antiseptic supplies
- Gloves
- Thermometers
- Ice packs
- Basic non-prescription care items approved for school use

The use of topical treatments or non-prescription products, such as antibiotic ointments, will be based on parent/guardian consent and school discretion.

## **REQUIRED EARLY/ EMERGENCY PICKUP**

- A separate area is designated for sick students awaiting pickup.
- Parents will be contacted for early pickup if their child has a fever, vomiting, contagious symptoms, or severe discomfort.

## **Attendance, Presence & Instructional Commitment**

SMMEIIS Institute is a collaborative learning community built around shared community rhythm. Consistent attendance and full-day participation are essential to student growth and group success. Frequent tardiness, excessive absences, or repeated early checkouts interfere with a student's academic progress, collaborative responsibilities, and overall learning experience. Consistent attendance supports student success and community rhythm.

Morning mingle is 7:30 – 8:30 AM. Instructional hours are:

- Monday–Thursday: 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM
- Friday: 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Students are expected to arrive on time and remain present for the full instructional day unless prior communication has occurred regarding:

- Absences
- Late arrivals
- Early dismissals

## **Absence Expectations**

Families are encouraged to communicate absences as early as possible so we can best support student continuity, confidence, and academic progress.

At SMMEIIS Institute, we recognize that consistent attendance is connected to more than academics alone. Frequent absences, late arrivals, or repeated early dismissals may cause students to miss important instruction, collaborative activities, enrichment experiences, peer connections, and classroom routines that help build confidence and stability within the learning environment.

Students who miss large portions of instructional time may sometimes experience:

- Difficulty reconnecting to lessons or projects
- Increased academic frustration or overwhelm
- Challenges rebuilding routines and momentum
- Reduced confidence in classroom participation and peer engagement

As a general guideline, patterns of excessive unexcused absences — including approximately 8 or more unexcused absences within a semester — may prompt a supportive family conference to discuss how school and home can work together to strengthen consistency and student success.

Our goal is not punishment, but partnership. We understand that illness, appointments, family needs, and unexpected circumstances arise, and we value proactive communication and collaborative problem-solving with families.

Please note: We are required to keep accurate attendance records, and beginning in the 2026–2027 school year, all attendance will be monitored and documented.

## **Participation in Leadership & Signature Opportunities**

SMMEIIS Institute believes that leadership opportunities are privileges that reflect a student's commitment to our learning community. Consistent attendance demonstrates reliability, responsibility, and respect for both individual learning and the collaborative experiences that make our school unique.

To remain eligible for participation in select leadership organizations, enrichment experiences, and school-sponsored opportunities—including but not limited to National

Beta Club, 4-H, student leadership roles, ambassadors, competitions, performances, conferences, field experiences, travel opportunities, and other invitation-only programs—students are expected to demonstrate consistent attendance and punctuality.

Students who develop patterns of:

- Excessive unexcused absences
- Frequent tardiness
- Repeated early dismissals
- Ongoing attendance concerns that significantly impact learning

may be placed on an attendance improvement plan before participating in or representing SMMEIIS Institute through these opportunities.

The school reserves the right to temporarily suspend or limit participation until satisfactory attendance has been reestablished. Exceptions may be made for documented medical conditions, family emergencies, or other circumstances approved by school administration.

The purpose of this expectation is not to exclude students, but to encourage habits of dependability, responsibility, and commitment that prepare them for future academic, professional, and leadership success.

## **SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL GROWTH PLAN**

We view behavior as a form of communication and an opportunity for growth. Our approach is rooted in social-emotional learning, helping students build self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and responsible decision-making. We do not use rigid discipline models. Instead, we:

- Model and teach peaceful conflict resolution
- Guide students in identifying and expressing emotions
- Support students in making amends when harm occurs
- Encourage personal responsibility within a framework of accountability and restorative justice.

When behavior concerns arise, our first step is understanding the “why” behind the behavior. Parents are key partners in this process. We will reach out for collaborative conversations when patterns emerge, so that together we can create strategies that support the student’s emotional and academic well-being.

## **Mediation**

SMMEIIS Institute prioritizes restorative practices over punitive discipline whenever possible. Rather than relying primarily on referrals, suspensions, or exclusionary discipline, students will often participate in guided mediation, reflection conversations, accountability meetings, and conflict resolution processes. Depending on the situation, students may:

- Participate in adult-led or peer-to-peer mediation
- Complete written reflections or restoration plans
- Contribute to repairing harm within the community
- Work toward restoring trust and community
- Participate in accountability and restoration measures
- Engage in reflective and restorative actions
- Contribute positively to rebuilding community relationships

Serious safety concerns, repeated harmful behavior, bullying, threats, or physical aggression may still require immediate administrative attention, action, and formal documentation.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT & RESTORATIVE SUPPORT**

At SMMEIIS Institute, discipline is viewed as an opportunity for growth rather than punishment. Our goal is to help students recognize the impact of their choices, repair harm, and strengthen their character while preserving a safe, respectful learning community.

