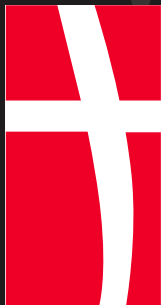


ELEMENTARY (PK3-5TH) PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK



GASTON
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL
East Cleveland Campus

PREPARE *People*
TEACH *Truth*
GLORIFY *God*

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF GASTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Gaston Christian School, Inc. was established in 1979 by a group of seven area pastors and interested Christian parents who believed that a need existed for a school that would provide a program of academic excellence and spiritual development in an orderly, God-honoring setting. The first year was devoted to planning, with the school opening its doors the following fall (1980) with an enrollment of 105 students in grades K-9 in the educational facilities of Parkwood Baptist Church in Gastonia, NC. A preschool program for three- and four-year-olds was added in 1985.

In August 1991 an additional elementary school campus was established in the Belmont/Mt. Holly area, using the educational facilities of Catawba Heights Baptist Church.

In 1994, the program expanded through grade ten on the campus of the former Sacred Heart College. Grades 11 and 12 were added the following two years with the school now providing a full college-preparatory program through the 12th grade. Acquiring 54 acres of land in March 1999 for future campus development, the school entered one of the most exciting phases of its history. In August of 2006, all elementary students moved to their new building on the Lowell campus. Students in grades 6-12 re-located to the consolidated campus in August of 2008. Campus development continued with the construction of the Fine Arts Center, which was completed during the 2018-2019 school year.

As set forth in the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws, Gaston Christian School is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees. The school is accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, the Northwest Accreditation Commission, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and Improvement; Gaston Christian is also approved by the North Carolina Department of Non-Public Instruction.

In January of 2022, five local pastors of Shelby churches, met with Gaston Christian's upper administration to discuss the need for a Christian school in the greater Shelby area. Elizabeth Baptist Church agreed to partner with Gaston Christian as a host site for the Shelby Campus. On August 11, 2022 the Shelby Campus opened its doors to students in preschool through fourth grade.

December 2023, Gaston Christian School purchased the old Central School in Kings Mountain and began the renovation process in January 2024 through the summer. On August 13, 2024 teachers and students started classes at their new location.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Gaston Christian School, Inc. admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its personnel or educational policies, admission policies, scholarships, athletic activities, or other school-administered programs.



Dear Parents,

I would like to welcome you and your child to the Gaston Christian School East Cleveland Campus program. We are so grateful and thankful for the opportunity we have been given to serve you and your family in Christian education.

This is a very instrumental time in the life of your child where academic, spiritual, and personal growth are priority. We are excited about partnering with you throughout the year and want you to know that we are faithfully committed to the success of your child.

Please feel free to communicate with your child's teacher about any concerns, ideas, or feedback that may be helpful to the overall growth of your child. We are devoted to keeping you updated on your child's progress as well as communicating any concerns should they arise.

My prayer is that this year would have a lasting positive impact on your child as we all work together to provide the ideal environment for learning and for developing Christ-like character in your child.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victoria Ahearn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "V" at the beginning.

Victoria Ahearn
Principal – East Cleveland Campus

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
Proverbs 9:10

GASTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK

We are delighted that you have chosen Gaston Christian School for your child's educational experience. We trust that this manual of information will be helpful in answering questions regarding school policy and practices. Please feel free to contact the school when additional information is needed.

1. STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, MISSION, AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Philosophy

The board, administration, faculty and staff of Gaston Christian School believe that education, like life, should be centered upon a personal relationship with God, Who is both our Creator and Redeemer. In Christian education, the Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word which reveals Jesus Christ is our philosophy, or foundational belief system, rather than man-centered philosophies.

1.2 Vision Statement: Soaring to Excellence in Christ

1.3 Mission Statement: Prepare People. Teach Truth. Glorify God.

1.4 Objectives

The School

- Believes that education must be personalized if it is to be effective.
- Views the student as created by God, in God's image and likeness. The student is somebody.
- Pledges to assist the student at each level of education to fully realize his undeveloped capacities for knowledge and wisdom apace with his maturing years.
- Takes a Biblical view of the student. From the scriptures we obtain knowledge about students as God's image bearers, deserving everyone's respect; from the scriptures we obtain knowledge about students as possessing a morally corrupt nature, needing God's forgiveness and redemption through Jesus Christ our Lord; from the scriptures we obtain knowledge about Christian sons and daughters growing into the image of God's Son, needing loving nurture and encouragement – and needing compassionate discipline and correction; and from the scriptures we obtain knowledge about students' uniqueness as persons, needing both the authority of law and the freedom of self-hood.
- Takes a developmental view of the student. From formal and informal observations we learn about student's personality differences; about their varieties of motivation, readiness, and learning styles; and about their developmental needs at the various stages of growth. From formal and informal observations we learn about their fears and aggressions; their joys and spontaneity; their loneliness and aspirations; their struggles with right and wrong, true and false, real and unreal, and love and hate. From formal and informal observations of students, we learn about the effects on students who come from stable and motivated homes; about effects on students who come from unstable and undisciplined homes; about the effects on students of good and poor nutrition; and about the effects on students of their emerging sexuality. From all such observations, both formal and informal, we learn about the complexity of human persons and how that complexity affects their educational requirements.

The Teacher

- Will be committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and set before students a noble example of Christian life and conduct.
- Will seek to know each student's abilities, feelings, values, and hopes.
- Will build many roads to success into the instructional program and assist students every day to taste success in an area of earnest endeavor.
- Will communicate what is expected of students.
- Will communicate how students can get assistance to successfully carry out what is expected of them.
- Will respect each student as an image bearer of God, regardless of the student's performance.

- Will lead the life of a Christian scholar in the vast and exciting worlds of fine arts, science, mathematics, language, literature, history, etc. The teacher will be a spiritual and intellectual model for students to follow and will have something rich and challenging to offer students.
- Will carefully examine and prepare for the learning styles of students.
- Will bring great enthusiasm to the teaching-learning transaction.
- Will have a passion for learning and an ever increasing mastery of the subjects they teach.
- Will set before students the rigorous requirements of the pursuit of academic excellence.

The Parents

- Have primary responsibility for their students. Parents train by example as well as by precept.
- Have the responsibility to teach their students that education is an aided form of self development over which the individual himself can never be relieved of the fundamental responsibility.
- Have the responsibility to encourage their students by carefully attending to the student's world of school. Parents must listen to and talk with students about the schoolday.
- Have the responsibility to support the school's and teacher's authority in the eyes of their students.
- Have the responsibility to resolve differences with the school or with a teacher in accordance with the scriptural principles outlined in Matthew 18 and Galatians 6.

The Student

- Will take an interest; he will set himself to learn and obey.
- Will aim high and strive hard. Whatever the student does, he will do with all his might as before the Lord's searching gaze.
- Will know that man cannot live without taking sides, without making decisions and taking action, and will know that while he is free to make choices, he is not free to determine the consequences of his choices.
- Will know that the scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God and fit him fully for all branches of his life's work.
- Will understand that the diversity of insights in the greater Christian community does not represent the pettiness of a difference, but rather, is representative of the vastness of the subject.
- Will recognize that bare facts, barely expressed, is not wisdom. He will understand that wisdom involves a feeling for facts, the realization of their meaning, significance, and application.
- Will accept the rigor and discipline which is required to become a Christian scholar.

Family/School Relationship

- To work with parents in enhancing the school's program.
- To partnership with parents in bringing up their students in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

2. ADMISSIONS

2.1 General Admissions Criteria to GCS

Because Gaston Christian School deems a well-ordered environment as necessary to the fulfillment of its mission statement, it is selective in its admission of students. Students who are not in good standing with their previous schools are generally not offered enrollment.

