



# Lower School Family Handbook

## 2023-2024

Revised Aug 2023

*The Headmaster of the Academy maintains the right to amend this handbook during the course of the year when it is deemed necessary. If this is the case, changes will be posted on the Academy's website*

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## Letter to Families

Dear Spartan Families,

It is my delight to welcome you to Great Hearts Western Hills Lower School, home of the Spartans! It is important that you read this handbook in its entirety and reference it as often as necessary. Not only will the handbook answer many of the practical questions you may have about the operation of the school, but it will also deepen your knowledge of the mission of the school.

We revise and improve the handbook annually, so re-reading it is important for returning families as well. The following pages clarify many of the essential details that a family must understand to participate fully in our community. Knowing the handbook helps your family to join the larger Great Hearts family as we share common values and expectations of one another.

Great Hearts Western Hills exists to build an intentional community of learners actively involved in the process of loving what is true, good, and beautiful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Absher'.

Headmaster Absher

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## Our Mission

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The mission of Great Hearts Western Hills is to cultivate the minds and hearts of students through the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty.

The Academy graduate has a foundation in the liberal arts of grammar and rhetoric, logic and mathematics, history, natural science, and philosophy. The graduate has also practiced the fine arts of music, poetry, drawing and painting, and drama. The graduate is thus prepared for every career, every course of advanced or specialized study, and every kind of leisure. In short, the Academy graduate is ready to live the lifetime of learning that is possible for a human being.

The Academy will fulfill its mission by the following means:

- Service to a rigorous, core liberal arts curriculum in the Western tradition that is the same for all students
- Small class size
- Dedicated, enthusiastic, and intellectually excellent teachers who serve as models of learning and of character
- Detailed student evaluation, with an emphasis upon written, narrative evaluation of learning rather than upon grades and percentages
- Regular and meaningful homework assignments
- High standards of personal conduct and comportment for students

Though the curriculum is rigorous, and expectations of students are high, the Academy is not a school only for the best and the brightest. We provide an environment that allows every student who is curious and diligent the opportunity to fulfill his or her potential.

### **Our Charter, Accreditation, and Affiliations**

Great Hearts Western Hills is a campus of Great Hearts Texas, the holder of an open-enrollment charter issued by the State of Texas and a 501(c)(3) organization.

Great Hearts Texas supports its schools with curriculum, data management, faculty orientation and professional development, human resources services, business management (such as accounting), special education services, and the development of funding and facility opportunities.

Great Hearts Texas is a subsidiary corporation of Great Hearts Academies, a non-profit charter management organization. In 2020-2021, Great Hearts operates 25 classical, liberal arts schools in Phoenix, Arizona, six in San Antonio, Texas and two in Irving, Texas.

## **Parent Involvement**

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The primary way that parents are involved in the school is by supporting their child in his or her journey through the Academy. Parents will want to have an established plan for listening to and then encouraging their students when they are working hard. Likewise, parents may want to communicate frequently with their son's or daughter's teachers so the parents can develop an understanding of the Academy's expectations of how preparatory-level, liberal arts studies form habits of learning. Parents should contact the teachers to share important information on how their child approaches the curriculum at home and if he or she is experiencing difficulty. Academy students invest a great deal in their education, and thus teachers and parents should be united in their support of the students and one another.

The teachers of the Academy are honored by the great trust that parents have placed in them. This trust between the parents and the school must be maintained by ongoing communication and mutual understanding of the "big picture": what an Academy education will offer young people in the long run. It can be difficult for both young people and adults to maintain a focus on the long-term benefits that a liberal education offers. Likewise, students, especially younger students, may not fully sense the extent of their own intellectual and moral growth over time. When students are applying themselves on a particular part of their journey, they will look to their parents and their teachers for a reaffirmation that their investment is yielding positive gains. As such, mutual trust between parents and teachers is essential to convincing students that we have an achievable plan in place for them that is also in their best interest.

### **Material Support of the Academy: Time, Treasure, and Talent**

The Academy provides an outstanding educational offering. The Academy is a state-funded public school, but the state funding formula does not provide for all our needs in terms of providing a truly outstanding education. To meet these needs and to build a strong Community of Learners, the Academy counts on the support of its parents through stewardship of time, talent, and treasure.

#### **Time:**

Volunteerism is strongly encouraged. Without this practical manifestation of your belief in the value and quality of our school, we could not exist. Each parent should consider volunteering regularly to assist on campus and through membership in the Parent Service Organization. (See below.)

#### **Talent:**

The Academy will benefit greatly from the unique talents of its community. Whether through volunteer time spent on campus, or by contributing your professional expertise, your talents are a vital addition to the success of our school.

#### **Treasure:**

The Academy welcomes and encourages financial support from families at a level their budget allows through donations and fundraising. The Academy is a non-profit, 501(c) 3 corporation; as such, donations may be tax-deductible.

## **Parent Service Organization**

The Parent Service Organization is a service organization within the Academy. All parents and guardians of students at the Academy are members of the Parent Service Organization. The purpose of the Parent Service Organization is to serve the school's students and teachers through coordinating and assisting programs and activities that are critical to their success. Involvement in the Parent Service Organization is structured according to service committees, with each committee devoted to a specific area of school life. At the beginning of each school year, Great Hearts will host a meeting for the PSO. At that meeting, individuals who are interested can sign up for different volunteer opportunities. Parents who volunteer on school grounds during school hours will be asked to participate in a volunteer training and fill out paperwork allowing the district office to do a DPS background check. Fingerprinting is not required unless a volunteer will be working alone with students.

## **Fingerprinting**

Great Hearts Western Hills has a policy that school volunteers who work alone with students shall be fingerprinted and have a criminal background check conducted by the Texas Department of Public Safety and the FBI. Great Hearts will contact all volunteers that are selected to assist with duties that require fingerprinting. Volunteers assisting in the school office in the presence of school employees are not required to be fingerprinted. In special cases, office volunteers may be asked to sign a FERPA confidentiality agreement in order to assist with student files.

## **Surveys and Activities**

Students will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation – funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education – that concerns:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent(s).
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family.
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes.
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior.
5. Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
6. Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians and ministers.
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
8. Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

Parents will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis or evaluation.

## **“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities**

Parents have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for their child's participation in:

1. Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
2. School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
3. Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the Academy in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law.

### **Accommodations for Children of Military Families**

Children of military families will be provided flexibility regarding certain Academy requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements.
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement.
- Eligibility requirements for participating in extracurricular activities; and
- Graduation requirements.

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who has been called to active duty for, is on leave from, or is returning from a deployment of at least four months will be excused by the school. The Academy will permit no more than five excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

### **Biological Sex and Gender Policy**

Great Hearts is responsible for ensuring the safety of all students during the school day and during school activities. This includes providing for the physical privacy rights of students. Great Hearts is further responsible for maintaining order, decorum, and discipline during school. Great Hearts is further responsible for ensuring the educational environment is free from disruption and disturbance and provides equal educational opportunity to all students. The following policy is found by the Board of Directors to be in the best interest of students and necessary for maintaining privacy rights of students, maintaining safety, discipline and order, and in preserving the educational environment:

#### **ASSUMPTIONS:**

1. That the recognition of any distinction between "gender identity" and biological sex is not yet a matter of settled law in the United States.
2. That there exists no general consensus but rather disagreement between the State of Texas and the United States and in the United States as a whole—legal, scientific, educational, philosophical—about the relationship between "gender identity" and biological sex.
3. That GH will comply with all settled law (plain language of statute, controlling case law and duly adopted administrative regulations) for the states in which it operates schools.
4. That GH will take into account each student's right to privacy and safety in accessing



facilities. That EVERY CHILD entrusted to our schools, regardless of sex, class, race, religion, and national origin, is to be educated with exactly the same level of care and respect for his/her dignity and innate human potential.

DEFINITION: “Sex” means an individual’s biological classification as male or female at the time of birth and as recorded on their official state-issued birth certificate.

**POLICY:**

**A. Student enrollment and instruction**

1. Schools will record, report, and classify each enrolled student as male or female according to the sex as indicated in the submitted enrollment documents. In the event of a discrepancy, the sex as indicated on the birth certificate will be considered as accurate.
2. In the event of an update or change to a birth certificate, the school shall consider the information upon the most recent birth certificate as accurate and shall modify all school records as pertinent.
3. Schools will record and report the legal name of the child as recorded in enrollment documents submitted by the family. School staff may either a) refer to a child by the name as indicated in school records, or b) refer to the child by a variant nickname sanctioned by the student and his/her family.
4. School personnel may use the personal pronouns consistent with the sex of students as recorded in school records described above.
5. When a learning activity calls for the separation of students by sex, students shall be classified according to sex as recorded in current school records described above.
6. Students must adhere to the uniform code and grooming standards of their sex as recorded in current school records described above.

**B. Use of School Facilities**

1. Schools shall maintain restroom and locker room facilities that are single-sex only and shall also provide single-occupant restroom and changing facilities that are sex-neutral. Students are permitted to use the single-sex facilities that correspond to their sex as noted in current school records describes above, and single-occupant restrooms and locker/changing rooms that are open to use by individuals of either sex.
2. Restrooms, locker room facilities and changing facilities shall be clearly marked and designated for the assigned sex or sex neutral.
3. This shall not apply to a person or persons who enter a single-sex facility for purposes of:
  - a. Maintenance
  - b. Providing medical assistance
  - c. Protecting a student/student from a threat to good order or safety
  - d. Shelter in an emergency
4. No student shall be compelled to use a single-sex restroom or locker/changing room facility against their wishes; access to private, sex-neutral facilities will be provided.

**C. Participation in school activities**

1. Students are eligible to participate in the single-sex athletic activities that correspond to their sex as noted in current school records and based on requirements of the specific league or ruling body for the athletic activity.

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## **Tolerance and Pluralistic Sensitivity**

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The Academy is a public, non-sectarian institution serving a variety of Texans. All members of the Academy community—the administration, teachers, parents, and students—should show profound respect and tolerance for the religious, political, and cultural traditions and perspectives of others. The administration and teachers will take the lead at the Academy in actively promoting tolerance, civility, and sensitivity. Teachers are not permitted to encourage a particular religious or political perspective in the courses they teach. Rather, they encourage a civil and tolerant discussion of ideas when such topics naturally arise in class or on campus.

### **Focus on the Western Tradition**

The Academy's teachers are able to explain to students, parents, and the public why we focus principally on Western Culture during the seven years of education at the school. This focus is not intended as a statement about other cultural heritages. In brief, we focus on Western Culture at the Academy because we believe that seven years is just enough time to offer students a comprehensive introduction to the great works of the Western tradition, including literature, philosophy, history, math, science, languages, and the fine arts. The Western tradition is one of great depth and diversity (of peoples and ideas) and will serve as a superb foundation to our students as they go on to be lifelong learners. We believe that many of the principal values and ideas that underlie our own American society may be clearly traced to the classics we study.

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

Great Hearts Western Hills does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or age in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational and career technology programs, in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and any other legally-protected classification or status protected by applicable law.

The following staff members have been designated as being responsible for coordinating The Academy's compliance with these requirements:

- The Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex:, 3350 W Story Rd, Irving 469-759-3030.
- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Diane Jones, 3350 W Story Rd, Irving 469-759-3030.
- Age Discrimination Act Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of age, 3350 W Story Rd, Irving 469-759-3030.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: 3350 W Story Rd, Irving 469-759-3030.

## **Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation**

### **Discrimination and Harassment**

For purposes of this policy, discrimination and harassment against a student is defined as conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or on any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the student.

### **Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment**

Prohibited discrimination and harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

- Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment.
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples of prohibited harassment may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes; name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

### **Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment**

In compliance with the requirements of Title VII and Title IX, the Academy does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. Sexual harassment of a student, including harassment committed by another student, includes welcome or unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

- Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment.
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples of sexual harassment of a student may include sexual advances; touching intimate body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

The Academy also does not tolerate sexual harassment of a student by school employees. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and school employees are always prohibited, even if consensual. Sexual harassment of a student by a school employee includes both welcome and unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually

motivated physical, verbal or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- A school employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the school employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or
- The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:
- Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities; or
- Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.

The Academy also does not tolerate discrimination or harassment of students on the basis of gender. Gender-based harassment includes harassment based on a student's gender, expression by the student of stereotypical characteristics associated with the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical behavior related to gender. Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not be limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

### **Dating Violence**

Dating violence occurs when one partner in a current or past dating relationship, intentionally uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other partner. Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engaged in these behaviors.

For purposes of this policy, dating violence is considered prohibited harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

- Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment.
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

### **Retaliation**

The Academy prohibits retaliation against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, or another student who, in good faith, makes a report, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation.

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a school investigation regarding discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is subject to appropriate discipline.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited discrimination or harassment or believes that another student has experienced prohibited discrimination or harassment, should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, the Headmaster, or other school employee. Alternatively, a student may report prohibited discrimination or harassment directly to one of the officials below:

- Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Title IX Coordinator.
- Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator.
- Reports of discrimination based on age may be directed to the Age Discrimination Act Coordinator.

After receiving a complaint of sexual harassment, the Academy may, but need not, require the student to prepare a written report. Oral complaints will be reduced to written form. Upon receipt of a complaint, the appropriate coordinator or other authorized school official shall promptly authorize and undertake an investigation. When appropriate, the Academy may take interim action to avoid additional opportunities for harassment. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and any others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations.