The examples below are intended as guidance and are not all-inclusive. Administration reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of intervention based on the circumstances of each situation.

### **Level I: Redirection & Reflection**

Examples may include:

- Off-task behavior
- Classroom disruptions
- Minor disrespect
- Dress code concerns

- Inappropriate language
- Misuse of classroom materials
- Failure to follow routines

#### Support Responses

- Gentle redirection
- Student conference
- Reflection activity
- Restorative conversation
- Parent communication when appropriate

### **Level II: Restorative Intervention**

Examples may include:

- Repeated Level I concerns
- Defiance
- Bullying or unkind behavior
- Academic dishonesty
- Intentional misuse of school property
- Inappropriate technology use
- Leaving assigned areas without permission

#### Support Responses

- Incident or accident report
- Parent conference
- Restorative mediation
- Restitution for damaged property
- Loss of specific privileges
- Individual behavior support plan
- Community contribution (helping restore or improve the school environment)

### **Level III: Serious Safety Concerns**

Examples may include:

- Physical aggression
- Threats toward others
- Possession of prohibited items
- Theft
- Serious harassment

- Any behavior that places the safety of the school community at risk

#### Support Responses

- Incident or accident report
- Immediate parent/guardian meeting
- Individualized re-entry plan before returning to normal activities
- Required restorative conference
- Safety contract
- Administrative review to determine whether continued enrollment remains appropriate

#### Administrative Discretion

Because every child and every circumstance is unique, SMMEIIS Institute reserves the right to determine the most appropriate restorative response. Repeated behaviors or behaviors that compromise the safety or well-being of others may result in increased levels of intervention.

#### SHARED SPACE RESPECT & CLASSROOM DECORUM

SMMEIIS Institute encourages students to be mindful of the comfort, focus, and well-being of others in shared learning spaces.

Behaviors intended to distract, disrupt, embarrass others, or create ongoing hygiene concerns — including intentional noises, excessive bodily humor, inappropriate comments, or repeated disruptive flatulence behaviors — may be addressed by staff as matters of classroom respect and social decorum.

Students are expected to:

- Practice self-awareness in shared environments
- Use appropriate manners and hygiene habits
- Respect the learning atmosphere of classrooms, studios, and collaborative spaces
- Avoid behaviors intended to gain attention through disruption or immaturity

Our goal is not to shame normal bodily functions, but to help students develop social awareness, consideration for others, and age-appropriate professionalism within community spaces.

## GRADING & FEEDBACK APPROACH

While we are a project-based program, academic feedback and growth measurement are essential. Students' academic subjects—including English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language—will be assessed and graded through Acellus Learning Academy, our online instructional platform. These grades will reflect mastery of standards and course completion. **Progress reports can be generated at any time through Acellus Academy, giving families real-time insight into student performance and pacing.** In addition, students will engage in interdisciplinary, project-based learning experiences curated by SMMEIIS Institute. These projects will focus on real-world application, collaboration, creativity, and social-emotional development. At the end of each semester, students will receive narrative evaluations and participate in a cumulative portfolio presentation to demonstrate what they've learned, how they've grown, and what they're proud of. Grades may be assigned when applicable, particularly for upper-grade learners or when needed for transcript purposes. Our feedback model is designed to celebrate progress, support reflection, and promote lifelong learning.

## COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

Families will receive a weekly email newsletter that includes important updates, reminders, and a copy of your child's customized Power Plan—a goal-setting sheet that outlines their academic targets, personal growth focus, and project milestones for the upcoming week. In addition to these weekly communications:

- Monthly academic progress reports and learning snapshots will provide deeper insight into each student's development.
- Staff will use Remind or GroupMe for urgent announcements or quick messages.
- Parents are encouraged to reach out via email, scheduled phone calls, or in-person check-ins as needed.

Our aim is to build a strong partnership with families through transparency, encouragement, and shared responsibility in the learning journey.

## **DRESS CODE**

We believe that students should have the freedom to express their individuality through clothing while still maintaining a safe, respectful, and focused learning environment.