All student applicants are thoroughly evaluated as to their readiness for the GCS program. Prior conduct, attendance, and attitude are considered heavily in the application process. An invitation to enroll is not extended to every student that applies.

2.2 General Overview of the Student Application Process

Prospective parents initiate the application process by contacting the Director of Admissions to receive information about the school and the enrollment process.

The application process involves completion of electronic documents and references. Applicants generally need to have scored at the 50th percentile rank or higher on standardized tests in reading, language, and math in order to be able to have a smooth transition to the GCS academic program.

Student applicants are interviewed and evaluated by the Principal. In support of the school's mission statement, the Principal will also evaluate the student's desire to attend.

2.3 Decisions for Admissions

If the student is considered eligible to enroll, the parents will receive an acceptance letter which grants 10 days to accept the offer of enrollment. The school cannot guarantee available space after the 10-day period has elapsed.

In the event that the Principal declines enrollment, the parent(s) will be notified in writing and an appeal of the Principal's decision may be made to the Head of School.

3. GENERAL INFORMATION

3.0 Administrative Discretion

This handbook gives guidelines to be observed by students and parents and attempts to state expectations and consequences clearly. However, since the school cannot foresee and address all situations and circumstances in this document, the administration reserves the right to exercise its administrative judgment and prerogative in responding to new or extraordinary situations or circumstances within all sections of this handbook.

3.1 Attendance Policy

Introduction: The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study to achieve the goal of maximum educational benefit for each child. Essential to this process is the consistent contact of students with one another in an appropriate learning environment and their participation in planned instructional activities under the leadership of a teacher.

Procedures and Issues:

Students are expected to be on time and present each day. Absences will be excused in the case of sickness, a death in the family, or some other unusual occurrence that makes it impossible for the student to attend school. Students are extended the same number of days to make up work equal to the number of days of their absence, and will be allowed to make up and receive full credit for any missed tests or quizzes.

Any absence for whatever reason will be documented in the student's record, except when a student participates in an approved school activity requiring his/her presence. A student must be present at least 3 ½ hours to be considered present for that day.

In the case of absences, parents call the school office and leave a message for the teacher indicating why your child is not in school. If this is not done, a note stating the reason for the student's absence must be sent to the teacher when the student returns to school. Extended absences due to medical reasons may require a doctor's note.

If a student's attendance pattern becomes a deterrent to the child's educational process, the Early Childhood and Elementary Administration may require a conference with the parent(s) to review the reasons for the excessive absences.

Ten absences or more represent more than 10% of a semester and is considered excessive. Ten or more absences in one semester will result in a formal administrative attendance review which may impact student promotion or future enrollment.

Please remember — When a student has been sick, he/she should not return to school until free of fever, without the use of fever-reducing medication, for 24 hours. Please see Addendum D in the back of this Handbook.

3.2 Planned Absences

Family vacations should be arranged when students are not scheduled to be in school. Trips during school time that have exceptional educational (not recreational) value may be approved and considered excused by the Early Childhood and Elementary Administration, if discussed a week in advance, thus allowing full credit for make-up work. The classroom teacher may be contacted by the parent or student for make-up work preceding, during, or following an absence.

3.3 Tardy Policies

As well as being in school regularly, it is equally important for students to arrive on time. Students need time to prepare pencils, books, etc. This time is necessary to be ready to start the school day promptly. If a child is frustrated by not being organized and ready to begin with the rest of the class, it is difficult for that child to have a successful day. The learning process for classmates is also disrupted when tardies occur. Five tardies are equivalent to one unexcused absence. Excessive tardies may result in a formal administrative attendance review.

When a student needs to be dismissed early for appointments, etc., the parent must send a note to the school office, which their child will deliver to the school secretary upon their arrival to school. When a parent (or other authorized person) comes to school for the early pick-up, they must come to the school office and sign their child out. The classroom teacher will be notified over the intercom system to send the child to the office to meet the parent there. Parents will not go to the

classroom to get the child. If anyone other than the parent is picking up a child, the name of such person must be on the note the child brings to school. Parents should alert this person that they must be prepared to show identification to school personnel.

3.4 Arrival Procedures

School representatives will be on duty each morning at the designated drop-off places beginning at 7:40 am for normal school hours. Adults should please remain in the car for both drop-off and pick-up. Parents will please allow the person on duty to assist the child out of the car.

Students are expected to walk themselves into the building independently and go straight to their classroom. Parents may not enter the building during arrival or dismissal. This has proven to be the best practice, especially for younger children who may have separation anxiety at the beginning of the year.

The following chart outlines the times at which the classroom doors will be opened to receive students and the times for commencement of instruction. Students must arrive prepared and ready to begin on time.

Grade Level	Classroom doors open	Classroom instruction begins
1-5	7:40	8:15
Kindergarten	7:40	8:15
Preschool (3-yr-old) PreK (4-yr-old)	7:40	8:15

Tardy Students: Students who do not arrive at school prior to the time that the instructional day begins (see chart above) are considered late. As a best practice, students should arrive at least 15 mins before classroom instruction begins in order to be settled and prepared for class on time.

3.5 Before and After School Care

Before school care is provided by GCS staff. Before care starts at 7:15 am. Parents are asked to walk students to the doors prior to 7:40 am. At 7:45 am students will be dismissed to their classroom.

Those who need regular monthly or part-time After School Care should complete the registration form . The parent’s account will be charged by the Business Office.

If a student is not registered for After School Care and not picked up by their regular dismissal time, the student will need to stay in the School Office until 3:15. After 3:15, the student will be required to go to After School Care and be billed for the time of care through the billing office.

On days with early dismissal, school is closed, or dismisses early due to weather, there will be NO After School Care. It is the responsibility of the parent to arrange transportation for their student on these days.

Participation in the After School Care program is a privilege and will be extended only to those students who establish patterns of acceptable behavior during this time.

3.6 Dismissal Procedures

Though dismissal times vary, a general outline is provided in the chart below. Please ask the school office personnel to verify the dismissal times for your student(s) as needed.

Grade Level	Dismissal
Grade 1-6	3:00 PM
Kindergarten (full day)	2:30 PM
PS3 & PK4 (full day)	2:30 PM
Kindergarten (half day)	11:55 AM
PK4 (half day)	11:55 PM
PS3 (half day)	11:55 AM

Students will be placed in cars by school personnel as the cars pull up to the covered walkway. FOR SAFETY REASONS, STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO WALK ACROSS THE PARKING LOT TO A PARKED CAR. This needs to be carried out as quickly as possible. In order to ensure the safety of each student, parents are not to park to pick up their child unless they are signing out their child from the office.

Any special arrangements (such as changes in who is picking up the child) will need to be approved through the office ahead of time.

Late Pickups: It is important that your child be picked up at the appointed time each day. Any student not picked up within 10 minutes after dismissal time will be cared for but will be charged an after-school care fee.

3.7 Sign In/Out Procedure

Parents are encouraged to schedule medical and dental appointments after school whenever possible. Understanding that this can be difficult, the school permits early dismissals for infrequent appointments or emergency situations. To minimize disruption in the classroom, parents should communicate ahead of time with the office and classroom teacher so that the child can be ready for pickup at the designated time. The parent will need to come by the office first to sign out the child. Students arriving back on campus after the beginning of the school day must sign in with the office.

3.8 Inclement Weather Policy

Parents will receive notification by GCS App notification, email, posted on the GCS website, and social media (Facebook page, Twitter, and Instagram). This information will be available as soon as a decision is made regarding the closures/delays. Local TV stations will be informed after all direct communication has been sent.

To keep you informed of a school closing/delay, please download the GCS App for important notifications. <https://gastonchristian.org/hub/#text>

3.9 Guests / Visitors

In the interest of school safety, all visitors must sign in at the office. Appropriate attire (consistent with the school's stance on modesty) will be expected. Visitors must also sign out when leaving.