The investigator will prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall be filed with the appropriate coordinator or other school official overseeing the investigation. If the results of the investigation establish that prohibited harassment occurred, the Academy shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the harassment and prevent its recurrence. The Academy may take disciplinary action based on the results of an investigation, even if the Academy concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of harassment prohibited by law or policy.

### **Confidentiality**

To the greatest extent possible, the Academy shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

### **Appeal**

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the Academy grievance procedure. A student shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

## **Registration, Records, Immunization Compliance, Medication, & Health Screening Policies**

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### **Admissions Policy**

Admission and enrollment of students shall be open to persons who reside within the geographic boundaries stated in the Great Hearts Texas open-enrollment charter, and who are eligible for admission based on lawful criteria identified in the charter and in state law. The total number of students enrolled in the Academy shall not exceed the number of students approved in the charter or subsequent amendments. Total enrollment may further be limited by the Academy based on occupancy limitations, code compliance, and staffing requirements, as deemed necessary.

In accordance with state law, the Academy does not discriminate in its admissions policy on the basis of sex; national origin; ethnicity; religion; disability; academic, artistic, or athletic ability; or the district the child would otherwise attend.

### **Exception to Admission**

As authorized by the Great Hearts Texas charter and Texas Education Code § 12.111(a)(5)(A), students with a documented history of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or serious discipline problems under Texas Education Code, Subchapter A, Chapter 37 will be excluded from enrollment in the Academy.

### **Submission of Applications and Admissions Lottery**

The Academy requires applicants to submit a completed application in order to be considered for admission. An admissions lottery will be conducted if the total number of applicants exceeds the number of open enrollment spots. Parents will be notified of the results of the lottery and the available seats will be offered to applicants in the order of their waitlist numbers.

Once all available seats have been filled, the remaining applicants will be placed on a waiting list. If a vacancy arises before the commencement of the school year, the individual on the waiting list with the lowest number assignment will be offered admission and then removed from the waiting list.

### **Exceptions**

Federal guidelines permit the Academy to exempt from the lottery students who are already attending the Academy; siblings of students already admitted to or attending the Academy; and children of the Academy's founders, teachers and staff, so long as the number of these students constitutes only a small percentage of the school's enrollment.

## **Student Information**

Any student admitted to the Academy must provide records, such as a report card and/or transcript from the previous school attended, to verify his or her academic standing.

Verification of residency and current immunization records are also required. Every student enrolling at the Academy for the first time must present documentation of immunizations as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

No later than 30 days after enrolling in the Academy, the parent and school district in which the student was previously enrolled shall furnish records that verify the identity of the student. These records may include the student's birth certificate, or a copy of the student's school records from the most recently attended school.

The Academy will forward a student's records on request to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll without the necessity of the parent's consent.

## **Residency Verification**

The Texas Education Code authorizes schools to obtain evidence that a person is eligible to attend public schools. To be eligible for continued enrollment in the Academy, each student's parent must show proof of residency at the time of enrollment. Residency may be verified through observation, documentation and other means, to include but not limited to:

- A recently paid rent receipt.
- A current lease agreement.
- The most recent tax receipt indicating home ownership.
- A current utility bill indicating the address and name of the residence occupiers.
- Mailing address of the residence occupiers.
- Visual inspection of the residence.
- Interviews with persons with relevant information.
- Building permits issued to a parent on or before September 1 of the school year in which admission is sought (permits will serve as evidence of residency only for the school year in which admission is sought).

Falsification of residence on an enrollment form is a criminal offense.

## **Immunizations**

The State of Texas requires that every child in the state be immunized against preventable diseases caused by infectious agents, in accordance with an established immunization schedule.

To determine the specific number of doses that are required for your student, please read the current Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students. The current annual document and more information about school vaccine requirements are available at the Texas Department of State Health Services ("TDSHS") Immunization Branch website: [www.ImmunizeTexas.com](http://www.ImmunizeTexas.com)

(click on the “School & Childcare” link). Immunizations can be received from the Bexar County Health Department; to find locations visit <http://www.bexarcountytexas.us/publichealth.htm>. Students must take immunization records in order to determine immunizations required for school attendance. Otherwise, please take your child to the physician of your choice.

Immunization certificates must have the vaccine name, the day, month, and year administered. Acceptable documentation can be the signature stamp of physician or public health personnel, an official immunization record generated from a state or local health authority such as a registry or a record received from school official including a record from another state.

### **Provisional Enrollment**

Texas immunization laws require all students be fully immunized from specified diseases before they may enter school. However, a student may be enrolled provisionally for no more than 30 days if he or she transfers from one Texas school to another and is awaiting the transfer of immunization records.

A student may be enrolled provisionally if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate vaccine required by law. To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the Academy. The Academy shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. If, at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received a subsequent dose of vaccine, the student is not in compliance and the Academy shall exclude him or her from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

A student who is homeless, as defined by the McKinney Act (42 U.S.C. § 11302), shall be admitted temporarily for 30 days if acceptable evidence of vaccination is not available. The Academy shall promptly refer the student to appropriate public health programs to obtain the required vaccinations.

### **Exclusions from Immunization Requirements**

Exclusions from immunization compliance are allowable on an individual basis for medical reasons, reasons of conscience, and active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

**Medical Reasons:** If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student must present a statement signed by the child’s physician (M.D. or D.O.), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States who has examined the child, in which it is stated that, in the physician’s opinion, the vaccine required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child or any member of the child’s household. Unless it is written in the statement that a lifelong condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

**Reasons of Conscience:** To claim an exclusion for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, a signed TDSHS affidavit must be presented by the student’s parent, stating that the student’s parent declines vaccinations for reasons of conscience, including because of the



person's religious beliefs. The affidavit will be valid for a two-year period. The form affidavit may be obtained by writing the TDSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347, or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/default.aspx>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the Headmaster within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student. Students, who have not received the required immunizations for reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs, may be excluded from school in times of emergency or epidemic declared by the commissioner of public health.

**Military Service:** To claim an exclusion for military service, the student must prove that he or she is serving on active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

If a parent seeks an exemption for more than one student, a separate form must be provided for each student.

### **Immunization Records Reporting**

The Academy's record of your student's immunization history, while private in most instances, may be inspected by the Texas Education Agency, local health departments and the TDSHS, and transferred to other schools associated with the transfer of your student to those schools.

### **Food Allergy Information**

The parent of each student enrolled at the Academy must complete a form provided by the school that discloses (1) whether the child has a food allergy or a severe food allergy that should be disclosed to the Academy to enable the school to take any necessary precautions regarding the child's safety, and (2) specifies the food(s) to which the child is allergic and the nature of the allergic reaction.

For purposes of this requirement, the term "severe food allergy" means a dangerous or life-threatening reaction of the human body to a food-borne allergen introduced by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact that requires immediate medical attention.

Parents or Guardians of any child with a severe food allergy will be required to provide an Allergy Action Plan. The Allergy Action Plan can be obtained from the Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE) website linked here: <https://www.foodallergy.org/file/emergency-care-plan.pdf>.

This form must be signed by the child's physician and submitted to the Nurse Clinic prior to the first day of class. Food allergy information forms will be maintained in the child's student records and shall remain confidential. Information provided on food allergy information forms may be disclosed to teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other appropriate school personnel only to the extent consistent with Board policy and as permissible under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA").

### **Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medication Policy**

All medication must be brought to the Nurse's Clinic where it will be kept in a locked container or cabinet. Students may not possess any form of medication while at school other than while bringing it to the Nurse's Clinic. Medication will be refrigerated only if refrigeration is required by the medication's labeling. At the end of the school year, all medication left at school will be returned to the parent or destroyed.

#### **Prescription Medication**

A designated Great Hearts employee may administer medication to a student provided:

1. Great Hearts has received a **written request** to administer the medication from a parent, legal guardian, or other person having legal control of the student.
2. Prescription medications must be in English & the original container, bearing **a prescription label** that includes the student's name, the name of the medicine, directions concerning dosage, the name of the prescribing physician, the name of the pharmacy filling the prescription, and the date the prescription was filled.
3. Prescription **inhalant medications, properly labeled, may be carried by the student only if directed in writing by the physician and parent.** This request must be filed in the Nurse's Clinic. **Please request the appropriate form** from the school nurse.
4. All physician's sample medication must be accompanied by a written authorization from the physician.

No Great Hearts employee will be required to give medication above the daily recommended dosage by the Federal Drug Administration.

**No medication will be dispensed for a missed dose unless written authorization is received from the parent/guardian for each dose missed.**

#### **Over-the-Counter Medication**

Designated Great Hearts employees may administer over-the-counter medications to students if the following conditions are met:

1. Great Hearts has received a **written request** to administer the medication from a parent, a legal guardian, or other person having legal control of the student.
2. The written request of the parent/guardian must indicate the dosage, frequency of need, the reason the medication is needed, and the date(s) of requested administration.
3. The medication must be stored in the original container. Dosage must be

within the recommended amount for the age of the student. **Medication may not be given for longer than 5 consecutive school days** unless directed by a physician.

The student will report to the Nurse's Clinic to take any medication. Exceptions to the Nurse's Clinic being the location for administering medications may be made if such is recommended by an ARD committee.

As a precaution to prevent tampering of the contents of an OTC medication, it must be brought by a student to the Nurse's Clinic in the original unopened container.

### **Fitness Testing**

According to requirements under state law, the Academy will annually assess the physical fitness of students. The Academy is not required to assess a student for whom, as a result of disability or other condition identified by rule or law, the assessment exam is inappropriate.

### **Dyslexia and Related Disorders**

From time to time, students may be screened and treated for dyslexia and other related disorders in accordance with programs, rules, and standards approved by the State of Texas. Parents will be notified should the Academy determine a need to identify or assist a student diagnosed with dyslexia or related disorder.

### **Vision and Hearing Screenings**

All children enrolled in Texas schools must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems in accordance with regulations issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Students in certain grade levels identified by state regulations shall be screened for vision and hearing problems annually.

Screening records for individual students may be inspected by the Texas Department of State Health Services or a local health department and may be transferred to another school without parental consent.

### **Exemption**

A student is exempt from screening requirements if screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or a member. To qualify for the exemption, the individual or, if the individual is a minor, the minor's parent, managing conservator, or guardian, must submit to the Headmaster on or before the day of admission an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

### **Spinal Screening**

All children in 6th and 9th grade must be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. The screening requirement for students entering grade six or nine may be met if the child has been screened for spinal deformities during the previous year.

A parent, managing conservator, or guardian who declines participation in the spinal screening provided by the Academy must submit to the Headmaster documentation of a professional examination, which includes the results of a forward-bend test. This documentation must be submitted to the Academy during the year the student is scheduled for screening or, if the professional exam is obtained during the following summer, at the beginning of the following school year.

### **Exemption**

A student is exempt from screening if the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or member. To qualify for the exemption, the student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian must submit to the Headmaster on or before the day of the screening procedure an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

### **FERPA Notification**

#### **Annual Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality Notice)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") affords parents and students over 18 years of age (eligible students) certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. These rights include the following:

#### **The Right to Inspect and Review**

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days of the day Great Hearts Western Hills ("the School") receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to Headmaster Keffer a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

If circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student's educational records, the School shall provide the parent or eligible student with a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or eligible student to inspect and review the requested records.

The School shall not destroy any educational records if there is an outstanding request to inspect and review the records under this section. The School may charge a reasonable fee for a copy of an education record that is made for the parent or eligible student, unless the imposition of a fee effectively prevents a parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student's education records. The School will not charge a fee to search for or to retrieve the educational records of a student.

If the educational records of a student contain information on more than one student, the parent or eligible student may inspect and review or be informed of only the specific information about that student.

### **The Right to Seek Amendment of the Student's Educational Records**

Parents and/or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student. Such a request must be made to Headmaster Keffer in writing, clearly identify the part of the record the parent or eligible student wants changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. The School will decide whether to amend the record as requested within a reasonable time after receipt of the request. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, it will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

If, as a result of the hearing, the School decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, it shall amend the record accordingly and inform the parent or eligible student of the amendment in writing.

If, as a result of the hearing, the School decides that the information in the educational record is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, it shall inform the parent or eligible student of the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information in the record or stating why he or she disagrees with the decision of the School, or both. If the School places an amended statement in the educational records of a student, it is obligated to maintain the amended statement with the contested part of the record for as long as the record is maintained and disclose the statement whenever it discloses the portion of the record to which the statement relates.

### **The Right to Consent Prior to Disclosure**

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A "school official" is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Charter Board of Directors; a person or company with whom the School has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another open- enrollment charter school, school district, or private school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

### **The Right to File a Complaint**

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. These complaints should be addressed as follows:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

### **Access to Medical Records**

Parents are entitled to access their students' medical records.

### **Notice for Directory Information**

Under FERPA, the School must, with certain exceptions, obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records. However, the School may disclose personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records without obtaining prior written consent of the parent or eligible student if the School has designated the information as "directory information."

The School has designated the following categories of information as directory information for the purpose of disclosure relating to school-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes:

1. Student name;
2. Address;
3. Telephone listing;
4. Electronic mail address;
5. Photographs (including video image);
6. Date and place of birth;
7. Major field of study;
8. Degrees, honors, and awards received;
9. Dates of attendance;
10. Grade level;
11. Most recent educational institution attended;
12. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and
13. Weight and height of members of athletic teams.