Students are encouraged to dress in a way that reflects their personality and helps them feel comfortable and confident, as long as their attire:

- Is appropriate for a learning environment and non-distracting to others
- Supports safe movement and participation in activities (closed-toe shoes are required)
- Allows students to comfortably participate in academics, arts integration, movement, collaboration, performances, and hands-on learning experiences
- Does not contain inappropriate language, imagery, or content that may disrupt the educational environment
- Does not include sleepwear, sleep headgear intended for bedtime (such as bonnets or durags), pajamas, or bedroom slippers unless otherwise specified for designated spirit or themed days

For the 2026-2027 academic year, SMMEIIS Institute will introduce uniform days on Mondays and Fridays as part of our efforts to encourage professionalism and build community, structure, and school identity. Uniform attire may also be required during local excursions, field trips, performances, presentations, or other designated school events. Families will receive advance notice regarding any special attire expectations.

On special occasions, the school may host themed dress-up days, spirit days, performances, cultural celebrations, or creative expression events. Parents and families will be notified in advance with specific guidance for participation.

Students should arrive dressed in a manner that reflects readiness to learn, respect for shared spaces, and consideration for the broader school community.

## **DIGITAL BALANCE & RESPONSIBILITY**

We aim to foster students who are disciplined digital citizens—individuals who can responsibly manage technology rather than be ruled by it. We acknowledge that phones are part of daily life, but in our learning environment, we prioritize focus, face-to-face connection, and intentional use of tools.

To help maintain focus, engagement, healthy peer interaction, and student safety during the school day, student cell phones and personal smart devices are not permitted for regular use during school hours.

Upon arrival, phones must be turned off or silenced and placed in the school's designated cubbies, storage area, or stowaway compartment until dismissal unless otherwise directed for an approved instructional activity.

Smartwatches and wearable devices with texting, calling, internet, camera, or messaging capabilities are not permitted during the school day and should remain at home whenever possible.

Student use of phones or personal smart devices during the school day is limited to:

- Emergencies approved by staff
- Approved educational activities under direct staff supervision

Students are not permitted to post, livestream, record, upload, or share content to social media platforms during the school day. This expectation is in place to help protect student privacy, campus safety, instructional focus, and the overall well-being of the school community.

We encourage families to communicate directly with the school rather than contacting students during instructional hours. If a parent/guardian needs to reach a student, the school office or designated staff member will assist in relaying important messages.

Likewise, students who need to contact a parent/guardian during the school day must do so through school staff or approved school communication procedures.

## **STUDENT TECHNOLOGY DEVICES**

To help create consistency across learning platforms, digital tools, troubleshooting, and classroom instruction, SMMEIIS Institute will adopt designated Chromebook/laptop standards for student use.

Families will receive information regarding approved or recommended student devices that are compatible with the school's instructional and technology needs.

Any student device not purchased through or specifically recommended by the school must be reviewed and approved by the SMMEIIS Institute Technology Department or designated school staff before being used regularly on campus.

Approved devices should be capable of supporting:

- Educational learning platforms
- Google Workspace tools
- Online testing and assessments
- School communication systems
- Daily digital coursework and enrichment activities

To support instructional consistency and digital readiness, students may also be asked to keep approved devices on campus during the school week when appropriate.

Students are expected to handle all school-approved technology responsibly and use devices in ways that reflect digital citizenship, academic integrity, and respect for the learning environment.

## **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) & RESPONSIBLE TECHNOLOGY USE**

We recognize that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT and similar platforms are becoming part of modern learning, communication, and professional life. As a future-focused learning community, we believe students should learn how to use these tools responsibly, ethically, and creatively.

AI may be used to:

- Brainstorm or initiate ideas
- Support research and creative exploration

AI may not be used to:

- Complete assignments for students
- Generate written responses to submit as original work
- Solve math problems without students showing and understanding the process
- Replace reading, critical thinking, discussion, or independent effort
- Copy and paste answers into coursework, projects, or assessments

At SMMEIIS Institute, we value authentic learning, original thought, creativity, and productive struggle. Students should be able to explain, demonstrate, and defend their thinking independently.

Because our program includes online and self-paced learning, students may occasionally be asked to:

- Complete handwritten work
- Explain their thinking verbally
- Show process steps

- Participate in live demonstrations of understanding
- Revise work that appears inauthentic or overly AI-generated

Improper or dishonest use of AI may result in:

- Required assignment revision or redo
- An academic integrity support plan developed in partnership with the student and family

Repeated misuse may result in additional administrative intervention or temporary restrictions on certain independent technology privileges.

Our goal is not to reject innovation, but to ensure students learn how to use emerging technology responsibly while continuing to develop their own voice, intellect, creativity, and critical thinking skills.