3.10 Lunches & Snacks

All students may bring a snack from home for mid-morning break. The snack should be one that is healthy and nutritious. Candy or any excessive sweets should not be a part of a child's snack or lunch.

Non-carbonated drinks may be sent with a student's lunch or milk may be purchased at school on a weekly, monthly, semester, or yearly basis. Students should only have plastic water bottles.

In the event that a student does not bring his lunch, the school will try to contact the parent to bring a lunch. If neither parent can bring a lunch for the student, a lunch will be provided for him and a notice sent home indicating that the student will be charged for the price of the daily meal that is being provided by local vendors. The charge will be submitted to the business office the next day.

If a parent needs to drop off a child's lunch, they may leave it with the administrative assistant. ***Parents are not permitted to use a meal delivery service to provide a lunch to their child.***

3.11 Observance of Special Days

To help prevent a health emergency, food for parties must be approved by the classroom teacher to ensure that students with food allergies will not be affected.

Classes parties will be provided two times a year: Christmas and end-of-the-year. Parties are to be planned by the teacher with the assistance of parent volunteers. Parties are defined as occasions with food and drink, perhaps including a craft, and will be held on the school site.

Treats will be planned by Grade Parents in collaboration with the teacher on Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, and Easter. Treats are defined as occasions with no more than 2 food items. Celebrations must be limited to these five occasions. Treat bags are not part of school celebrations.

Parents may be asked to donate cupcakes, doughnuts, etc., on the three treat days, or volunteer a favorite dish for staff luncheons, etc., sponsored by the Parent Club. The teacher will plan details of each party with the assistance of the Grade Parent. Solicitations of any kind must be pre-approved by the principal. Gift exchange among students at school is not allowed at Christmas.

Parents are asked not to plan parties for individual staff members. GCS makes no observance of Halloween and Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny will not be part of the school's holiday observance.

3.12 Student Birthday Treats

A student birthday treat may be shared with a class if the teacher is contacted and if the treat is limited to one item that can be quickly and easily served (individually wrapped ice cream cup, cookie, brownie, rice krispie treat, or doughnut etc.). The treat should come to school with the student that morning, along with napkins, please. Birthday parties will not be held at school.

No balloons, flowers, or gift items may be delivered to a student in a classroom because of the disruption these items create.

3.13 School Programs & Performances

The school presents two programs each year for parents in which all students are involved. The first one is during the Christmas season, and the other is for Grandparents Day during the Easter season. Other programs on a smaller scale will be announced as they are planned.

Students in grades K-6th attend a chapel program on a regularly scheduled basis. Programs are given by a staff member, an invited guest, or individual classes. Students are encouraged to bring an offering each chapel time. At year's end the offerings are sent to a worthy missionary or missionary organization.

Each student is expected to participate in school programs, since these are very much a part of the overall planned program of learning. Any exceptions need to be discussed in advance with the principal.

3.14 Grade Parents

After the school year begins, a Grade Parent for each class is chosen who can be available during the school day and who is willing to assist the teacher when classroom needs arise. Duties include: planning parties, helping with or arranging transportation for field trips, assisting with any special projects within the class, according to guidelines from the teacher.

Each Grade Parent must have an updated background check (within the last twelve months) before serving as a Grade Parent. Please contact the school office if you have questions regarding this policy.

3.15 Parent Teacher Fellowship

The PTF organizes staff appreciation gestures deemed appropriate by the group and the school principal. Your support in this area and in all areas of your child's school experiences at GCS is much needed and appreciated.

3.16 Grievance Procedure

From time to time, disagreements may arise between students and/or parents and school personnel. The principles for resolving such matters are described in Matthew 18:15-17. Specifically, if a legitimate disagreement with a teacher arises, you must seek first, with all respect and Christian love, to resolve the problem with that teacher. With good communication from everyone, it is likely that most problems can be resolved at this level.

If resolution cannot be reached, then the student/parent should meet with the teacher and the next higher person in authority. You should not expect the next higher in authority to listen to criticisms of the teacher without the teacher having the opportunity to be present. The Head of School will make a final resolution decision. The Head of School makes the final decision for all school policies, including discipline. The Board will only hear appeals in cases where school policy is violated. For extraordinary circumstances, see "Conciliation Agreement."

The faculty and administration are very interested in helping you resolve any issue that may arise; however, we need your assistance to reach that goal. When a parent or student voices a complaint to ones other than appropriate school personnel, the problem generally goes unresolved, and frustrations increase for everyone involved. Such actions are also detrimental to personal relationships, potentially injurious to others, and dishonoring to one's Christian testimony. Perhaps the greatest harm, though, is that such actions violate God's principles for Christian speech and conduct. Repeated offenses of this nature by a family may become grounds for dismissal from the school. Our goal is to let our light shine to the community of always honoring each other in word and indeed.

It is expected that parents and students will cooperate with all guidelines established by the school. The policies and guidelines are established to ensure a comfortable, orderly, God-honoring school environment and educational program for students.

Attendance at Gaston Christian School is a privilege and not a right. Students forfeit this privilege if they do not conform to the school's standards of achievement and conduct. It is expected that students, parents, and school staff shall always show respect in every way to each other in obedience to the admonition of our Lord. (Ephesians 4:29-32, Galatians 6:10).

3.17 Formal Reconciliation and Binding Arbitration/Mediation Agreement

One of the principles clearly set forth in Scripture is the instruction that believers are not to sue one another in public courts. Grievances between believers are to be settled within the body of Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 and Matthew 18:15-20.) The purpose for this instruction is that the Body of Christ is to be united and that the Name of Christ not be blasphemed due to the conduct of believers. We are to seek to be reconciled to each other rather than to triumph over one another.

In the event that conciliation is necessary, the Rules for Procedure of Christian Conciliation established by the Association of Christian Conciliation Services shall be the sole remedy utilized in pursuing arbitration/mediation. (Handbooks giving a full description of this process are available in the school office.) All families and students of GCS expressly waive their rights to initiate civil litigation against Gaston Christian School, its employees, administrators, and officers as a condition of enrollment.3.9 Registration & Payment Fees.

4. HEALTH INFORMATION

4.1 Immunizations

State law requires that all immunizations and medical records be current and on file in the office. Please check with the School Nurse in fulfilling this requirement.

4.2 Medicine

Prescription medication will be administered to students at school on the specific written request of the student's physician and parent or guardian. The required [Medication Authorization](#) and [Release Form](#) must be completed by the parent or guardian AND also must contain your physician's signature for each medication or change of medication the parent wishes to have administered to the student.

Medication must be left at school in the original container that has the doctor's name and instructions. Possession of any medication without a Medication Information Form containing the physician's signature will be considered a serious violation.

Copies of this form will be required to be completed BEFORE any field trips. Forms are located for your convenience on the GCS website or in the school offices.

4.3 Student Illness/Injury

Students are allowed to leave class for illness in cases of emergency as determined by the teacher. The school nurse will assess the student's illness and call a parent or guardian to arrange for the student to be picked up if needed. Student will remain in sick area. An emergency contact should be available for pickup within 30 minutes.

Students must be fever free without the use of fever reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school. All rashes should be evaluated by a physician. Please reference the Guidelines for Common Illness (Addendum D).

5. ACADEMICS PROGRAMS & STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

5.1. Academic Requirements

The high academic expectations for the child set in a Christian environment tend to enhance student learning. Gaston Christian School has the ministry of equipping the student with the necessary skills and content to help him realize his full God-given potential.

100-90	A
89-80	B
79-70	C
69-60	D
Below 60	F

5.2 Assessment & Reporting

For students in grades K-6, report cards will be issued every nine weeks. Report cards will reflect student progress towards the grade-level learning outcomes.