School-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes are those events/activities that the School conducts and/or sponsors to support the educational mission of the School. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Extracurricular programs or events (*e.g.*, school plays, concerts, athletic events, graduation ceremony);
2. Publications (*e.g.*, campus family directory, newsletters, yearbook, etc.);
3. Honor roll and other student recognition lists;
4. Marketing materials of the School (*e.g.*, print media, website, videos, newspaper, etc.)

The School has designated the following categories of information as directory information for the purpose of disclosure to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, but only for secondary students:

1. Student's name,
2. Address, and
3. Telephone listing.

The School shall not release directory information except for the purpose indicated above, namely:

1. Disclosure relating to school-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes; and
2. Disclosure to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, but only for secondary students.

A PARENT OR ELIGIBLE STUDENT MAY OPT OUT OF THE RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION FOR EITHER OR BOTH OF THESE PURPOSES BY SUBMITTING A WRITTEN OBJECTION TO THE HEADMASTER. SUCH AN OBJECTION BE SUBMITTED WITHIN THE FIRST FIVE SCHOOL DAYS OF THE 2020–2021 SCHOOL YEAR.

If the School does not receive an opt-out form objecting to the release of directory information by the fifth school day of the school year, the School will assume that the parent approves release of directory information for the purposes described above. However, parents may alter their decision to restrict or not to restrict release of directory information by submitting a completed “Use of Student Photos and Directory Information Opt Out Form” or otherwise notifying the School in writing at any time during the year. Opt out forms will be distributed to students on the first day of school and made available as part of the School’s Student and Parent Handbook.

## FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

### Use of Student Photos and Directory Information Opt Out Form

You have the right to choose whether your student's information is released or not. Please check a box in the appropriate column below and return this form to your student's school no later than the end of the first week of instruction after the student is enrolled. **Parents, guardians, or eligible students who do not check a box, or who do not return this form, give their implied consent for release of directory information, consent to student photographs, and consent to release directory information to the military (grades 9–12 only).** If you do not wish to allow disclosure of this information, please return this form directly to Great Hearts Western Hills either in person or by U.S. mail. If you have more than one student enrolled, you must complete a separate form for each student.

#### INFORMATION ABOUT THE MILITARY

The military requests, and is entitled to, the names, telephone numbers, and addresses of high school juniors and seniors, unless the parent, guardian or eligible student checks Box C in the high school portion of this form. The military typically requests this information in the Fall semester of each academic year. **If you do not want information to be released to the military, you must return this form by October 1st in order to ensure that your preferences are entered in time.** Parents, guardians and eligible students are encouraged to remember that checking Box C means that Great Hearts Western Hills will not release student information to the military, but it does not mean that the military might not gather student information from other sources not affiliated with Great Hearts Western Hills.

ALL STUDENTS	ALL STUDENTS IN GRADES 9–12
PLEASE MARK EACH APPLICABLE SPACE:  A. <u>  </u> I do NOT consent to the release of directory information about the student named below outside the Great Hearts Texas/GHWH system to sources such as an institution of higher education or newspapers and other media, except as authorized by law.  B. <u>  </u> I do NOT consent to the release of photographs or directory information within the Great Hearts Texas/GHWH system such as yearbooks, rosters for sports information, programs or articles.	RELEASE TO MILITARY:  C. <u>  </u> I do NOT consent to the release of directory information to the military about the student named below.

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PRINT Student's Full Legal Name

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Students Date of Birth (month/day/year)

---

PRINT Parent/Guardian/Full Legal Name

---

Parent/Guardian Signature

---

Date (month/day/year)



**FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT**  
**Use of Student Photos and Directory Information Opt Out Form**

You have the right to choose whether your student's directory information (as defined in the Parent and Student Handbook) is released or not. Please check a box in the appropriate column below and return this form to your student's school. Parents, guardians, or eligible students who do not check a box, or who do not return this form, give their implied consent for release of directory information, and consent to student photographs. If you do not wish to allow disclosure of this information, please return this form directly to Great Hearts Western Hills either in person or by U.S. mail. If you have more than one student enrolled, you must complete a separate form for each student.

If the School does not receive an opt-out form objecting to the release of directory information by the fifth school day of the school year, the School will assume that the parent approves release of directory information for the purposes described above. However, parents may alter their decision to restrict or not to restrict release of directory information by submitting a completed "Use of Student Photos and Directory Information Opt Out Form" or otherwise notifying the School in writing at any time during the year. The Opt Out Form has been made available as part of the School's Student and Parent Handbook (pg. 26) and can be requested at the Front Desk as well.

ALL STUDENTS  
PLEASE MARK EACH APPLICABLE SPACE

- ☐ I do NOT consent to the release of directory information about the student named below by Great Hearts Western Hills to outside sources, as described in the School's Notice of Directory Information, except as authorized by law.
- ☐ I do NOT consent to the release of photographs or directory information within the Great Hearts Texas school system in sources such as yearbooks, rosters for sports information, and programs or articles.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT Student's Full Legal Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Students Date of Birth (month/day/year)

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT Parent/Guardian/Full Legal Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (month/day/year)

## **FERPA, Parental Rights, and Student Privacy**

### **A. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM**

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and maintain a comprehensive system of student records and reports dealing with all facets of the school program and shall ensure through reasonable procedures that records are accessed by authorized persons only, as allowed by this policy. These data and records shall be stored in a safe and secure manner and shall be conveniently retrievable for use by authorized school officials.

### **B. CUMULATIVE RECORD**

A cumulative record shall be maintained for each student from entrance into Great Hearts Western Hills (“the School”) until withdrawal or graduation from the School.

This record shall move with the student from school to school and be maintained at the school where currently enrolled until graduation or withdrawal. Records for non-enrolled students shall be retained for the period of time required by law. No permanent records may be destroyed without explicit permission from the Superintendent.

### **C. CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS**

The Registrar and Student Information Systems Manager are the custodians of all records for currently enrolled students, and for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

### **D. TYPES OF EDUCATION RECORDS**

For the purposes of this policy, the term “education records” means those records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by the School or by a person acting for Great Hearts Western Hills, including:

1. Admissions data, personal and family data, including certification of date of birth.
2. Standardized test data, including intelligence, aptitude, interest, personality, and social adjustment ratings.
3. All achievement records, as determined by tests, recorded grades, and teacher evaluations.
4. All documentation regarding a student’s testing history and any accelerated instruction he or she has received, including any documentation of discussion or action by a grade placement committee convened for the student.
5. Health services record, including:
  - a. The results of any tuberculin tests required by the School.
  - b. The findings of screening or health appraisal programs conducted or provided by the School.
  - c. Immunization records.
6. Attendance records.

7. Student questionnaires.
8. Records of teacher, counselor, or administrative conferences with the student or pertaining to the student.
9. Verified reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns.
10. Copies of correspondence with parents and others concerned with the student.
11. Records transferred from other districts in which the student was enrolled.
12. Records pertaining to participation in extracurricular activities.
13. Information relating to student participation in special programs.
14. Records of fees assessed and paid.
15. Records pertaining to student and parent complaints.
16. Other records that may contribute to an understanding of the

student. The term “education records” does not include:

1. Records that are created or received by the School after an individual is no longer a student in attendance, and that are not directly related to the individual’s attendance as a student.
2. Records made by school personnel that are kept in the sole possession of the maker, are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible or revealed to anyone other than a temporary substitute for the maker of the record.
3. Records maintained by a law enforcement unit of the school that were created by that law enforcement unit for the purpose of law enforcement.
4. Records on a student who is eighteen years of age or older, or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education, that are:
  - a. Made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in his or her professional capacity or assisting in a paraprofessional capacity;
  - b. Made, maintained, or used only in connection with treatment of the student; and
  - c. Disclosed only to individuals providing the treatment. For the purpose of this definition, “treatment” does not include remedial educational activities or activities that are part of the program of instruction at the agency or institution.
5. Grades on peer-graded papers before they are collected and recorded by a teacher.

#### **E. ACCESS BY PARENTS AND ELIGIBLE STUDENTS**

Great Hearts Western Hills shall make a student’s records available to the student’s parent(s) and the eligible student, as permitted by law. The records custodian or designee shall use reasonable procedures to verify the requestor’s identity before disclosing student records containing personally identifiable information.

Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours without charge upon written request to the records custodian. For in-person viewing, the records custodian or designee shall be available to explain the record and to answer questions. The confidential nature of the student's records shall be maintained at all times, and records to be viewed shall be restricted to use only in the Superintendent's, Headmaster's, or counselor's office, or other restricted area designated by the records custodian. The original copy of the record or any document contained in the cumulative record shall not be removed from the school.

If circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student's educational records, the school shall provide the parent or eligible student with a copy of the records requested.

The School may not destroy any educational records if there is an outstanding request to inspect and review the records. The School may charge a fee for a copy of an education record that is made for the parent or eligible student, unless the imposition of a fee effectively prevents a parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student's education records. The School will not charge a fee to retrieve the educational records of a student.

If the educational records of a student contain information on more than one student, the parent or eligible student may inspect and review or be informed of only the specific information about that student.

A parent may continue to have access to his or her child's records under specific circumstances after the student has attained 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

#### **F. ACCESS BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS**

A school official shall be allowed access to student records if he or she has a legitimate educational interest in the records.

For the purposes of this policy, "school officials" shall include:

1. An employee, director, trustee, or agent of Great Hearts Western Hills, including an attorney, a consultant, a contractor, a volunteer, and any outside service provider used by the School to perform institutional services.
2. An employee of a cooperative of which Great Hearts Western Hills is a member or of a facility with which the School contracts for placement of students with disabilities.
3. A contractor retained by a cooperative of which Great Hearts Western Hills is a member or by a facility with which the School contracts for placement of students with disabilities.
4. A parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

All contractors provided with student records shall follow the same rules as employees concerning privacy of the records and shall return the records upon completion of the assignment.

A school official has a “legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records when he or she is:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities;
3. Compiling statistical data;
4. Reviewing an education record to fulfill the official’s professional responsibility; or
5. Investigating or evaluating programs.

#### **G. TRANSCRIPTS AND TRANSFERS OF RECORDS**

The School may request transcripts from previously attended schools for students transferring into Great Hearts Western Hills; however, the ultimate responsibility for obtaining transcripts from sending schools rests with the parent or student, if 18 or older.

For purposes of a student’s enrollment or transfer, the School shall promptly forward in accordance with the timeline provided in law education records upon request to officials of other schools or school systems in which the student intends to enroll or enrolls. The School may return an education record to the school identified as the source of the record.

#### **H. RECORDS RESPONSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Headmaster Keffer shall be responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information in records of students in special education.

A current listing of names and positions of persons who have access to records of students in special education is maintained at the Great Hearts Western Hills Administrative Office.

#### **I. PROCEDURE TO AMEND RECORDS**

Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write Headmaster Keffer, clearly identify the part of the record sought to be changed, and specify why the record is inaccurate or misleading. The School will decide whether to amend the record as requested within a reasonable time after receipt of the request. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, Headmaster Keffer or designee will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing to challenge the decision.

#### **J. CONSENT TO DISCLOSE PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION**

A parent or eligible student has the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information, except to the extent that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) authorizes disclosure without consent.

“Personally identifiable information” includes, but is not limited to:

1. The student's name;
2. The name of the student's parent or other family members;
3. The address of the student or student's family;
4. A personal identifier, such as the student's biometric record, as defined by 34 CFR 99.3, social security number, or student number;
5. Other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name;
6. Other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the Great Hearts Western Hills community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or
7. Information requested by a person who the School reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. Upon request, the School will disclose educational records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

#### **K. NOTICE OF FERPA RIGHTS**

The Superintendent or designee shall see that Great Hearts Western Hills provides parents and eligible students annual notification of their rights under FERPA.

The notice must inform parents or eligible students that they have the right to:

1. Inspect and review the student's education record;
2. Seek amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights;
3. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and 34 CFR 99.31 authorize disclosure without consent; and
4. File with the United States Department of Education a complaint under 34 CFR 99.63 and 99.64 concerning alleged failures by Great Hearts Western Hills to comply with the requirements of the Act and 34 CFR Part 99.

The notice must include all of the following:

1. The procedures for exercising the right to inspect and review education records;
2. The procedure for requesting amendment of records under 34 CFR 99.20; and

3. A specification of criteria for determining who constitutes a school official, and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest.

The Superintendent or designee may provide this notice by any means that is reasonably likely to inform the parents or eligible students of their rights. The notice shall also be effectively communicated to parents of students who are disabled and parents of students who have a primary or home language other than English.

#### **L. RELEASE TO MILITARY RECRUITERS AND INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Great Hearts western Hills will comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for students' names, addresses, and telephone listings, unless a parent or eligible student has advised the School not to release the student's information without prior written consent.

#### **M. INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES AND SURVEYS**

All instructional materials, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material that will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any program funded in whole or in part by the U. S. Department of Education shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of students.