### **Teaching Social Responsibility**

We will guide students to:

- Understand why boundaries matter for digital wellness
- Reflect on how their device habits affect themselves and others
- Participate in occasional “tech-lite” or “unplugged” challenges to build self-awareness
- Learn about positive tech use, including creative expression, digital storytelling, and activism

### **Consequences for Misuse**

- First offense: Gentle reminder and redirection
- Repeated misuse: Confiscation until end of day and parent notification
- Ongoing issues will involve a student-parent conference to realign on expectations

### **Communication Policy**

- Students are not permitted to create or participate in text message group chats or social media chat groups related to school.

## **Year-Round & Summer Learning Pathways**

SMMEIIS Institute embraces a flexible, mastery-based approach to learning. Depending on academic history, attendance, graduation goals, or individualized learning needs, some students may participate in extended learning opportunities during the summer or throughout the calendar year.

These opportunities may support:

- Grade-level recovery
- Credit recovery
- Academic acceleration
- Early graduation pathways
- Personalized pacing plans

Learning plans will be developed collaboratively with families and may include online coursework, tutoring, projects, enrichment experiences, or independent study expectations.

## **FIDGETS, EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ITEMS & PERSONAL WORKSPACES**

We recognize the importance of supporting students' emotional regulation, focus, and comfort throughout the school day. Fidgets and emotional support items are permitted as tools that may help students manage anxiety, attention, sensory needs, or emotional self-regulation.

However, these items must meet the following expectations to remain permitted within the learning environment:

- They are used for focus, calming, or emotional support rather than general play
- They are non-disruptive, quiet, and do not interfere with instruction or distract other students
- Items should be small enough to fit within a student's personal workspace or desk area
- Items may not create clutter, excessive distraction, or unsafe conditions within shared learning spaces

Examples of acceptable items may include:

- Stress balls or therapy putty
- Silent fidget spinners or cubes
- Smooth stones or sensory strips

- Small comfort items such as a keychain plush or calming object

What distinguishes a fidget or emotional support item from a toy is its intended purpose:

- A toy is primarily for recreation or entertainment
- A fidget or emotional support item is a functional tool intended to support concentration, emotional regulation, or well-being

Students are also welcome to personalize or decorate their desk or workspace area in ways that reflect creativity and comfort. However, desk areas must remain reasonably clean, organized, and free from excessive clutter, trash, food buildup, or collections of unnecessary items that interfere with learning, cleanliness, or shared space expectations.

Our goal is to create an environment that feels both supportive and functional. If an item or workspace setup becomes distracting, unsafe, unsanitary, or disruptive to the learning environment, staff may ask students to reorganize, remove, or store items appropriately. Removed items may be returned at the end of the school day with guidance regarding appropriate use and expectations.

## **LOCAL FIELD TRIPS & TRANSPORTATION**

Learning often extends beyond our classroom walls. We take frequent local field trips to enhance academic topics, explore our community, and encourage real-world connections.

Students will be transported on these outings using the school's van, operated by an approved and insured driver. Parents will be notified in advance of all scheduled trips, and field trip permission is granted at the time of enrollment.

*For safety and easy identification, all students are required to wear a SMMEIIS school shirt during field trips. Shirts can be ordered from our nonprofit's or vendor's online store.*

## **TUITION & PAYMENT INFORMATION**

Tuition for SMMEIIS Institute is \$400 per month, per child. Payments are due by the 5th of each month to support consistent programming and planning.

Our preferred payment method is through digital invoicing. Families will receive invoices and payment instructions directly from the school for monthly tuition and related fees. Additional payment information and accepted payment methods will be provided prior to the start of the school year.

Founding family or legacy tuition arrangements already established with the school will continue to be honored unless otherwise communicated.

Additional payment options may be made available upon request, including:

- Paying multiple months in advance
- Paying the full academic year upfront

To arrange these options, simply request an invoice for the total amount you'd like to pay. Families enrolling multiple children may receive a sibling discount of \$25 per month for each additional child enrolled. Sibling discounts apply only while siblings are enrolled concurrently.

## **PART-TIME & ENRICHMENT ENROLLMENT**

To better serve the diverse needs of families, SMMEIIS Institute may offer a limited Part-Time/Enrichment Enrollment option for students who do not require full-day academic programming. Availability is limited and offered at the discretion of the school based on enrollment capacity and staffing.

Students enrolled in this option attend **Monday–Thursday during the afternoon enrichment block which is 12:30-2:30pm** (the school day concludes at 12:00 p.m. on Fridays) to participate in a variety of creative and experiential learning opportunities.