5.3 Student Promotion

GCS weighs carefully many factors in making a decision to promote or retain. GCS reserves the right to either retain or dismiss a student with excessive absences or tardies. Students must pass the current grade before promotion to the next grade level.

Parent teacher conferences to confirm kindergarten readiness (for Pre-K students) will be held during the third nine weeks when necessary. The final decision for kindergarten placement will be determined by the Elementary with Early Childhood Principal, in consultation with your child's teacher.

5.4 Parent-Teacher Conferences

Open communication is essential to effective partnership between the classroom teacher and the home. One way to reinforce the shared goal of student wellbeing and success is through Parent-Teacher Conferences.

Parent-Teacher conferences are held for all students in grades K-6 after the first grading period and throughout the year as needed. For students in preschool, your child's teacher will contact you by phone during the first nine weeks of the school year for a concise update of your child's adjustment.

If additional conference time is needed, please contact the teacher and arrange a time for after school. Conferences should not occur before school starts or during the school day. School-age children can be left in after-school care at no charge while the conferences are held.

Classrooms must not be interrupted at any time during the school day. Messages, lunches, books, etc., may be left in the school office when such a need arises and the school secretary will take care of the delivery of these forms. Parents will not be permitted to go to the classrooms during instructional time. ***Parents are not permitted to use a meal delivery service to provide a lunch to their child.***

5.5 Homework

The school recognizes that students need to experience balance in their lives between school work, social activities, family participation, and church. In recognition of this needed balance, teachers assign reasonable quantities of homework and provide time at school to do some homework. In general, the school will give lighter homework and test assignments on

Wednesdays. Homework may be assigned over weekends but not over Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Spring Break.

Homework is a major part of learning in that it takes practice to master any skill. Homework can be given for reinforcement of classroom instruction, practice in skill development, memorizing important information, and preparing for tests. Homework is assigned on a regular basis and is expected to be submitted by the due dates. It is the student's responsibility to seek clarification of assignments and to seek assistance from the teacher as soon as the need is realized.

Parents should recognize the important role of homework to the total instructional program of their child. Students develop independent study skills through the completion of homework, and studies show a correlation between student achievement and homework.

5.6 Tutoring Policy

Gaston Christian School recognizes its responsibility to provide, as much as possible, a thorough and appropriate system of education for each of the students enrolled at GCS. Teaching staff may spend extra time working with a student in their class outside of the school day at no charge. However, for students who need additional support, tutoring may be advisable. Tutorial instruction shall be interpreted to mean individualized or small group instruction in addition to and in support of regular classroom content instruction. Tutoring may be scheduled before the start of the school day or after the school day ends. There will be no tutoring for pay during the school day. To avoid a conflict of interest, teachers may not tutor for pay any student in their classroom or any student for whom they have recommended tutoring.

5.7 Textbooks

Any textbook that is not used as a workbook (written responses by students) will be returned to the school at the end of the year, except designated books in Kindergarten. Damage fees will be assessed if excessive damage occurs. Lost library books will be charged at full value.

5.8 Chapel & Spiritual Formation

Chapel is a very significant part of Gaston Christian School. Students are required to participate and are challenged from the Word of God to develop genuine Christian character.

5.9 Special Classes

Regularly scheduled music, physical education, library, art and computer training is provided for students in Preschool to 5th Grade by teachers who specialize in these areas.

5.10 Field Trips

Field trips are also an important part of the overall school program and are arranged each year by individual classroom teachers to enhance the classroom studies. Please refer to the "Addendum A: Field Trip Guidelines" on the last page of this handbook.

5.11 Toilet Training & Bathroom Accident Policy

Gaston Christian School's program for three and four-year-old students is an enrichment program. As such, we do not staff our classrooms using a daycare type format, nor do we have the convenience of daycare facilities, such as restrooms attached to classrooms, etc. In general, our program works successfully without additional staff & facilities because the school requires all entering students to be fully toilet trained as a prerequisite to enrollment. We recognize, however, that occasional accidents can occur, especially if a child is not feeling well on a particular day. To handle this situation the school's policy is as follows:

If a child wets his pants, he will be permitted to go to the restroom to change (using the change of clothes he brought to 2024-2025 GCS EARLY CHILDHOOD/ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK 17 school). The teacher will assist as needed, beginning by helping him remove his shoes in the classroom. PLEASE NOTE: A frequent or consistent pattern of wetting accidents can result in a conference to determine if your child is fully toilet trained. If a child soils his/her pants, we will attempt to reach a parent (or nearby relative if any are listed in the child's records) so that he/she can come to school and clean and change the child. In the event that a parent or designated caregiver cannot be reached within a reasonable period of time, school personnel will clean and change the child.

While school personnel are attempting to contact the parent or the parent is en route to the school, the child will wait in the school office to prevent the possible spread of illness to other children. School personnel will communicate to the child that waiting in the office is not a punitive measure. These issues will be handled on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Principal.

PLEASE NOTE: Anytime a child experiences an accident involving soiled clothes, the parents will be required to remove the child from school for the day. If the child has three accidents while on campus (including before and after school care) within a six -week period, the parents would, at that point, need to remove the child from the preschool program for a long enough period of time to allow for complete toilet training. The place on the class roster can be retained by the parents' continuing to submit the monthly tuition payment.

6. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE

6.1 Conduct/Discipline General Guidelines

A very positive approach is used in the discipline of students. With a structured setting and a staff that is well trained in classroom management, the need for strong discipline measures is minimized. When correction or punishment is needed, it will be carried out with appropriate regard for the student and in a way that corresponds to the type of inappropriate behavior, taking all circumstances into account.

When misbehavior or other infraction of school/classroom standards occurs, a teacher may verbally correct the problem, conference with the student and/or parents, or assign other disciplinary measures.

If a student does not respond appropriately to a classroom teacher's corrective measures, the student may receive a Discipline Referral Slip (DRS). If a student receives a DRS, parents will be contacted and other disciplinary measures will be imposed, based on the discretion of the Administration.

Behavior that includes, but is not limited to, physical aggression toward another student or staff member, as well as cumulative, flagrant violations of expected school behavior may be grounds for suspension (either in school or out of school) or dismissal.

While this Discipline Policy represents the usual response to offenses by a student, the Administration reserves the right to modify these consequences depending on the severity of the violation.

As stated in the Enrollment Agreement, Gaston Christian School reserves the right to dismiss any student who consistently and willfully neglects his academic work, exercises poor citizenship, reflects adversely on the Christian principles of the school, or engages in behaviors inconsistent with the Biblical guidelines promoted by the school.

6.2 Student Cell Phone/Smartwatch Policy

Administrators and teachers have the responsibility to maintain order and to create a positive and respectful learning environment for GCS students. Cell phones/smartwatches can be a disruption to the educational environment on a day-to-day basis (interfering with learning).

The school prefers that students NOT CARRY cell phones/smart phones/other communication-enabled devices to school at all. According to GCS policy, if they are brought, they must remain turned off, in the child's backpack, as school personnel will communicate any necessary information with parents as needed. If a violation occurs, the device may be picked up in the Elementary Office at the end of the day by a parent.

6.3 Bullying Policy

Harassment or bullying of a student(s) by other students is contrary to God’s Word and to the school’s commitment to provide a physically and psychologically safe environment in which to learn. In John 13:34-35 Jesus commanded us to “. . . love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Bullying occurs when a person or group is intentionally intimidated, frightened, excluded, or hurt by a pattern of behaviors directed at them by others (Greg Griffiths, “Bullying in Schools-the Hidden Curriculum, 2003).