No student shall be required, as part of any program funded in whole or in part by the U. S. Department of Education, to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning the following topics without the prior consent of the student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor), or, in the case of an unemancipated minor, without the prior written consent of the parent. Topics covered by this include:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent(s);
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

#### **N. OPT-OUT NOTICE**

The Superintendent shall ensure that parents are provided reasonable notice of the contents of this policy. Such notice shall be provided directly to the parents of the students in attendance at Great Hearts Western Hills. At a minimum, the Superintendent shall:

1. Provide notice at least annually, at the beginning of the school year and within a reasonable time after any substantive change in policy; and
2. Offer an opportunity for the parent to opt the student out of participation in an activity described above.

### **Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- 1) *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)–
  1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
  2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
  3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
  4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
  5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
  6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
  7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
  8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- 2) *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of* –
  1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
  2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
  3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- 3) *Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use –
  1. Protected information surveys of students;
  2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
  3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The Academy has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The Academy will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The Academy will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The Academy will make this notification to parents at the



beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

*Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:*

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

### **Child Find**

Child Find's intent is to ensure that all children from birth through 21 with delays or disabilities are identified, located and evaluated with minimal cost to parents.

Anyone who has contact with the child may refer him or her to Child Find. Contact Child Find if you have concerns about how a child plays and interacts with others, learns, communicates, moves, sees or hears.

When children are "found", they are referred to a specialist to screen their development. The screening helps "identify" any areas of concern that need to be evaluated further. In order to receive early intervention or special education services, a child must be evaluated to confirm they have a delay or disability that falls under state definitions.

If needed, the child is evaluated using state criteria for specific delays or disabilities. If eligible, Child Find or a public school system will offer early intervention or special education services according to the child's needs.

- Early intervention supports and services assist families of children who are eligible by helping children ages birth to three years develop to their full potential.
- Preschool special education services for children ages 3 to 5 provide special strategies to help children reach their developmental milestones.
- Special education services for school-aged children in kindergarten through the age of 21 provide specialized instruction and services to assist children in the educational environment.

For younger children, aged 2 years, 9 months to 5 years, you may also contact the local school district.

### **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

**IDEA** is a federal law that protects the rights of students with disabilities. In addition to standard school records, for children with disabilities education records could include evaluation and testing materials, medical and health information, Individualized Education Programs and related notices and consents, progress reports, materials related to disciplinary actions, and mediation

agreements. Such information is gathered from a number of sources, including the student's parents and staff of the school of attendance. Also, with parental permission, information may be gathered from additional pertinent sources, such as doctors and other health care providers. This information is collected to assure the child is identified, evaluated, and provided a Free Appropriate Public Education in accordance with state and federal special education laws.

Each agency participating under Part B of IDEA must assure that at all stages of gathering, storing, retaining and disclosing education records to third parties that it complies with the federal confidentiality laws. In addition, the destruction of any education records of a child with a disability must be in accordance with IDEA regulatory requirements.

For additional information or to file a complaint, you may call the federal government at (202) 260-3887 (voice) or 1-800-877-8339 (TDD), or the Texas Education Agency (TEA) at (512) 463-9734.

Or you may contact:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

This notice is available in English and Spanish on the ADE website at [www.ade.az.gov/ess/resources](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/resources) under **forms**.

For assistance in obtaining this notice in other languages, contact the ADE/ESS at the above phone/address.

## **Academic Expectations, Evaluation, and Student Promotion**

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### **Academic Expectations**

Our curriculum is rigorous, and expectations of students are high; however, we are not an exclusive school for only the best and the brightest. Our goal is to provide an environment that allows every student who wants to learn the opportunity to achieve academically. A student's desire to learn and his or her curiosity, is the key to success and fulfillment at the Academy. While the school understands that some students are more talented than others in certain subjects, every student who has passed the appropriate prerequisites, is genuinely curious, and applies him or herself diligently on a daily basis will succeed at the Academy. Success is measured as a student's growth in maturity, accomplishment, and understanding over the course of his or her seven years in the Lower School, will be demonstrated in his or her character as a young man or woman deserving of promotion to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade/Upper School, and eventually as a truly impressive well-rounded Spartan graduate at the end of their senior year.

As a key philosophical assumption, the Academy holds that every student can learn. As human beings, we are equal in that we all have the capacity to learn and grow. But this equality *in* capacity cannot be confused with equality *of* capacity, and certainly not with equality of

academic results. Just as individuals differ in their physical gifts and characteristics, we all have different gifts and challenges in the subjects of learning. The Academy is committed to helping each student achieve as much as he or she can. True excellence across the curriculum is a rare and worthy achievement, to be admired by all, but not to be unreasonably expected of all.

The Academy requires a rigorous course of study, and we strongly recommend that students do not work at an outside job during the school year.

### Course of Study



	K	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
English	Core Knowledge Literature						Literature & Composition			Humane Letters: US History from 1877-Present	Humane Letters: Modern European History	Humane Letters: Great Texts of the Ancient World	Humane Letters: Rome to Modernity
	Spalding Phonics			Grammar & Composition									
	Leveled Readers		Junior Great Books										
History & Geography	Modified Core Knowledge History & Geography						World History & Cultures	Texas History	US History: Beginnings-1877				
	Emphasis: US History			Emphasis: Texas History	Emphasis: US History								
Math	Singapore Math						Math Fundamentals	Pre-Algebra	Algebra I	Geometry	Alg II Pre-Calculus	Calculus I	Calculus II
Science	Modified Core Knowledge Science				Physical Science			Life Science	Earth Science	Biology	Chemistry	Physics I	Physics II
Foreign Language	Beginning Latin						Latin & Western Humanities I	Latin & Western Humanities II	Latin & Western Humanities III	Latin III or Modern Lang I	Latin IV or Modern Lang II	Greek I or Modern Lang III	Greek II or Modern Lang IV
Fine Arts	Core Knowledge Fine Arts						Studio Art*	Studio Art/ Music*	Music*	Studio Art	Music	Drama	Studio Art
Other Core	Physical Education						Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education	Economics*	World History/ Geography	Senior Project
	Competitive Chess												
	Poetry Memorization & Recitation												

\*Indicates semester or every-other-day courses; all others are full year.

Note: In the founding years of a Great Hearts academy, modifications to offerings (especially in math & foreign language) are made.

### Physical Education

The Academy will ensure that students in kindergarten through grade 6 engage in at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week of moderate or vigorous physical activity.

### Exemption

Short-term exemptions from physical education are possible for students who have physical handicaps, illnesses, or other incapacities that a physician deems severe enough to warrant exemption or severe enough to warrant modified activity in such classes. Each case is handled on an individual basis as follows:

1. Each request for exemption or for modified activity must be accompanied by a physician's certificate. Such certificates are honored, but must be renewed each year.

2. When the certificate will allow modified activities in class, the student should remain in physical education class. The teachers adjust the activities of the student to the disability.
3. An exempted student may be admitted to regular physical education activities only upon presentation of a written statement from the same physician who signed the original exemption.

## **State Assessments**

### **STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness)**

#### **STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness) *Grades 3–8***

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state- mandated assessments, such as the STAAR, in the following subjects:

1. Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8;
2. Reading, annually in grades 3–8;
3. Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7;
4. Science in grades 5 and 8; and
5. Social studies in grade 8.

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 is required by law, unless the student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student's current grade level, in order for the student to be promoted to the next grade level.

STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate will be available for eligible students receiving special education services, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

## **TELPAS**

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System ("TELPAS") is a system of statewide assessment administered to all Limited English Proficient ("LEP") students in 3rd–12th grades. The TELPAS measures English ability based on the stage of language development of second language learners. These results will further the understanding of the educational needs of LEP students by providing a state-level measure of both their current academic English levels and their annual progress in English.

## **Summer School**

The Academy may offer summer school classes designed for students who did not meet expectation on STAAR (5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade), complete all required work for the previous school year, and for students who are required to take an additional course toward graduation.

## **Tutoring**

All Great Hearts teachers offer regularly scheduled tutoring sessions before, during, and/or after school at no cost. Tutoring is an important opportunity for students to receive academic guidance and support. Students are strongly encouraged, and may be required, to see teachers for tutoring. Tutoring services are also available for students receiving special education services.

Private tutoring is the responsibility of a student's parents. Teachers employed by the Academy are not permitted to privately tutor their own students for pay.

### **Textbooks & Classics to Keep**

Books are at the heart of a classical, liberal arts education. At Great Hearts, it has always been the tradition for students to develop a personal library of books that they annotate, keep, and return to during their time at Great Hearts, and treasure for years to come. We call these books "Classics to Keep." Your child's class will utilize these classics during the upcoming school year. Parents and students are strongly encouraged to purchase these books for their own personal collections, so that they can mark them and keep them, allowing students to develop their own impressive personal library of classics over the course of their academic career with Great Hearts. We ask that all books match the ISBNs listed on our website. This ensures that students can all follow along on the same page when reading and discussing in class.

For families who do not purchase the texts, students will be given access to a copy of these books as part of their curriculum.

State-approved textbooks and additional curriculum materials are provided free of charge for each subject or class. Materials must be treated with care and used as directed by the teacher. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher.

Students must return all textbooks and supplemental materials to the teacher at the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from school. Any student failing to return issued materials in an acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and educational materials until the student and/or parent pay for the damages. However, a student will be provided textbooks for use at school during the school day. The Academy may reduce or waive the payment requirement if the student is from a low-income family. The release of student records, including official transcripts, will be delayed pending payment for lost or severely damaged textbooks or supplemental materials, including, but not limited to, library books and borrowed musical instruments.

### **Homework**

We believe that the majority of class time should be spent in the *collective* pursuit of what is true, good, and beautiful about a specific subject. Homework time, then, is reserved primarily for reading and for meaningful *independent* activities that support the curricular objectives of a given course. Students should expect to do meaningful homework each night.

General nightly homework expectations for the average student at the Academy are as follows:

**Kindergarten:** approximately 20 minutes\*  
**1st Grade:** approximately 30 minutes\*  
**2nd Grade:** approximately 30-40 minutes\*  
**3rd Grade:** approximately 35-45 minutes\*  
**4th Grade:** approximately 45-60 minutes\*  
**5th Grade:** approximately 60-75 minutes\*  
**6th Grade:** approximately 75-90 minutes\*  
**7th-8th Grade:** approximately 85-115 minutes\*

\*The homework minutes do not include the fact that each student is expected to read at least 20 minutes each weeknight in addition to their assigned HW. (Kinder student reading minutes will vary depending on teacher communication.)

**We ask parents to help us communicate to students the importance of establishing a silent and distraction-free environment for completing all homework.** If students do not work in such an environment, they should expect that:

- it will take significantly longer to complete the assignments; and
- the student's thought will be fragmented, and his or her overall comprehension of the material will be deficient.

Often, success with homework is a condition of the student's self-regulation. Skillful self-regulators have a number of strategies that enable them to achieve efficiently and effectively: help-seeking, planning, goal setting, time-management, self-monitoring, reducing distractions, questioning, comprehension monitoring, and using feedback. Students who struggle often do not systematically employ these strategies, even though they may, in fact, spend a significant amount of time working/studying.

As students rise through the grades at the academy, they develop and strengthen their work skills. In essence, students *learn how to learn* through the rigors of school.

Teachers work carefully in measuring out a proper amount of work for their class and will coordinate with other teachers of a grade level of students in scheduling their major tests and projects. Thus, students will have no more than two major tests on the same day. It is the **responsibility of the student** to make up missed homework after any absence, planned or due to illness, in a timely manner. **(Please see the section on Make-Up Work on page 72-73)**

**An absence on the due date of a major assignment (essay, lab report, project, etc.) or exam may not extend the due date of that assignment.** The student should expect to submit the work and/or make-up the exam on the day of his/her return. Likewise, absences during the preparation time of a major assignment may not extend the due date.

The school will schedule a number of 'R and R' weekends" so that these can be announced progressively. These are designated as school-wide "*no homework*" weekends. Teachers will not

assign homework over these weekends and tests and quizzes will not be administered on the Mondays following. It may be the case that a long-term or multi-day project is given well before and due a few days after an “R and R” weekend; students will need to stick to a disciplined work schedule to enjoy the well-deserved time off.

### **Grades, Objectivity, and Qualitative Judgment**

The evaluation of students by their teachers is an essential part of formal schooling. This ongoing process of evaluation informs the teacher about what a student has mastered, where he/she is struggling, and what he/she should learn next. Evaluation and timely academic feedback are also necessary for the student’s self-understanding and self-management as a learner, particularly as children mature. Finally, evaluation and academic updates are crucial for parents if they are successfully to support and oversee the education of their children. While older students are more capable of receiving direct feedback from their teachers through written evaluations and quarter or semester grades, parents play the essential role in conveying to younger children what they need to know about their own progress and growth, since the report cards are written for the parents and not for the students.

A Great Hearts classical, liberal arts education calls upon teachers, students, and families to place their primary attention upon *learning and growth*, not upon the mere letter or number grades which are assigned as shorthand summaries of student progress. In the context of a classical education, “What grade am I/is my child getting?” is not the right question to ask; instead, the focus should be on specific areas of success, growth/progress, and struggles/opportunities for improvement. When students are young, this is a conversation between parent and teacher: *“My child usually does well on math tests, but I see that the last one she brought home was a 62—what went wrong? was there a pattern to her mistakes? Is he participating more? What’s one thing he can do to improve his participation in class? Did she miss any homework assignments last week? Why are his quiz scores so low? How can she better prepare for her vocabulary tests?”*

But as children transition into adolescence, this conversation should increasingly take place between *student and teacher*, with parental support and guidance where needed, and only with the purpose of helping the student to become fully independent. By the time students have entered high school, the training wheels should be completely off, and both **parents and teachers should expect the student to be the active, autonomous, self-regulating, primary agent of his or her own learning and progress.**

In the classical, liberal arts tradition of education, the work of assigning numerical and/or letter grades to student learning is understood to be **an act of qualitative human judgment**, aided by but not reducible to the impersonal quantifiable results of a system, a calculation, or a set of

spreadsheet formulas. But by “human judgment” we do not mean “subjective”, for the rigorous, qualitative evaluation of student learning is not mere sentiment or an expression of a teacher’s arbitrary likes and dislikes.