The tuition for Part-Time/Enrichment Enrollment is \$200 per month, per student, with payments due by the 5th of each month.

Because this enrollment option does not include the full academic program, students may participate in selected school performances, showcases, exhibitions, clubs, and other activities that occur during the afternoon or evening, as determined by the school. Participation in academic coursework, assessments, and certain daytime events may be limited.

Families should note that while the Part-Time/Enrichment option provides meaningful opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and community engagement, the full-day program offers the most comprehensive SMMEIIS Institute experience, including the complete academic curriculum, daily community-building activities, and the full range of educational programming.



# 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR & OBSERVANCES

UPDATED: 6/17/2026



## SUMMER 2026

|  |                    |                                                  |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>June 1</b>      | Summer Learning Pathways Begin                   |
|  | <b>July 13-17</b>  | Math Tutoring Camp for Invited Students          |
|  | <b>July 20-24</b>  | Language Arts Tutoring Camp for Invited Students |
|  | <b>July 24</b>     | Summer Operations End                            |
|  | <b>August 3-5</b>  | Teacher & Staff Training / Workdays              |
|  | <b>August 6</b>    | Student Orientation (Elementary)                 |
|  | <b>August 7</b>    | Student Orientation (Middle & High School)       |
|  | <b>August 10</b>   | <b>First Day of School</b>                       |
|  | <b>August 14</b>   | Light the Way Day / Convocation                  |
|  | <b>August 23</b>   | Spelling Bee (students must be registered)       |
|  | <b>September 7</b> | Labor Day Holiday                                |



## FALL SEMESTER 2026

|  |                                |                                                             |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>September 1-4</b>           | Diagnostic Testing                                          |
|  | <b>September 14</b>            | International Dot Day & Discovery Night                     |
|  | <b>September 24</b>            | National Beta Induction                                     |
|  | <b>October 5-9</b>             | Fall Break                                                  |
|  | <b>October 16</b>              | Odyssey Day (Report Cards)                                  |
|  | <b>October 26-30</b>           | Founder's Week                                              |
|  | <b>November 8</b>              | National STEM Day & Family Science Fair Projects on Display |
|  | <b>November 9-13</b>           | Kindness Week                                               |
|  | <b>November 19</b>             | Gratitude Brunch (Thanksgiving Lunch)                       |
|  | <b>November 23-27</b>          | Thanksgiving Break                                          |
|  | <b>December 4 &amp; 5</b>      | Fall Play Production                                        |
|  | <b>Week of December 7</b>      | Diagnostic Testing                                          |
|  | <b>December 17</b>             | Karamu: End-of-Year Meal (Kwanzaa Celebration)              |
|  | <b>December 19 - January 6</b> | Christmas Break                                             |



## SPRING SEMESTER 2027

|  |                     |                                                        |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>January 8</b>    | Odyssey Day (Report Cards)                             |
|  | <b>January 18</b>   | Martin Luther King Jr. Day                             |
|  | <b>February 1-5</b> | African Heritage & Health Week                         |
|  | <b>February 28</b>  | Black History Quiz Bowl                                |
|  | <b>March 8-12</b>   | Spring Break                                           |
|  | <b>March 19</b>     | Odyssey Day (Report Cards)                             |
|  | <b>March 26-29</b>  | Easter Holiday                                         |
|  | <b>April 8</b>      | Art Flex                                               |
|  | <b>April 21</b>     | World Creativity & Innovation Day                      |
|  | <b>April 26</b>     | Diagnostic Testing                                     |
|  | <b>May 7</b>        | Awards & Promotion Day / Passion Project Presentations |
|  | <b>May 14</b>       | <b>Last Day of School</b>                              |



## IMPORTANT NOTES



Fridays are Early Dismissal Days.



Chapels are held every Friday morning.



Student uniforms are worn on Mondays, Fridays, and field trip/excursion days.



Wellness Wednesdays promote student well-being through mindfulness, movement, and awareness.



Calendar dates are subject to adjustment based on school needs, weather conditions, and community or national events that may impact school operations.

## **MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER**

We recognize that SMMEIIS Institute may look and feel different from traditional school models. Our approach is intentionally designed to provide flexibility, creativity, restoration, and individualized support while still maintaining structure, accountability, and clear expectations for students.

Children thrive when they are given both freedom and guidance — opportunities to explore who they are alongside routines, boundaries, consistency, and community support that help them grow with confidence.

Thank you for trusting us to partner with your family as we continue working to learn, create, impact, and light the way for the next generation.