The following actions in an ongoing manner where an imbalance of power is represented may be forms of bullying:

- Physical aggression (hitting, kicking)
- Teasing or verbal abuse (insults, name calling, or racial/sexual remarks)
- Damaging a person’s property/possessions or taking them without permission
- Threatening gestures, actions, or words
- Written/verbal/electronic messages that contain threats, putdowns, gossip, or slandering
- Cyberbullying through any social media site, texting, or other electronic means

Bullying is not acceptable behavior; incidents will be assessed by the administration and addressed according to administrative discretion. Gaston Christian School recognizes that not all inappropriate behaviors should be considered bullying or willful violation of this policy.

6.4 Gum & Toys

Neither chewing gum nor toys are permitted at school.

6.5 Prohibited Items and Activities

Weapons (guns, knives, etc.) or any other item which looks like or is used as a weapon, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, unauthorized use of prescription medication, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, vaping devices or solutions, drug paraphernalia and fireworks are strictly prohibited.

The following items are not allowed inside the school buildings because they do not promote instruction: electronic entertainment devices such as iPods, electronic games, or any other device that might distract from learning. These items will be taken and returned to the parent after 24 hours. Any item that dishonors God, is contrary to the mission statement of Gaston Christian School, or in any way distracts from an orderly environment or classroom instruction is also prohibited.

6.6 Animals On Campus

For student safety, animals are not allowed on the campus grounds, indoors or outdoors, unless approved by administration for educational purposes. Family pets riding in cars for pick up is permitted.

7. STUDENT APPEARANCE/DRESS GUIDELINES

7.1 Dress Code & Personal Appearance

Modesty, cleanliness, neatness, and showing honor to our Lord are determining factors of the GCS student.

All clothing must be clean, properly fitted, and neat in appearance. Dress should not distract from the learning process, nor should it attract undue attention to one's appearance. In addition to honoring the Lord, students' attire should convey respect for oneself and for the GCS community. Parents are requested to review the dress code and assist the school in its implementation. All Students must dress in accordance with their gender in the womb in a manner that is not a distraction in the learning environment to be determined by the school administration.

The dress code policy is not intended to be all-inclusive. All clothing should be:

- Appropriate for dynamic learning and active play
- Appropriately sized fit and worn modestly
- Comfortable, washable, and allows for self-dressing
- Labeled with child's name (sweaters, jackets, coats, etc.)

School administration have the authority and responsibility to determine whether a student's appearance satisfies the intent of this policy. Final determination of appropriateness of attire or appearance will rest with school administration. Anything that disrupts the learning environment will be deemed unacceptable.

7.2 Male Students

- Bottoms: Dress slacks, casual slacks, jeans, or shorts including athletic shorts, may be worn to school. Jeans must have no holes above the knee. Frays or patches above the knee are acceptable only if no skin above the knee is exposed as a result of these frays or patches. Pants and shorts must be worn at normal waist height, and not at the hips. Shorts must come to below or to the end of fingertip length. With shoulders relaxed, arms straight by the side, and fingertips extended, shorts must be at the fingertips.
- Tops: Appropriate tops include dress shirts/blouses, knit shirts, T-shirts, or sweatshirts may be worn. Undershirts or sleeveless shirts are not appropriate tops. No midriff should show at any time.

7.3 Female Students

- Bottoms: Dress slacks, casual slacks, jeans, or knee-length shorts including athletic shorts, may be worn to school. Regardless of type, shorts must come to below or to the end of fingertip length. With shoulders relaxed, arms straight by the side, and fingertips extended, shorts must be at the fingertips. Jeans must have no holes above the knee. Frays or patches above the knee are acceptable only if no skin above the knee is exposed as a result of these frays or patches.

Leggings, jeggings, ballet pants, yoga pants, and other similar styles may not be worn on their own, but they may be worn underneath a dress, skirt, shorts, or tunic.

Skirts and dresses that fall no higher than 3 inches above the knee when standing are acceptable. It is strongly recommended that girls wear bike shorts or something similar under dresses/skirts. Slits in skirts are to meet the same criteria as skirt length.

- Tops: Appropriate tops include dress shirts/blouses, knit shirts, T-shirts, or sweatshirts may be worn. Undershirts or sleeveless shirts are not appropriate tops. No midriff should show at any time.

7.4 Hair and Jewelry

- Hair is to be neatly trimmed and styled. All students must keep their hair out of their eyes and face, and no designs should be cut into their hair. If a boy's hair falls to or below his shoulder, his hair must be worn in a ponytail when on school campus or for school events. Dyed hair of an unnatural color is not acceptable. Colored or multicolored braids must not be added to hair for school wear.
- Hair styles may be determined by the administration to be a distraction or inappropriate.
- Jewelry worn to school must be modest and without distraction to the learning environment. Male students may not wear earrings.

7.5 Footwear & Shoes

Footwear: Sneakers worn with socks are the best footwear for school. Shoes must be closed-toed with heel covered. Flip flops are not appropriate for school. Good judgment should be exercised in selecting safe footwear.

7.6 Note for Preschool-Kindergarten Students:

Please provide a seasonally-appropriate change of clothing for your child in a plastic zip-lock bag. Include underwear and socks in the bag, also. Clearly label the bag and the articles of clothing with your child's name. These items will be kept in their book bag.

7.7 Dress Code Consequences

First violations of the dress code (if slight) will be pointed out to parents by a note home or phone call. GCS Administration will be involved if there is a second violation. In extreme or continuous dress-code violations the parent would be asked to bring, as quickly as possible, a change of clothing to the school. The student would be required to wait at the office until the parent brings the change of clothing to the school. If a student continues to violate the dress code policy, administrative action will be taken.

The many aspects of a dress and appearance code are difficult to define in print. The constant changing of fads in clothing & hairstyles makes it impossible to list all the possible infractions. Parents must work cooperatively with the school in this area, supporting school administration as the final authority in these matters, and to daily oversee clothing a student chooses for school wear, thereby eliminating extra time taken from busy schedules to deal with infractions.

These guidelines apply to the regular school day as well as to any school-related activity.

ADDENDUM A: GUIDELINES FOR FIELD TRIP DRIVERS/CHAPERONES

We greatly appreciate the assistance of parents in transporting students on field trips that broaden the educational experience of the students. It is beneficial for everyone to have the following common guidelines for parent chaperons/drivers.

1. The teacher will determine the number of chaperones needed for a particular field trip (needs fluctuate); teachers will choose available willing parents on a rotating basis.
2. Parents attending Field Trips as drivers and chaperones must undergo a background check.
3. A driver must submit his/her valid driver's license and vehicle registration to the office prior to the field trip. (in case of an accident, the driver's automobile insurance would be considered the primary source of compensation, with the school's insurance being secondary to that.)
4. Younger siblings should not be brought along on the trip so that the chaperone will be better able to focus completely on the care of the students.
5. No unscheduled stops of any kind are to be made, except in the rare case of an emergency.
6. Chaperones should follow the specific time guidelines/schedule given by the teacher for every aspect of the trip.
7. Chaperones are expected to follow the same behavioral guidelines as school staff when accompanying students on a field trip (no listening to inappropriate music in the vehicle [no radio strongly suggested], no smoking, no inappropriate language, etc.)
8. The role of the chaperone includes giving appropriate supervision/direction to students in his/her care at times when they are not under the supervision of the teacher.

*Remember: Parents set the example for our children (students) to follow. Please follow the teachers lead and school guidelines. I have read the Gaston Christian School Guidelines for Field Trip Drivers/ Chaperones.

ADDENDUM B: STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN BELIEFS REGARDING MARRIAGE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

For the purposes of this statement, the school holds to the definition of “sex” and “gender” as both meaning the biological condition of being male or female as determined at birth by one’s physiology and chromosomal makeup.