Our way of viewing grades is increasingly out of fashion in a world shaped by purely quantitative thinking and by digital tools of information management, from the Fitbit to banking apps to the invisible systems of “big data” that give business and government unprecedented knowledge and power to influence human behavior. Indeed, such digital tools have increasingly become part of what is accurately now called “the education *industry*”, and the widespread use of these platforms for quantitative grade monitoring has made it increasingly difficult for 21<sup>st</sup>-century parents and teachers alike to think about learning in its qualitative essence. As the proverb of the telecommunications age has it, *the medium is the message*, and the medium of the digital grade platform, well suited to tracking quantitative data, silently and relentlessly conveys the message that *the entire process of education is about measurable outcomes—the numbers, the results, the score, the return-on-investment*. Classical, liberal arts education categorically rejects this view.

And because of the apparent ease and convenience of such digital systems, the greater good of academic conversation between parent and teacher, student and teacher, and even between parent and student, is bypassed in favor of the lesser good of instant information. Students who don’t have to talk to their teachers or their parents about how they did on the last test, whether they turned in their missing homework, or whether they’ve been improving their participation, do not develop into autonomous, self-regulated learners.

For these reasons—because of our focus upon the qualitative, upon conversation, upon the process of learning, and upon the development of student autonomy, **Great Hearts does not employ an on-line system or portal to enable parents to check on real-time, daily/weekly student grades.**

### **Special Categories of Student Evaluation: Depth of Inquiry, Sense of Wonder, and Participation**

A Great Hearts approach to student evaluation includes the discrete and quantitative: numerical scores on quizzes and tests, scores on projects, homework grades for completion and/or accuracy. But a classical, liberal arts education aims at developing not only basic skills and subject matter knowledge, but also habits of understanding, imagination, and analysis. The evaluative categories of *depth of inquiry*, *sense of wonder*, and *participation* describe some of these higher habits. **They are fundamentally qualitative categories of evaluation, best**



**expressed in narrative and not in quantitative scores. They are also *objective* and not subjective, for they reflect real acts and habits of the student, not the teacher's feelings or vague, personal impressions.**

When the teacher evaluates a student's ***depth of inquiry***, he/she gives answers to questions such as *does the student ask questions in class? What kinds of questions does she ask? Do his questions rise above the pursuit of right answers to seeking causes and reasons why? Does she seek to make connections between what is at hand and what was learned earlier in the course, or even with other subjects? Does the student get beyond rules and formulas? Can the he/she construct questions that are more specific than "I don't get it"? Is the student limited to "what do I need to know for the test?", or does he/she have a genuine desire to know? How does the student express depth of inquiry—is it in class discussions? On assignments, projects, or exams?*

When the teacher evaluates a student's ***sense of wonder***, he/she answers questions such as *is the student interested by the subject matter's mysteries, problems, or puzzles? Or does he "shut down" in the face of the difficult or the unknown? Does the student demonstrate curiosity? Does she ask relevant "what if..." questions? Has the student had any "aha!" or "wow!" moments? Does the student demonstrate engagement? How?* Again, it is not only in overtly expressive classroom actions that wonder can be demonstrated; often, what a student writes or how he/she completes an assignment, or a project can demonstrate this habit.

It is a mistake to think that ***participation*** is a measure only of a student's active, self-initiated volunteering in the classroom. While this is part of participation, a teacher's evaluation in this category answers a range of questions including *how does the student respond when the teacher calls upon him/her? Does he speak too much in class or too little? Is her participation self-centered, or is it mindful of others? Does the student listen well? Does she 'track the speaker'? Does the student take notes or annotate readings, either in class or when working at home? Does he speak about the topic, or does he say whatever is on her mind regardless of relevance? Does she engage productively with others? Is he polite and courteous to classmates? Does she make distractingly silly or glib comments, or does she bring appropriate humor and playfulness to the classroom? Does he stay on task during independent or group work?*

**It is also a mistake to think that students' wonder, depth, and participation are just reflections of fixed, innate dispositions in students:** that a certain kind of gregarious, talkative, and socially uninhibited student gets an A for participation every year simply by showing up; that a student who is more naturally introverted will never be a strong participant and will never get more than a B; that certain students are just inquisitive and that's that. *Nothing could be further from the truth.* Students' natural dispositions are not evaluated; their actions and habits of learning are, and actions and habits are voluntary and can thus be altered through intention and effort. Some students will find certain habits of learning easier to develop than others, but intention and effort are still required. Teachers guide and encourage all students to develop all aspects of learning and give them the practice they need to grow where they need to grow, just like a good coach of young athletes, or a beginners' piano instructor.

**Grade Scale**  
(updated August, 2020)

The following letter grade scales with numerical equivalents are in use at all Great Hearts schools in Texas:

For grades K-8:

For grades 9-12\*:

93-100	A	93-100	A
90-92	A-	90-92	A-
87-89	B+	87-89	B+
83-86	B	83-86	B
80-82	B-	80-82	B-
77-79	C+	77-79	C+
73-76	C	73-76	C
70-72	C-	70-72	C-
67-69	D+	69	F
63-66	D		
60-62	D-		
59	F		

GPA (non-honors)

*Note: there is no A+. \*By state law, a grade equivalent to 70/100 is required for high school credit. When 8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra I is taken for HS credit, it is graded according to this F=69 scale.*

Grades assigned according to any different scale(s) prior to August, 2020 are unaffected by the adoption of this scale.

**Evaluation**

A liberal arts education requires a special kind of written evaluation – one that offers a prose discussion of the student’s sense of wonder, depth of inquiry, specific areas of mastery and needs for improvement, and attitudes toward learning and towards others. The narrative treats student in a fundamentally human way, not by neglecting numerical scores, but by situating those numbers as one part of fuller, more nuanced picture of the student’s progress in a given course.

### **Weekly returned graded work:**

- K-5:*
- Weekly graded student work will be sent home in the student's Take Home Folder
  - A signature slip will be attached to front of packet of graded work to be signed by a parent and returned the following day or weekly signature page attached on the inside of the Take Home Folder will need to be signed (your teacher will explain their specific procedure.)
  - Tests & major writing assignments will be marked with a **parent signature stamp**. These should be returned **SEPARATELY** with test corrections (if assigned as HW) for grades 3-5. Test corrections should be done on a separate piece of paper and attached. A HW grade is given when completed and turned in with parent signature. At no time will test corrections "add back points" to the test or quiz.

**Deficiency Notices:** Midway through each quarter, progress reports will be emailed out to all parents of GHWH scholars. For student's whose progress report reflects a current D or F, the teacher will offer a clear explanation of why the student is doing poorly in the subject(s) and offer clear directives for how the student may improve his or her standing. These notices are intended to keep parents informed as to their student's overall progress and prompt students to make necessary changes and improve their academic standing before the end of the quarter.

**Grade Reports:** At the end of each quarter, parents will receive a report that indicates student performance in each subject area. At the end of the 2nd & 4th quarters, teachers will write a narrative report for each student. These reports provide parents with specific feedback on a student's strengths and weaknesses within a given class. In addition to narrative commentary, these reports include student grades in various categories of assessment along with an overall letter grade for the semester.

**First quarter Conferences:** After the first quarter, parents will meet with their child's classroom teacher and apprentice (K-6 only) to discuss the first quarter and overall student progress in greater depth. Specials teachers (K-6 only) will be available to schedule a conference. Parents may also schedule conferences with interventionists.

**State Testing:** Students will also be assessed according to state requirements. Please review

appendix for list of state standardized exams. All tests will be conducted during the school year and the results will be mailed directly to families.

### **Promotion**

A student may be considered for retention or remediation (required to repeat a grade or particular course) if he or she has met any of the following criteria:

1. Failed one or more core subject areas;
2. Failed one or more state assessments;
3. Is below level in one or more core subject areas; or
4. Missed more than 10% of instructional days in an academic year.

Retention decisions will be made by a committee comprised of the child's core subject area teachers and the Headmaster or designee.

In order to be promoted to the next grade level, students in certain grade levels – with limited exceptions – will be required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (“STAAR”).

In order to be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 STAAR assessment in English or Spanish.

In order to be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 8 STAAR assessment in English.

If a student in grade 5 or 8 is enrolled in a course that earns high school credit and for which an end-of-course (“EOC”) assessment will be administered, the student will not be subject to the promotion requirements described above for the relevant grade 5 or 8 assessment.

If a student in grades 3–8 is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above his or her current grade level in which the student will be administered a state-mandated assessment, the student will be required to take an applicable state mandate assessment only for the course in which he or she is enrolled, unless applicable federal law requires otherwise.

Parents of a student who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year.

A student in grade 5 or 8 will have two additional opportunities to take a failed EOC. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year.

In other grades, students will have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments.

Certain students—some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency—may be

eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Upon the recommendation of the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (“ARD”) Committee, a student with disabilities who is receiving special education services may be promoted and/or permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her Individualized Education Program (“IEP”).

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school, but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremonies to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

### **Student Success Initiative**

The Student Success Initiative (SSI) was created by the Texas Legislature to ensure that all students receive the instruction and support they need to be successful in reading and mathematics.

The SSI grade advancement requirements apply to the grade 5 mathematics and reading tests and the grade 8 mathematics and reading tests. As specified by these requirements, a student may advance to the next grade level only by passing these tests or, if the parent appeals, by unanimous decision of his or her grade placement committee (GPC) that the student is likely to perform at grade level after accelerated instruction.

Students have three opportunities to meet the passing standard on each of the tests and will receive additional instruction after each testing opportunity on which they do not meet the standard. A GPC, consisting of the principal, teacher, and parent or guardian, meets when a student has not met the passing standard after two testing opportunities and is responsible for determining the accelerated instruction the student needs before the third testing opportunity. A student who does not meet the passing standard after three testing opportunities is automatically retained. However, if the parents appeal the retention, the GPC may choose to promote the student if all members agree that the student is likely to perform on grade level with additional accelerated instruction and if the student completes the required accelerated instruction.

For Special Education students, the ARD committee will serve as their Grade Placement Committee (GPC).

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### **Project Week**

Project Week typically takes place in the week just before the start of the second semester. Students will be given directions for a research or other project before they leave for winter break. The project assignments vary from grade to grade, and may include such things as a science experiment, a research topic and presentation/paper, building a model, a longer assigned reading, and/or memorization piece. Sometimes, students will be assigned their projects well before the semester break and given guidance by their teacher for completion.

Students can expect to invest up to 15 hours on their projects, which are due on the first day they

return for the second semester. Projects may require library/internet research, acquisition of modeling materials, or hands-on problem-solving. All faculty participate in the evaluation of projects. This assessment is factored into the second semester grades.

Project Week allows students to explore a topic (often to some extent of their choosing) in greater depth, using resources that are not readily available to them in the classroom. Project week teaches students how to study a topic in-depth on their own and how to manage their time, to cultivate love for something of interest to them, and to participate in true intellectual “leisure”—i.e. pursuing something for its own sake and value. Parents may be tempted to over-assist students with projects, especially hands-on modeling or crafting activities, students must problem-solve and produce their work on their own. Parents should seek to guide as teachers would—helping a student to find a solution rather than giving them the solution.

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## **Family-Teacher Academic Partnership**

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**As a preparatory school, Great Hearts believes that the student should be the primary agent in his or her education.** Our first priority in this regard is to encourage student responsibility by establishing an open line of communication between students and their individual teachers. Timely and effective communication between teachers, students, and parents is essential in fostering academic growth.

### **Communication Roles**

Student: Students are responsible for tracking assignments, understanding stated course requirements, and meeting deadlines. We strongly encourage students to meet with their teachers regularly for tutoring if they are having difficulty understanding specific concepts or material. It is also the job of the students to communicate honestly to their parents about their day-to-day performance and academic standing by bringing home weekly graded and returned student work and tests.

Teacher: Teachers are responsible for clearly communicating to the student what is expected of him or her. Teachers are also responsible for notifying parents when their student is struggling considerably with the material, is not performing as expected, shows significant changes in behavior or begins to struggle socially.

Parent: The primary means by which parents can assist their children are:

1. Encouraging their children in their development in Academy goals, namely the growth of character and wisdom.
2. Providing a distraction-free study environment.

When students are experiencing significant academic struggles, parents should generally seek to assist the student according to these guidelines:

1. First, student communicates specific difficulty directly to teacher
2. Teacher meets with student to create action plan
3. If difficulty persists, parents contact teacher or vice versa
4. Teacher, parents, and possibly student meet to discuss and address issue
5. Other school personnel may be brought in to assist, such as Reading or Math

- Interventionists, MTSS Coordinator, and/or Special Student Services Coordinator
6. If difficulty persists, parents and/or teacher may contact the Assistant Headmaster or a Dean
  7. Assistant Headmaster or Dean facilitates conference with parents and teacher  
\*Students may attend part of a meeting once resolutions and next steps have been established. Student will not be permitted in meetings between faculty and parents where sensitive information about the students will be shared. Student attendance in any meetings are subject to the headmaster's discretion.