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one’s biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. Therefore, the school does not condone intentional attempts by a person to change one’s biological sex nor will the school refer to students by gender-specific pronouns other than those in alignment with their gender in the womb.

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (I Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; I Cor. 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Gaston Christian School as a Christian ministry and to provide a Biblical role model to the Gaston Christian School students and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Gaston Christian School in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement of Christian Beliefs Regarding Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality and that the conduct code requirements of students enrolled at Gaston Christian School also reflect and comply these beliefs. (Matt. 5:16; Luke 6:14; Phil. 2:14-16; I Thess. 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; I Cor. 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31, Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Gaston Christian School.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY RELATED TO GASTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL'S STATEMENT OF FAITH AND STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN BELIEFS REGARDING MARRIAGE, GENDER & SEXUALITY

The Gaston Christian School (GCS) Statement of Faith as well as the Statement of Christian Beliefs Regarding Marriage, Gender & Sexuality is a summary of our core Christian beliefs which are derived from the Bible and which are also based upon historic, orthodox, Christian consensus. We believe God’s attributes are described in the Bible, including that He is loving, holy, and unchanging. We believe all people have a sinful and broken nature which manifests itself in various ways in various people. These sinful behaviors are contrary to God’s will as it is explained in the Bible. The Bible also gives us wisdom for holy living, and God has given us His Holy Spirit to grow us in sanctification so that behaviors which please God are possible. Our student body at GCS comes from a wide variety of denominations and churches which have statements of faith which may differ from the school’s position contained herein. Therefore, this statement serves to clarify the school’s views on marriage, sexuality, gender, and the resulting impact this position has on the school’s expectations for employees, students and parents.

We believe that there are circumstances in which a school must react to an employee or student’s behavior when it does not align with our beliefs. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Gaston Christian School as a Christian ministry and to provide a Biblical role model to the Gaston Christian School students and the community, it is imperative that employees agree with and abide by this statement, and that parents and/or guardians agree that their students will abide by this Statement of Christian Beliefs Regarding Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; I Thess. 5:22) while enrolled at Gaston Christian.

Our policies and practices flow from our sincerely held religious beliefs as expressed in our Statement of Faith and our Statement of Christian Beliefs Regarding Marriage, Gender and Sexuality and are also intended to guard against instructional disruptions at school (see Parent/Student handbook for specific policies). When a student is behaving in ways which contradict our purpose as a school and our conduct policies for students, the school’s administration will take the following approaches:

We will focus our partnership with parents on discipling, mentoring, and helping students understand biblical thought and actions regarding marriage, sexuality, and gender, as well as the school’s policies relevant to the situation.

While we believe sexual behavior outside of God’s design as mentioned above to be sinful and contrary to what is ultimately best for each individual’s good, we also believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; I Cor. 6:9-11). We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Gaston Christian School. Sinful treatment of any student by another is not tolerated (see Parent/Student handbook for conflict, harassment, and bullying policies).

Student instruction, discipline, and counseling will be administered in accordance with their God-given gender in the womb. We will refer to students using pronouns aligned with their God-given gender in the womb. Students must dress, use the bathroom and locker room, and participate on athletic teams which align with their God-given gender in the womb (see Parent/Student handbook for further language and context).

I have read Gaston Christian School’s Statement of Faith, Statement of Christian Beliefs Regarding Marriage, Gender & Sexuality, and the Administrative Policy related to these sincerely held religious beliefs of the school. Furthermore, I understand, support, and agree that my student will be taught these Christian beliefs as revealed through the Scriptures and that my student will be required to abide by a conduct code based on these Christian doctrines held by the school.



Printed Name of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

Mission: The mission of Gaston Christian School is “Prepare People. Teach Truth. Glorify God.”

Purpose of Policy: Gaston Christian School (hereinafter “the School”) values the partnership between parents/guardians, students, and the school to achieve the stated mission and recognizes that parents have the primary responsibility for their children. Partnership includes open communication between all parties (parents, students, teachers, and administrators), mutual respect among the parties at all times, and appropriate conflict resolution when a dispute arises among parties. The parents and the School agree to work together toward the best interests of the student insofar as possible within the mission and purpose of the School.

From time to time, the School recognizes that conflict may arise between the parents/guardians and the School. The School further believes that children learn by example as well as from precept. Therefore, it is imperative that disputes are handled among the parties with respect and Christian grace. The purpose of this policy is to set forth clear expectations and implement healthy practices when such conflict arises. The School holds that disagreements can and should be handled within the parameters of Scriptural principles; at the same time, the School must be able to maintain its integrity to implement necessary procedures for furtherance of the safety and distinctly Christian mission of the Institution. It is solely within the discretion of the School to determine standards of conduct and academic achievement as well as best practices to achieve the safety and mission of the Institution.

This Code of Conduct is applicable to all Gaston Christian School sponsored events, including but not limited to, the school day, athletic events, field trips, banquets, and other special events not herein listed.

Expectations: As partners in Christian education, Gaston Christian Parents agree to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect at all times;
- Commit themselves to conflict resolution based on Matthew 18 principles as set forth below;
- Teach their students that education is an aided form of self-development over which the individual can never be relieved of the fundamental responsibility;
- Encourage their students by carefully attending to the student’s world of school. Parents must listen to and talk with students about the school day;
- Support the School’s and teacher’s authority in the eyes of their students;
- Stay abreast of their student’s academic progress through FACTS/Renweb;
- Read and agree to follow the Gaston Christian School student handbook relevant to your student’s grade level;
- Respect and follow the School’s rules, calendars, and deadlines including but not limited to starting times, personal cell phone use, and dress code;
- Communicate respectfully, whether in person or in writing, with members of the School community, especially when there is a conflict and/or your student is present;
- Build a bridge of acceptance and understanding among the different cultures represented at the School;
- Allow 24 hours for School staff to respond to emails and voicemails and understand that messages left after 3:20pm may be responded to the following day;

- Follow the on-campus speed limit, parking rules, and pick-up guidelines;
- Conduct themselves with dignity and respect at all athletic or other school sponsored events and to treat others outside of the School community who may be present, whether referees, students or parents of opposing teams, staff members, etc. with respect.

Unacceptable Behavior: In order to support a respectful, peaceful and safe school environment, the following parent behavior will not be tolerated:

- Shouting / raising voice at members of school staff either in person or over the telephone;
- Disrespectful, harassing, abusive or threatening emails, text messages, voicemail, phone messages, or other forms of written or verbal communication;
- Breaching the School’s security procedures;
- Undermining or interfering with school sponsored events including but not limited to hosting competing events at the same scheduled time of the School event, encouraging students outside their immediate family not to attend a School sponsored event, and allowing or encouraging students not to follow School rules and policies at School events.
- Disruptive behavior which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of the classroom, office area, staff’s office, or any other area of the school grounds or the School sponsored events and activities, including athletic events.
- Defamatory, offensive, abusive or harassing comments regarding the School or any staff member, teacher, parent, guardian or student in the School community posted on Social Media sites or other internet forums.

Major Events: Behavior including, but not limited to, the following will be considered a major event and may result in Third Offense consequences as listed below:

- Physical intimidation or violence towards teachers, staff, other parents or students of the School as well as referees or opposing teams parents, staff, or students whether on the School campus or at an away campus;
- Cursing, using profane language, or other insulting remarks towards teachers, staff, parents or students of the School as well as referees or opposing teams parents, staff, or students whether on the School campus or at an away campus;
- Attending school sponsored events on or off campus under the influence of drugs or alcohol or allowing students to attend events under the influence of or in possession of drugs or alcohol;
- Threats of physical violence or harassing behavior towards teachers, staff, parents or students of the School as well as referees or opposing teams parents, staff, or students whether on the School campus or at an away campus;

In the event of threatening or harassing behavior, the School may feel it necessary to involve the School Resource Office or contact appropriate authorities and may ban the offending parent from the school grounds and/or grounds of School sponsored events and activities.

Procedures for Conflict Resolution of Parent with Teacher/Staff Member:

In any school (or other organization), it is inevitable that occasional disagreements or misunderstandings will arise between students and their parents and school personnel. As Christians, we find the principles for resolving such matters described in Matthew 18:15-17. This passage requires the person with the concern to go first and only to the other party. With a proper attitude and good communication from everyone, most, if not all, school problems can be resolved in this way. The procedure is as follows:

- An administrator who is approached with a concern that has not been first presented to the teacher or coach will direct the appropriate staff member to contact the parent to arrange resolution. By deferring to deal directly with the problem, the administrator is not trying to appear disinterested in the situation but is trying to uphold sound Biblical teaching. Board members, when approached by parents with a concern, will refer the parent back to the individual staff member involved without becoming entangled in the matter.
- If approaching the staff member directly involved fails to bring satisfaction, then the student/parent should contact the principal to arrange resolution. If the complaining party remains dissatisfied with following the outcome of the meeting with the school principal, the party may present the matter to the Associate Head of School
- Pursuing the matter beyond the authority of the Head of School requires the aggrieved party to put the concern in writing before the Board of Trustees will hear the matter. As a faculty and staff, we are very interested in helping you resolve any issue that may arise; however, we need your assistance to reach that goal.

Procedure for Conflict Resolution of School with Parent:

If parents or guardians violate this Code of Conduct, the following procedures will take place to resolve the conflict:

First Offense:

- The conflict resolution process will take place between the Principal and parties involved in accordance with the Procedures for Conflict Resolution set forth above.
- The Associate Head of School will be notified.

Second Offense:

- The conflict resolution process will take place between the Associate Head of School and parties involved in accordance with the Procedures for Conflict Resolution set forth above.
- The Head of School will be notified.

Third or Major Offense:

- Offending party and family members if appropriate will meet with the Head of School or Associate Head of School.
- The Board will be notified.
- The Head of School reserves the right to take appropriate action including but not limited to:
 - Banning offending party from school grounds and school sponsored activities;
 - Refusing re-enrollment for the following year;
 - Ask the family to leave the GCS Community immediately;
 - Contact appropriate authorities to pursue legal action including but not limited to obtaining a restraining order and/or criminal charges.

Final Statement: Although the School and its employees make every effort to avoid it, this policy recognizes that we live in a fallen world where mistakes, misunderstandings, and oversights will happen. The School acknowledges that these situations may result in emotional hurt, frustration, confusion and anger and that those feelings are legitimate and need a proper outlet. The purpose of this policy is to effectively allow for all sides of an issue to be given a full hearing and for the parties to resolve differences in a way that honors Scripture, maintains unity among the School community and glorifies God.

All parties to this Agreement agree to abide by Section 3.16, 3.17 and Addendum D of the Gaston Christian Student/Parent Handbook.

AGREEMENT SIGNATURES

The school requires the following agreement to be signed by every high school student and both parents (or guardians).

Yes, I have read the Gaston Christian Early Childhood and Elementary School Student/Parent Handbook, and my signature indicates that I pledge my full support and cooperation with Gaston Christian School by making our commitment to honor these policies.

<hr/>	
Student's printed name	Grade
<hr/>	
Student's signature	Date
<hr/>	
Parent or Guardian	Date
<hr/>	
Parent or Guardian	Date

Signed form must be returned to the school office by August 31, 2023.

ADDENDUM C: STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Definitions

Technology: As used in this document, technology encompasses all GCS-owned computing devices and all personal computing devices used at GCS campuses, GCS buildings, and GCS-sponsored events. This technology includes but is not limited to all IT infrastructure devices, network equipment, software platforms, cloud platforms, email, laptops, chromebooks, workstations, iPads, monitors, software, door access control systems, security cameras, phones, speakers, computer peripherals, and personally owned mobile devices such as cell phones, smart watches, iPads, and laptops, especially personally owned devices that access the GCS network and/or use GCS IT accounts.

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is bullying, defined as unwanted, repeated, aggressive, negative behavior, that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, tablets, and computers. Cyberbullying can happen anywhere online, including but not limited to, over email, through texting, on social media, while gaming, on instant messaging, and through photo sharing.¹

PII: Abbreviation for Personally Identifiable Information, defined as any representation of information that permits the identity of an individual to whom the information applies to be reasonably inferred by either direct or indirect means. Examples of PII include one's full name, email address, phone number, social security number, and government-issued ID number.²

GCS: Abbreviation for Gaston Christian School

AUP: Abbreviation for Acceptable Use Policy

Purpose and Scope

This AUP outlines the guidelines governing technology and the behaviors students are expected to follow when accessing and using technology at GCS.

GCS believes technology plays an integral part in a holistic education experience. GCS's vision is that students acquire the skills necessary to select and manage digital tools that will empower them in research, problem-solving, content creation, communication, and collaboration. To fulfill this goal, students are responsible to use technology in a way that honors God and meets the best digital citizenship practices. When using technology, each student is responsible to meet God-honoring, biblical standards of behavior.

The use of technology at GCS is a privilege and not a right. Any violation of this policy may result in lost privileges.

¹ National Bullying Prevention Center: <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/cyberbullying/>

² National Institute of Security Technology (NIST): <https://csrc.nist.gov/glossary/term/PII>

School-Issued Student Devices

For students in grades 6-12, GCS assigns a chromebook and charge cord to each enrolled student. Each assigned chromebook and cord has a unique asset tag.

Students in grades 6-12 are expected to bring their chromebooks to school every day. Devices should be fully charged every day before coming to school. Neither chromebooks nor charging cords will be loaned by GCS.

Only school-issued devices are allowed to be used during the school day.

Students are responsible for proper care of the school-issued devices including but not limited to:

- Devices should not be stored in extreme heat or cold for extended periods of time.
- Devices should be protected from extreme pressure on the screen.

- Devices should not be marked on and stickers should not be placed on the device.
- Devices should be protected from exposure to liquids including rain, drinks, cleaners, etc.
- Devices should not be transported in the open position.
- Devices should not be left unattended.
- Devices that are lost or stolen must be reported to the Director of Technology immediately. If the device cannot be recovered, parents and student are responsible for paying replacement cost of the device.
- Devices that are damaged must be reported to the Director of Technology immediately. If the device can be repaired, it will be repaired and the parents and student will be responsible for paying for the repair of the device.

GCS reserves the right to search and seize personal electronic devices and technology when used on GCS property or at GCS events upon reasonable suspicion of criminal activity or activity which would violate the Parent Student Handbook and/or student code of conduct.

Student Accounts

GCS will create accounts for students that should be used for educational purposes. Student accounts can include but are not limited to, Google account, which includes email and a google drive. When a student graduates, withdraws, or separates from GCS, the domain account, Google account, and other accounts will be immediately locked and scheduled for deletion. GCS does not keep backups of student email, Google drive data, or other data created on student accounts. GCS and the IT Department will not be responsible for lost or deleted student data.

Network and Monitoring

GCS reserves the right to govern, monitor, and log any and all technology used at GCS. GCS does monitor and logs all devices connected to GCS networks, including personal student devices. GCS also monitors student GCS accounts, including email.

The GCS network is protected with a variety of web content filtering, monitoring, logging, and cybersecurity tools to create a safe, secure learning environment and maintain compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA). While these tools are reliable, powerful, and CIPA-compliant, no filters or tools can provide complete accuracy or security. GCS provides these tools as a “best effort” for student safety and security. Thus, students are still responsible to be cyber-aware and practice ethical behavior in cyberspace, as outlined in the expected student behavior section below.