To contact the teachers by phone, please call the school office and leave a message on the individual teacher's voicemail box. Teachers may also be reached via email; individual e-mail addresses are found on the school's website.

Note: We ask that students and parents not enter faculty or administrative offices, which includes the teacher's classroom without invitation. This is a private workspace which contains confidential school records. Stopping by the faculty workroom or classroom before or after school is not a good time to meet with teachers.

Parents of students in all grades are encouraged to talk with the faculty as soon as they think their son or daughter might be having difficulty. The earlier a problem is recognized, the easier it is to resolve. If you wish to talk with your child's teacher by phone, or to make an appointment for a conference, please call the school office and leave a message on the individual teacher's voicemail box with your name, your child's name, your phone number, and times during which you will be available. Teachers can also be reached via email. The teacher will return communication by the end of the next school day. It is not appropriate to stop by the classroom before school starts to meet with the teacher unless an appointment has been made. In the morning, teachers are monitoring students and it is important that they not be distracted from this duty. Our teachers' lunch time and prep time are also valuable and should be protected. If you would like to meet during the school day, please make an appointment. **Teachers will return phone calls and emails within 24 hours.**

While on campus, parents should always conduct themselves in a civil manner. Hostility, disrespectful speech, and vulgarity that Great Hearts determines is disruptive to the educational environment will not be permitted on campus, including in the parking lot. If parents are upset about a matter involving a teacher, we ask that they contact the Office Manager to set up an appointment with the appropriate teacher, Assistant Headmaster, or the Headmaster as the situation warrants.

### **Student-Teacher Relationships: On-campus and Off-campus**

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The Academy highly values the working relationship between teachers (or staff) and students. This is a relationship best characterized as a *professional* friendship grounded in mutual respect. Teachers will treat each student as a unique individual and will serve the student with a heart of charity. Students, on their part, will treat each teacher with the respect properly accorded his or her role as an authority figure and leader here at the Academy. With this in mind, students should address teachers by their formal title i.e. Mrs., Ms., Mr., Dr., and their last name.

Our teachers, staff members, and coaches will maintain a proper professional boundary between him or her and the student. They will not be overly familiar with the student or get involved in the details of the student's personal life. (If a teacher senses that a student requires counseling for a social or family issue, that issue will be referred confidentially to the administration and/or parents). The faculty/staff/coaches of the Academy will insist on maintaining appropriate physical boundaries, and will not meet in a room alone with a student with the door closed. It is also Academy policy that faculty/staff do not transport students in their personal vehicles. This is excepting, of course, when transporting his/her own children, or when acting in some other capacity (for example as a camp counselor or church leader) *and* parental permission for such transportation is explicitly granted.

Many of our teachers and staff live in the same neighborhoods as our students, hence it is appropriate to offer a word regarding off-campus relationships. ***The same professional rules governing on-campus relationships apply to off-campus relationships or chance meetings between students and faculty.***

It is not appropriate for students and teachers/staff to interact as anything other than students and teacher/staff, regardless of the location, time, or day of the week. Furthermore, students should not contact or visit teachers or staff members off campus unless the teacher or staff member has spoken with the parents and explicitly invited such contact, nor should teachers or staff contact students off-campus (other than phone calls regarding academics or school-sponsored extra-curricular activities), unless such contact has been approved by the parents.

Parents, students, and GH staff are advised that once a GH employee has separated from employment, the separated employee no longer represents GHA in any personal, professional, or political activities or relationships.

## Academy Parent and Student Grievance Procedure

Student and parent complaints or concerns can usually be addressed by a phone call or a conference with a teacher. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the Academy has adopted a standard complaint policy as stated in the Academy policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the Headmaster's or Superintendent's office. The Academy parent and student complaint process is also summarized below:

Process	Guidance Notes
<b>1. Introduction</b> It is the school policy to ensure that students or parents with a grievance relating to the Academy, its administration, and/or other employees shall, except as otherwise set forth below, use a procedure which may resolve grievances as quickly and as fairly as possible.	
<b>2. Initial discussions</b> If you or your child has a grievance you should discuss it informally with the teacher, administrator, coach, or staff member directly involved in the matter. We hope that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this stage.	Informal discussions should resolve the vast majority of grievances. NOTE: Grievances or information involving an ongoing or imminent threat to a student's well-being should skip this stage and be immediately directed to the Headmaster.



<p><b>3. Stage 1</b> If you feel that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, you should put your grievance in writing to the appropriate teacher, administrator, coach, or staff member (again, the one directly involved). The school employee must offer a response within five (5) working days in an endeavor to resolve the matter.</p>	<p>The first stage should allow the family and school employee to resolve the grievance without the involvement of the Headmaster or Board of Directors. The aim should be to resolve the grievance at the lowest relevant level.</p>
<p><b>4. Stage 2</b> If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you may raise the matter, in writing, with the Headmaster, who must give a response within five (5) working days. This response may take the form of a letter and/or follow-up meeting with the family and any employee(s) involved in the matter. This meeting will be led by the Headmaster.</p>	<p>The Headmaster is the acting supervisor over all school employees.</p>
<p><b>5. Stage 3</b> If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you may raise the matter, in writing, with the Superintendent, who must give a response within five (5) working days. This response may take the form of a letter and/or follow-up meeting with the family and any employee(s) involved in the matter. This meeting will be led by the Superintendent.</p>	<p>The Superintendent is the acting supervisor over all Great Hearts Texas employees.</p>
<p><b>5. Stage 4</b> If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, and you wish to pursue this matter further, you should put your grievance in writing to the President of the Board of Directors. You may be entitled to have a meeting with the grievance committee established annually by the Board of Directors and comprised of directors. This committee will formally respond by setting a meeting or taking another course of action within thirty (30) days. If the Board as a whole is convened to address the grievance, all applicable public open meeting laws will be followed, including prior notice and the right of the employee to request an open meeting or an executive session for the hearing. The board's decision is final.</p>	<p>If the Board understands that stages 1 and 2 have not been completed, these may be a requirement prior to further action or hearing from the Board.</p> <p>A response by the committee may include a dismissal of the grievance, a formal reprimand of the school employee, or headmaster, and/or a directive for staff to develop an additional policy recommendation for Board consideration.</p>

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## Basic School Information

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### Office and Student Hours; Campus Access

The school office is open from 7:20am – 4:00pm every day that school is in session and will be closed during the month of July. The school phone number is 210-888-9484. Messages may be left on voice mail any time the phone is busy or we are out of the office. Messages left after hours will be returned the next working day. Also, families may contact the administration via e-mail (please see the Directory or our website).

The administration asks that non-urgent calls to the school office be made between 9 and 11 and between 1 and 3, since other times during the school day are “high-traffic” periods. Messages for faculty can be relayed to our receptionist to pass on to faculty. **Please note that administration has directed the faculty to check email before 7:30 a.m. each day, and then maintain their focus on their teaching duties throughout the school day. Parents should not expect teachers to read and/or respond to emails between 7:30 a.m. and 4:20 p.m.**

School starts daily at 7:50am and ends at 3:30pm. For safety reasons, students should not arrive on campus earlier than 7:20am, nor stay later than 4:05pm, unless they are attending an organized, adult-supervised program associated with the school. Students must leave campus immediately after school dismisses in the afternoon, unless they are involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or sponsor. If a student is involved in an after-school activity, he or she must remain in the area where the activity is scheduled to take place. The student may not go to another area of the school without permission by the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity.

Outside of scheduled school activities, students and parents should not enter the campus after hours, during holidays and breaks, or on weekends. For example, the school’s outdoor athletic and playground facilities are not open to general student or family use except in the context of a

school activity or event. Unauthorized presence of this kind may constitute trespassing.

The Academy has a closed campus. **During the school day, and excepting official school activities such as field trips and athletic contests, a student may not leave the campus except under parental supervision (including written permission for student drivers).** Students may also not receive any peer or adult visitors (this excludes the privilege extended to parents to visit their child during lunch – see below) to the campus during the school day, including before school, during lunch, and after school.

## **Administrative Responsibilities**

### **Leadership Team and Staff at the Academy**

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#### **Headmaster**

Kyla Absher

The Headmaster leads the school in the attainment of its mission. He or she is responsible for communicating the vision of the school, hiring the faculty, observing and evaluating teachers, and establishing a school culture reflecting the Great Hearts commitment to the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. He or she directly oversees the implementation of the Academy's curriculum and directs teachers and staff at the Academy in its delivery and in the fulfillment of their duties. The headmaster reports directly to a supervisor, and he/she frequently collaborates with other headmasters and central office personnel.

#### **Assistant Headmaster**

Erica Rodriguez

The Assistant Headmaster will assist the Headmaster with various administrative duties including, but not limited to, the oversight of school compliance issues, MAP testing, curriculum implementation & support, campus schedules, STAAR testing, the Student Services Team, student discipline and the coaching of teachers. She will also help design and lead professional development seminars, as well as oversee grade level teams as they plan lessons, tests, parent/teacher conferences, and student evaluations & grades.

#### **Director of Campus Operations**

Jennifer Cape

The Director of Campus Operations (DCO), manages the following areas: front office staff (Receptionists), Registrar/Student Information Specialist, School Nurses and Facilities Technician, Meal Services Program as well as assists the Headmaster in communicating information to families, responding to public queries about the Academy, and maintaining the school's assets. He or she manages the school's numerous records and reporting requirements to the state and other institutions. In interacting with the DCO, teachers and staff should remember the following: 1) do not direct academic, student, or disciplinary matters to the DCO (speak an Assistant Headmaster or Dean); 2) submit all requests concerning the campus in writing (the front office is a very busy place); 3) teachers and staff may not

request the DCO to complete any of their responsibilities, such as photocopying for class or filing of grade reports.

**Dean of Students**

Criselda Arredondo

The **Dean of Students** is Mrs. Criselda Arredondo. She is responsible for assisting the Headmaster with student culture & discipline, operations & events, traffic, student ambassadors, and school safety measures. She will also assist teachers with classroom management strategies and classroom discipline routines.

**Dean of Academics**

Kristin Pickett

The **Dean of Academics** is Mrs. Kristin Pickett. She is responsible for assisting the Headmaster with teacher coaching and classroom instruction, operations & events, professional development and teacher culture. She will assist teachers with classical pedagogy and instructional best practices.

**SIS/Registrar**

Nicole Shelley

The Registrar is Ms. Nicole Shelley. She is responsible for enrollment on campus as well as family communication regarding attendance. She handles all students who are in special programs that need to be coded properly for services, and all student information into Great Hearts databases. Ms. Shelley also takes care of all student academic records.

**Special Education Services Coordinator**

Mrs. Vivian Caldera

**ESL Services Coordinator**

Mrs. Jeanna Quiroz

**504 and Response to Intervention Coordinator**

Mrs. Ashley Granado

Questions or concerns about curriculum should be directed to the appropriate teacher or any member of the Leadership Team. Questions or concerns about student conduct or discipline should be directed to the Dean of Students or Assistant Headmaster. General questions regarding the school may be directed to Office Manager or to the Headmaster. If you are uncertain whom to contact about a particular issue, please contact the office, and we will direct you to the appropriate employee.

The Great Hearts CEO and management teamwork with the headmasters and schools, and offer essential support. For more information about Great Hearts, please visit the website, [greatearthamerica.org](http://greatearthamerica.org). The Great Hearts management team includes:

- Jay Heiler, J.D., CEO
- Mr. Brendan Minitier, Superintendent of Great Hearts Texas

- Mrs. Mandi Cannon, Executive Director for Dallas / Fort Worth
- Mrs. Monet Lessner Mr. William Rutherford, Executive Directors, San Antonio

*Note to Parents: Copies of resumes and fingerprint clearance cards for all Academy faculty, Great Hearts leadership and Academy board members are available upon request. Please direct your request to the Assistant Headmaster for assistance.*

### **Crisis Management Plan**

The Academy has an established Crisis Management Plan that is maintained and updated by the facilities and operations staff at Great Hearts. The plan outlines emergency procedures for natural disasters, violent situations, medical emergencies, and fires. Academy faculty and staff are trained in and drilled on the plan throughout the school year.

### **Official School Calendar and Website**

The official school calendar for each academic year is posted on the school website (<http://greateartswesternhills.greateartsschools.org/>) and distributed to each family prior to the start of school, usually in June. Any updates and revisions will also be found on the web version of the calendar, which is updated as needed. This calendar should be carefully coordinated with each family's own calendar and should be consulted on a regular basis throughout the year. The calendar identifies school holidays, half-days, special events, mandatory student fine arts performances, year-end ceremonies, etc.

We encourage families to visit our website regularly to view communiqués, faculty contact information, updates on athletic and extracurricular schedules and locations, and other school related events and information.

### **Special Programs**

#### **Bilingual/ESL Services**

The academy offers Bilingual/English as a Second Language ("ESL") services at all appropriate grade levels for English language learners who are limited in their English proficiency. The program is designed to assist students identified as having limited English proficiency with development in language – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The goal of the ESL program is to provide additional English language assistance to students, enabling them to become academically successful in all classes. Students are assessed with state-approved Oral Language Proficiency and Norm-Referenced Tests to qualify for placement in the program. If test results indicate either limited oral or limited cognitive academic English ability, the student (with parent approval) is provided additional English language support.

#### **Special Education Services**

The Academy has the responsibility of identifying, locating, and evaluating individuals with disabilities who are 5–21 years of age and who fall within the school's jurisdiction. If you know

or suspect that your child has a disability, please contact the Headmaster for information about available programs, assessments, and services.

Special education services are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. Each student who receives special education services has an Individual Education Plan (“IEP”), which is developed by the student’s Admission, Review, and Dismissal (“ARD”) Committee. The ARD Committee considers the student’s disability and determines appropriate accommodations, supplementary aids, and/or services that are necessary for the student to participate in the general curriculum.

All special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment, which may be special education settings, general education settings, or a combination of both. All students receiving special education services are educated to the maximum extent appropriate with their non-disabled peers as well as participating in all school activities on the same basis as students who are not disabled.

The Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities, can be obtained from the Special Education Director or at the Texas Education Agency Special Education Website: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/>. For further information, please contact the Headmaster or designee.

#### **Section 504 Services**

The Academy provides a free appropriate public education to each qualified student with a disability, regardless of the nature or severity of the student’s disability. A “student with a disability” is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the student’s major life activities, has a record of having such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. A student with a disability is “qualified” if he or she is between the ages of three and 21, inclusive.

An appropriate education is the provision of regular or special education and related services that are (1) designed to meet the student’s individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of students who do not have disabilities are met; and (2) based on adherence to procedures that satisfy federal requirements for educational setting, evaluation and placement, and procedural safeguards.

Qualified students with disabilities will be placed in the regular educational environment, unless the Academy demonstrates that education in the regular environment with the use of supplemental aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Should an alternate educational environment be necessary, the Academy shall comply with all legal requirements regarding least restrictive environment and comparable facilities for students with disabilities. In providing or arranging for nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities, the Academy shall ensure that a qualified student with a disability participates with students who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

To be eligible for services and protections against discrimination on the basis of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a student must be determined, as a result of an evaluation, to have a “physical or mental impairment” that substantially limits one or more

major life activities. If a student has or is suspected of having a disability, or requires special services, parents or teachers should contact the Headmaster for information concerning available programs, assessments, and services. For further information, please contact the Section 504 Coordinator.

### **Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services**

For those students who are having difficulty in a general classroom environment, all school districts and open enrollment charter school must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (“RtI”). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) listed below to learn about the school’s overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for specific education or Section 504 services at any time.

### **Special Education Referrals**

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Note of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluation children who are suspected of having a disability and being in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school day timeline.

If the district or charter school decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student’s initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent’s written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent’s consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last

instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30<sup>th</sup> due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply. Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school in a companion document entitled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

### **Contact Person for Special Education Referrals**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is: **Mrs. Vivian Caldera**. [vivian.caldera@greatheartswesternhills.org](mailto:vivian.caldera@greatheartswesternhills.org)

### **Section 504 Referrals**

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's or charter school's Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

### **Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is: Mrs. Cristina Dorta. [cristina.dorta@greatheartswesternhills.org](mailto:cristina.dorta@greatheartswesternhills.org)

### **Additional Information**

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families:

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)
- [Partners Resource Network](#)
- [Special Education Information Center](#)
- [Texas Project First](#)

### **Services for Title I Participants**

Information regarding the school's participation in Title I or a specific Title I program may be obtained from the Headmaster or district office.

## **Pledges of Allegiance and Moment of Silence**

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the Headmaster or designee at the Academy office to excuse their student from reciting a pledge.

State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. In addition, state law requires that the Academy provide for the observance of one minute of silence at the beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

## **Recitation of the Declaration of Independence**

State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during “Celebrate Freedom Week.” A student will be exempted from this requirement if a parent provides a written statement requesting that the student be excused, the Academy determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or the parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity.

## **Prayer and Meditation**

Students have a right to individually, silently, and voluntarily pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other school activities. The Academy will not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

## **Lockers and Backpacks**

According to campus programming and as permitted by space and facilities, students in the fifth grade will be assigned a locker. The Academy requires that students keep their lockers locked throughout the day. The school is not responsible for the loss or theft of items stored in lockers. It will be incumbent on students to ensure their lockers are always locked, and to conceal their lock combination numbers to avoid lock tampering. The Academy reserves the right to inspect student lockers at any time, with or without notice, and at any time with or without reason. If there is a compelling reason to open a locker and the lock cannot be opened, school staff may cut the lock; families will not be compensated for a cut lock. Students are not permitted to write on or otherwise deface school lockers, inside or out. They may tape non-offensive posters or photos *inside* their lockers, but may not glue or paste stickers, and no decoration may be placed on the outside of any locker (excepting official House insignias or competition awards given by a House Consul or Governor OR tasteful “Birthday Surprise” decorations on lockers, which must be removed at the end of one week).



Backpacks and gym bags should be free of messages that are offensive or inappropriate to the Academy environment. All bags should be free from “pop-culture” references and pictures, including emojis.

Academy officials may search and seize property when there is reason to believe that some material or matter is present that is detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of students.

### **Searches**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that the Academy is safe and drug free, school officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

Administrators, teachers and other professional personnel may question a student regarding the student’s own conduct or the conduct of other students. In the context of school discipline, students have no claim to the right not to incriminate themselves.

Students shall be free from unreasonable searches and seizures by school officials. School officials may search a student’s outer clothing, pockets, or property by establishing reasonable cause or securing the student’s voluntary consent. Express or implied coercion – such as threatening to contact parents or police – invalidates apparent consent.

A search is reasonable if (1) the school official has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will uncover evidence of a rule violation or a criminal violation and (2) the scope of the search is reasonable related to the circumstances justifying the search; i.e., the measures adopted are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and are not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

### **Desk and Locker Searches**

Students should have no expectation of privacy in the contents of their lockers, desks or other school property. Lockers and desks assigned to students remain at all times under the control and jurisdiction of the Academy. The Academy will make periodic inspections of lockers and desks at any time, with or without notice or student consent. School officials will remove any item that violates school policy or that may potentially be dangerous.

Students have full responsibility for the security of their lockers and desks and shall be held responsible for any prohibited items found during a search. The student’s parent shall be notified if any prohibited articles or materials are found in a student’s locker or desk, or on the student’s person, as a result of a search conducted in accordance with this policy.

From time to time, teachers will do locker inspections for 5th graders. Teachers will be looking for proper organization and cleanliness. House points will be awarded to the house(s) with the largest number of lockers meeting the “orderliness” criteria.

### **Vehicles on Campus**

Vehicles parked on school property and property under school control are under the jurisdiction of the Academy and may be searched at any time if reasonable suspicion exists to believe that

the search will result in evidence that school rules or other laws have been violated. If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student shall be asked to unlock the vehicle and consent to a search of the vehicle. If the student refuses to permit the vehicle to be searched, the Academy may contact the student's parents and/or law enforcement officials. A student may be held responsible for and in possession of prohibited items found in his or her vehicle parked on school property or at a school-related event.

### **Random Drug Searches**

In order to ensure a drug-free learning environment, the Academy conducts random drug searches of all school facilities. The Academy may use or contract for specially trained nonaggressive dogs to sniff out and alert school officials to the current presence of concealed prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. Canine visits may be unannounced. The dogs shall be used to search vacant classrooms, vacant common areas, the areas around student lockers, and the areas where vehicles are parked the Academy property or at school-related events. The dogs shall not be asked to alert on students. A dog alert to a locker, vehicle, or item in a classroom, constitutes reasonable grounds for a search by school officials.

## **Law Enforcement Agencies**

### **Questioning of Students**

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school:

- The Headmaster will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The Headmaster ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the Headmaster considers to be a valid objection.
- The Headmaster ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the Headmaster considers to be a valid objection.
- The Headmaster will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation.

When the investigation involves allegations of child abuse, special rules apply. See "Child Abuse Reporting and Programs."

### **Students Taken Into Custody**

State law requires the Academy to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- Pursuant to an order of the juvenile court;
- Pursuant to the laws of arrest;
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision;
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated the terms of probation imposed by a juvenile court;
- Pursuant to a properly issued directive to apprehend; or
- By an authorized representative of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order

and under the conditions set out in Texas Family Code § 262.104 relating to the student's physical health or safety.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the Headmaster will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The Headmaster will immediately notify the Superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises that the Headmaster considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents.

### **Child Abuse Reporting and Programs**

The Academy provides child abuse anti-victimization programs and cooperates with official child abuse investigators as required by law. The Academy also provides training to its teachers and students in preventing and addressing incidents of sexual abuse of children, including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse. Assistance, interventions, and counseling options are also available.

The school's administration shall cooperate with law enforcement investigations of child abuse, including investigations by the Texas Department of Protective and Family Services. School officials may not refuse to permit an investigator to interview a student who is alleged to be a victim of abuse or neglect at school. School officials may not require the investigator to permit school personnel to be present during an interview conducted at school.

Investigations at school may be conducted by authorized law enforcement or state agencies without prior notification or consent of the student's parent, if necessary.

### **Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse of Students and Other Maltreatment of Children** **What is Sexual Abuse of a Child?**

The Texas Family Code defines "sexual abuse" as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as, in certain circumstances, failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child.

### **What is Other Maltreatment of a Child?**

Under State law, "other maltreatment" of a child includes "abuse" or "neglect," as defined by Texas Family Code sections 261.001 and 261.401.

### **Reporting Obligation**

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services ("DFPS"). Reports may be made by contacting one of the following:

- Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or, in non-emergency situations only, <http://www.txabusehotline.org>.

- San Antonio Police Department: 201-207-8126
- Call 911 for emergency situations.

The Academy has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children (the “Plan”).

### **Methods for Increasing Awareness Regarding Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment of Children**

***For Teachers:*** The Academy annually trains teachers in all content areas addressed in the Plan. Training will include contents of the adopted board policy and is provided by campus staff, administrative staff, or outside agencies as determined by the Headmaster.

***For Students:*** School counseling staff will address issues to increase awareness regarding sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children and anti-victimization programs with age appropriate conversation and materials. Sexual abuse awareness will be discussed in classroom group settings, or as otherwise deemed appropriate by campus administrators.

***For Parents:*** Parents must be aware of warning signs indicating that their child may have been or is being sexually abused or otherwise maltreated. A child who has experienced sexual abuse or other maltreatment should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that evidence of sexual abuse or other maltreatment may be more indirect than disclosures or signs of physical abuse. It is important to remain calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing in coming to you.

The fact that the abuser is a parent or other family member does not remove your obligation to protect the child. Parents who permit their child to remain in a situation where he or she may be injured or abused may also be subject to prosecution for child abuse. And, if you are frightened for your own safety or that of your child, you should call 911 or 1-800-252-5400.

Also remember that parents are legally responsible for the care of their children and must provide their children with safe and adequate food, clothing, shelter, protection, medical care and supervision, or arrange for someone else to provide these things. Failure to do so may be considered neglect.

The Headmaster or campus counselor will provide information regarding counseling options available in your area for you and your child if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment. The Department of Family Protective Services (“DFPS”) also provides early abuse intervention through counseling programs. Services in your county can be accessed at the following web address:

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention\\_and\\_early\\_intervention/programs\\_available\\_in\\_your\\_county/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention_and_early_intervention/programs_available_in_your_county/default.asp).

These websites are also helpful:

- Texas Education Agency – Prevention of Child Abuse Overview:  
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2820>
- Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs:  
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/programs/types/sexualabuse.cfm>
- Promoting Healthy Families in Your Neighborhood:  
[http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/res\\_packet\\_2008/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/res_packet_2008/)
- Signs of Child Abuse:  
[http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/commonproblems/child\\_abuse.html](http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/commonproblems/child_abuse.html)
- DFPS – How to Report Child Abuse or Neglect  
[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact\\_us/report\\_abuse.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_us/report_abuse.asp)
- Texas Attorney General – What Can We Do About Child Abuse?  
[https://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/txts/child\\_abuse.shtml](https://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/child_abuse.shtml)
- Prevent Child Abuse.org – Texas Chapter: <http://www.preventchildabusetexas.org>
- Texas Council on Family Violence – Abuse Prevention Links: <http://www.tcfv.org/>

### **Likely Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment**

Psychological and behavioral signs of possible sexual abuse or other maltreatment may include:

- Nightmares, sleep problems, extreme fears without an obvious explanation.
- Sudden or unexplained personality changes; becoming withdrawn, angry, moody, clingy, “checking out” or showing significant changes in eating habits.
- Depression or irritability.
- An older child behaving like a young child, for example, bedwetting or thumb-sucking.
- Developing fear of certain places or resisting being alone with an adult or young person for unknown reasons.
- Resistance to routine bathing, toileting, or removing clothes, even in appropriate situations.
- Play, writing, drawings, or dreams of sexual or frightening images.
- Refusal to talk about a secret he or she has with an adult or older child.
- Leaving clues that seem likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues.
- Using new or adult words for body parts.
- Engaging in adult-like sexual activities with toys, objects or other children.
- Developing special relationships with older friends that may include unexplained money, gifts, or privileges.
- Intentionally harming him or herself, for example, drug/alcohol use, cutting, burning, running away, and sexual promiscuity.
- Thinking of self or body as repulsive, dirty, or bad.
- Becoming increasingly secretive about Internet or telephone use.