GCS has the right to search all computing devices on our network, including personal student devices, external storage devices, and cell phones.

Expected Student Behavior

- Accessing or distributing abusive, harassing, libelous, obscene, offensive, profane, violent, pornographic, threatening, sexually explicit, or illegal material from any device, even if the device is not on the GCS network, will constitute a violation of this AUP.
- Cyberbullying of any kind, whether on personal or school devices, whether on or off GCS property, and whether during school or after school, will not be tolerated.
- Students are strongly discouraged from posting or distributing personally identifiable information (PII) about themselves or any other staff or students online. Students are expected to use discretion and follow data privacy best practices when posting or distributing information using social media platforms, chats, email, blogs, or any other online digital communication.
- Students must report any requests for PII from unknown individuals to a school administrator.
- Students must not arrange meetings with an online contact without school and parental approval.

- Students must not share passwords or account credentials with anyone except their designated parent/guardian.
- Students should not digitally impersonate or log in as any other student, staff, or faculty. Account sharing with anyone other than a student’s parent/guardian is strictly prohibited.
- Students must not plagiarize, which includes online content. Students must not violate copyright or intellectual property laws.
- Students must not record or photograph other GCS students or staff for non-instructional purposes without their explicit permission.
- Students must not attempt to circumvent, reverse-engineer, hack, attack, or otherwise compromise the integrity of GCS’s IT infrastructure, including, but not limited to, content filtering systems, servers, networks, cloud platforms, databases, and IT accounts.
- Students must not attempt to access restricted data and databases, nor should they attempt to download, share, change, alter, tamper with, delete, or destroy said data.
- Students must treat the facilities with respect at all times and not damage or destroy GCS assets, including all technology at GCS.
- Students must not use their devices for gaming during school hours. Students are not allowed to bring gaming devices to school.
- Students are not permitted to print from personal devices at school.
- Students must not use technology for illegal activity.
- Students are expected to report any violation of the AUP to the principal or appropriate school administrator.

Computer Lab Guidelines

The following applies to computer labs at GCS:

- Students are not permitted in the lab without staff supervision.
- No food, beverages, or gum is allowed.
- No personal software or hardware (including external drives, USB drives, etc.) may be brought to school or loaded on any school computer.

Media Center Computers Guidelines

The following applies to desktop computers in the Media Center at GCS:

- Students are allowed to print from the desktops to the Media Center printer.
- No food, beverages, or gum is allowed when using the desktops.
- Students are responsible for signing out of his/her Google account when finished using the desktops.

Consequences

If a student is found to be in violation of this Acceptable Use Policy, GCS may take disciplinary action determined by school administration. A violation may result in any or all of the following:

- Parental Notification
- Reimbursement for damaged property
- Suspension of GCS IT accounts
- Suspension of technology, network, and/or computer privileges
- Disciplinary action, including detention or suspension, in accordance with school policies
- Potential expulsion from school
- Legal action and/or prosecution

Damages and Security

Responsibility to keep devices secure rests with the individual owner. GCS, its staff, and its employees are not liable for any device stolen or damaged on campus. If a device is stolen or damaged, it will be handled through the administrative office similar to other personal effects that are impacted in similar situations.

Indemnity Clause

Gaston Christian School and the IT department bear no responsibility whatsoever for any legal action threatened or started due to the conduct and activities of staff, faculty, or students. All staff, faculty, and students indemnify Gaston Christian School and the IT department against all damages, costs, and expenses suffered by actions arising out of any unlawful or improper conduct and activity, and in respect of any action, settlement or compromise, or any statutory infringement. Legal prosecution following a breach of these conditions may result independently from any action by Gaston Christian School.

AI (Artificial Intelligence) Policy

Use of AI is considered a tool now available to students in the same way technological resources are available (i.e.: YouTube tutorials, Khan Academy, Wikipedia, etc.). The heart of the issues of AI-generated content is one of academic honesty. The goal is to use AI as a tool to enhance learning rather than to replace the genuine teaching and learning process. Students are permitted to use AI-assisted resources, unless otherwise directed by the teacher, in the same way a student might appropriately use other technological resources such as Google, Wikipedia, tutoring services, or even a calculator.

Students must cite AI-generated content by submitting AI conversations alongside the student work, if AI was used at any point in the creation process.

Copying and pasting any amount of text from AI-generated content, unless otherwise directed by the teacher, is considered plagiarism.

Suspicion of uncited AI-generated content will disqualify the assignment. Each disqualified assignment is subject to a review by the teacher and Academic Dean. After this review, if suspicion of AI-generated content is upheld, a plan will be created for the student to complete the assignment within the parameters given by the teacher. Confirmation of AI-generated content, whether through an online AI Detector or other means, will result in standard plagiarism consequences.

Acknowledgment

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand GCS's Acceptable Use Policy and agree to follow this policy governing the use of GCS technology. I also agree that violation of this policy may result in disciplinary and/or legal action.

Student's Printed Name

Grade

Student's Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian

Date

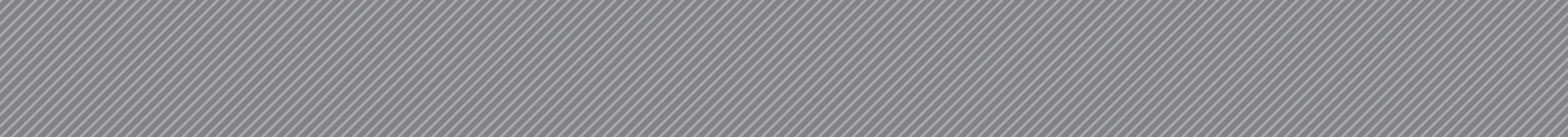


ADDENDUM D: GUIDELINES FOR COMMON ILLNESSES

ILLNESS	INCUBATION PERIOD	MODE OF TRANSMISSION	RESTRICT FROM SCHOOL?	RETURN TO SCHOOL	PREVENTION OF TRANSMISSION
Temperature over 100°			YES	Once fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications	Handwashing and dependent on underlying cause
Vomiting and/or diarrhea			YES	Once it has been 24 hours since last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea	Handwashing
Common Cold	12 hours to 5 days	Respiratory tract, droplets, indirectly by contaminated hands or surfaces	NO	N/A	Hand washing, covering nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	24-48 hours	Contact with discharge from eyes	YES	24 hours after the start of antibiotic therapy	Treatment of the affected eye, hand washing, disinfecting contaminated surfaces, avoid contact with eye drainage
Influenza	24-72 hours	Droplets, Respiratory tract	YES	When fever and symptom free for 24 hours without Fever reducing meds	Good hand washing, covering nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, Immunization unless contraindicated
Head Lice (Pediculosis)	7 days for eggs to hatch.	Direct contact with infested person is most common	NO	After application of effective pediculicide	Avoid head to head contact; do not share clothing, hats, combs/brushes, or towels.
Chickenpox (Varicella)	From 2-3 weeks; commonly 14-16 days	Person to person by direct contact, droplet, or airborne spread of secretions	YES	After all vesicles become dry/crusty	Avoiding contact with infected person; covering coughs and sneezes. Immunization unless contraindicated.
Rash			YES	Once evaluated and cleared to return to school by physician	Avoiding contact with the affected person
Strep Throat		Person to person contact	YES	24 hours after beginning antibiotic therapy	Avoiding contact with the affected person

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GASTON
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL
East Cleveland Campus

PREPARE *People*
TEACH *Truth*
GLORIFY *God*

GASTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL - EAST CLEVELAND CAMPUS

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ELEMENTARY (PS3-6th Grade)

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Phone: (704) 824-9011

FAX: (704) 824-9013

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL
(6th -12th Grade)

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Phone: (704) 349-5030 (MS)

FAX: (704) 349-5027