### **Physical symptoms of possible sexual abuse or other maltreatment include:**

- Stomachaches or illness, often with no identifiable reason.
- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Stained or bloody underwear.
- Genital or rectal pain, itching, swelling, redness, or discharge.
- Bruises or other injuries in the genital or rectal area.

- Unexplained soreness, pain or bruises around mouth, sexually transmitted disease, or pregnancy.

Any one sign does not necessarily mean that a child has been sexually abused or maltreated, but the presence of several signs is the time you should begin asking questions and seeking help. Signs often first emerge at other times of stress, such as during a divorce, death of a family member or pet, problems at school or with friends, or other traumatic or anxiety-inducing events.

### **Actions That A Child Who Is A Victim of Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment Should Take**

During student awareness sessions concerning sexual abuse and maltreatment issues, students will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in a private and confidential conversation if they have been a victim of sexual abuse or maltreated, or have been in situations that make them feel uncomfortable in any way. School employees are trained to take appropriate actions to help the child obtain assistance and to follow proper reporting procedures. Older students will also be provided with local crisis hotline numbers to obtain assistance.

### **Procedures for Use of Restraint and Time-Outs**

School employees, volunteers or independent contractors are authorized to use restraint in the event of an emergency and subject to the following limitations:

- Only reasonable force, necessary to address the emergency, may be used.
- The restraint must be discontinued at the point at which the emergency no longer exists.
- The restraint must be implemented in such a way as to protect the health and safety of the student and others.
- The student may not be deprived of basic human necessities.

At no time, however, may a student be placed in seclusion.

A student with a disability may not be confined in a locked box, locked closet, or other specially designated locked space as either a discipline management practice or a behavior management technique.

### **Drills: Fire, Lockdown, Tornado, and Other Emergencies**

From time to time, all members of the school community will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When a drill is initiated (either by an alarm or announcement), students should follow the instructions from their teachers or other individuals in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

### **Emergency Closings**

Generally the Academy dismisses classes for weather-related events on the same days as surrounding local independent school districts. Any closures for weather will be communicated to all families by text message via our notification service and by email.

The Academy may also need to close during certain emergency situations beyond the control of school officials. The announcement of non-weather related school closings will also be communicated to families through our notification service.

### **Pest Control Information**

The Academy periodically applies pesticides inside school buildings and on school grounds. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 72 hours before application. Students may not reenter a treated area inside a building or use an area on school grounds for at least 12 hours following application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application may contact the Headmaster.

### **Accident Prevention**

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the Academy. Although the Academy has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. Students should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the Headmaster, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the Headmaster safety hazards, such as intruders on campus and threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Immediately follow the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other school employees.

### **Asbestos Management Plan**

All school facilities have been inspected for asbestos by a licensed Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (“AHERA”) inspector. An Asbestos Management Plan has been created for the Academy in accordance with federal regulations. Parents may view the Asbestos Management Plan by contacting the Headmaster. Copies of the management plan are also available at a reasonable charge.

### **Bacterial Meningitis**

State law requires the Academy to provide the following information:

#### **What is Meningitis?**

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is common and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

#### **What are the Symptoms?**

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over two years of age) and adults with meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness or joint pains. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. In both students and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red- purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body. The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

### **How Serious Is Bacterial Meningitis?**

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

### **How Is Bacterial Meningitis Spread?**

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing and sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes, coughing, or sneezing).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

### **How Can Bacterial Meningitis Be Prevented?**

Maintaining healthy habits, including getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. Students should not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Students should limit the number of persons they kiss.

There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis.\* The vaccine is safe and effective (85-90 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as a redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

### **What Should You Do If You Think You Or A Friend Might Have Bacterial Meningitis?**

Students should seek prompt medical attention.

### **Where Can You Get More Information?**

Your family doctor and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Texas Department of Health office to ask about meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and



Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>; and the Texas Department of State Health Services (“TDSHS”), <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us>.

\*Please note that the TDSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination between grades 7 and 10, and state guidelines recommend this vaccination be administered between age 11 and 12, with a booster dose at 16 years of age. Also note that entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the main office for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

### **Illnesses and Communicable Diseases**

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, the Academy encourages the practice of common sense health habits which will reduce exposure to various contagious illnesses. All employees and students will be encouraged to:

- Remain at home when ill.
- Remain at home until fever free for 24 hours.
- Cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid sharing eating and drinking utensils.
- Avoid sharing hair brushes and articles of clothing including headwear.
- Wash hands frequently and well with soap and water.

To further protect employees and students with the following symptoms are to be excluded from school:

- Temperature of 100.0 degrees F or above
- Diarrhea, nausea, and/or vomiting
- Red eye with purulent discharge or crusting
- Scaly patches on the scalp which could indicate ringworm
- Open, draining lesions which could indicate impetigo
- Signs of jaundice such as yellowing of the skin or eyes
- Unknown rash

Students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents of students with a communicable or contagious disease should notify the Headmaster for reporting to the health department. Among the more common of these diseases are the following:

Bacterial Meningitis, Hepatitis A, Impetigo, Ringworm of the scalp (tinea capitis) and Scabies.

Any student excluded from school attendance for reason of communicable disease may be readmitted by one or more of the following methods, as determined by the local health authority:

- Certificate of the attending physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant attesting that the child does not currently have signs or symptoms of a

- communicable disease or to the disease's non-infectiousness in a school setting;
- Submitting a permit for readmission issued by a local health authority; or
- Meeting readmission criteria as established by the commissioner of health.

Students will NOT be excluded for Ringworm of the skin if covered and is being properly treated; Hepatitis B; Bed Bugs; or Head Lice (pediculosis capitis) once parents confirm their student has been treated.

The Academy position on head lice is in compliance with the current positions of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American School Health Association, and the National Association of School Nurses. As with all confidential health matters, the Academy does not send notes to classmates though classroom teachers are advised.

**Please note:** The Academy will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent, unless required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and report

### **Food and Drink on Campus**

Refrigerators are not available for student use, so care should be taken in packing lunches.

Food and drink (except bottled water with lids) is not permitted in the classrooms or halls without special permission from the Headmaster.

There are several water fountains available on the campus. During hot weather, students are encouraged to bring water bottles to school with their names printed on them. Students may refill these bottles from any of the drinking fountains on campus. As a precaution against sickness, students should not share or drink from the same bottles.

### **Lost and Found**

The Academy maintains a lost and found rack/closet. Unclaimed items will be given away or discarded periodically throughout the year. It is strongly recommended that all personal items be marked with the student's name. Uniform clothing should have the family name on the inside label; and we recommend that student-owned consumable books have the student's name prominently displayed either on the front cover or on one of the four sides of the book. All unidentified clothing, lunch boxes, etc. not claimed within one week will be donated. Anyone who finds books, clothing or other personal items left unattended should bring these items to the front office. Items will be kept in lost and found for up to seven days. The hallways are inspected each evening and all unsecured items are placed in the front office.

### **GHWH Carline Traffic Flow**

#### **Drop Off**

Families with K-5 students ONLY will drop off in the Lower School lot.

Families with 6-10 students ONLY will drop off in the Upper School lot.

Families with students in BOTH Upper and Lower schools may drop of at either

US or LS Lot.

Drop off will run from 7:20-7:49 A.M. in each lot. Both Schools will begin promptly. Students not in their classrooms for attendance by 7:50 will be considered tardy. Families arriving after 7:49 will need to park and sign in their child at the front desk.

- The left lane into the campus will be closed on Ingram Rd. and Midhurst Ave. Only faculty will be allowed to enter through these exits until 7:15. The officer will not allow you to enter through the Faculty Entrance.

### **Early Drop Off**

Please do not drop off your children before 7:20 am. No child should be left unattended. There is no supervision for students dropped off before 7:20 a.m. so we highly suggest students not arrive before that time. Parents will not be allowed to walk students into the building. Faculty will utilize the exit to enter into the parking lot. Faculty will have a placard to indicate that they are faculty.

### **Tardies**

Students in K-5 arriving late to class (after 7:50) may be required to stay in the first few minutes from their first recess to complete the missed bell-work activity and fill out their HW agenda. In a case of excessive tardiness, parents will be notified and further disciplinary and academic measures will occur.

### **Pick Up**

Families with ONLY K-5 students will pick up their students at the LS lot.

Families with ONLY 6-10 students will pick up their students at the US lot.

Families with siblings in BOTH Upper and Lower school will pick up at the Upper School Lot.

- Please do not stop and get out of the vehicle to buckle in your child. Please teach your child how to do this independently. This will be necessary to keep the traffic flowing.
- Lower school will enter through the right lane on Ingram Rd. (front of campus) and Upper School will enter the right lane through Midhurst Ave (back of campus).

Notices:

- The city has mandated that vehicles parked on Midhurst will receive a ticket.
- In the state of Texas, cell phones are not to be used while operating a motor vehicle, this includes inside the school lots.
- Turning left on Ingram Rd is prohibited. Turning Left on Midhurst is prohibited. It is dangerous and you may be ticketed.
- Do not cue on Ingram prior to 7:15 for drop off or 3:15 on regular school days or 1:15 on early release Friday's. Cones will be moved, and parents may enter our parking lot respectively at 7:15 for drop off and 3:15 and 1:15 (on ER Friday's). SAPD may issue a citation if you are in violation.

### **Placards**

Each student/family will be issued a car placard with a number on it. Please place the placard in the dash of your front window. If any of your students are participating in after school activities or did not attend school that day, please indicate so by using your CURB app. This system

allows us to notify your students' teachers that you have arrived so they can release your child as quickly as possible.

### **Dismissal Routine Change**

In order to change a scholar's regular daily dismissal routine, (i.e. a different person picking a student up, atheneum/HW Club), parent/guardian must contact the homeroom teacher before 12:00 p.m.

### **Early Pickup**

Our lobby will close daily at 3:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. (on early release days) to those seeking to check out students from school early. The only exception is in the case of an emergency.

When you pick up your child before 3:30 pm (1:30 early release), valuable instructional time is lost. It is also a disruption to the classroom. However, we will work with you for occasional early pick-ups. We discourage frequent early pick-ups as they will negatively affect your scholar's ability to keep up with the course work and may result in affecting their grades.

Parents/guardians picking up a student prior to 3:30 p.m. must park in a designated parking space, i.e. NOT in the handicap space or along the red curbed fire lanes.

Parents are required to show an I.D. and must sign out their student(s) at their respective campuses (K-5) Lower and (6-10) Upper. The receptionist will contact the teacher to dismiss the student to the front lobby. Children will be released to authorized people only.

Parents cannot call ahead to request their scholar be ready at the lobby upon arrival for early check out.

### **After school Pick up**

All students MUST be picked up by 4:05 pm (2:05 pm on early release days) unless they are enrolled in an after-school activity. After 4:05 pm (2:05 pm on early release days), parents must park, enter the main entrance, and sign out their student(s). Any student that has not been picked up on time will be checked into Athenaeum and they will collect a late fee at a rate of \$1/minute upon your arrival. All students should be picked up within 10 minutes of scheduled end time for clubs, tutoring, or sports. Any student not picked up by this time will fall into the above policy. Siblings of students in clubs, tutoring, or sports, may not "hang out" on campus until their sibling's extra curricular activity is over. No student may be unsupervised on campus after school. Any student unattended will be checked into Athenaeum/HW Club.

### **Refusal to pick up**

In the rare event a scholar's health or behavior is severe enough to require a removal from campus, the Nurse and/or Admin will attempt to contact the scholar's parent/guardian. If parent/guardian is not available, the nurse and/or admin will attempt to contact approved emergency contacts listed in the scholar's file. Once a nurse and/or Admin have spoken to the scholar's parent/guardian or emergency contact, the scholar must be picked up within 30 minutes of confirmed contact.

If a parent/guardian is unable to be contacted or refuses to pick up their scholar who is experiencing a severe health emergency within 30 mins, the nurse may take the following course of action; call 911, call the department of children's service to file a claim, and make the necessary arrangements for the scholar's removal from campus.

If a parent/guardian refuses to pick up their child for disciplinary reasons, administration may take the following course of action; call law enforcement, call CPS to report child abandonment (Being unwilling to provide care, support, or supervision for the child).

Please see the video for carline procedures [here](#).

### **Transportation**

The Academy does not provide bus transportation to or from school. Students planning to use public transportation should contact the Headmaster for possible discounts.

Students will not be released to leave school with any adult except the parent, an approved adult listed on the school registration documentation, or by written permission of the child's parent. If another adult will be picking up your child to drive home after school, please file permission with the office through required annual enrollment or re-enrollment documents.

Academy students are not permitted to leave campus in any car driven by someone other than the parent, unless explicit written permission from the parent is on file with the school office. It is school policy that faculty/staff do not transport students in their personal vehicles to or from school or to and from school events.

***Once a student is on campus, he/she may not leave except under parental supervision or under the supervision of an authorized teacher or coach.***

### **Student Trips Away from Campus**

Students will have the opportunity to take field trips from time to time. Students involved in clubs and sports will also have the opportunity to travel; in some cases, trips may extend overnight and may take students out of the state.

Some trip guidelines for families are: 1) all families must sign a liability waiver before the student travels; 2) all students must have the proper insurance and have submitted proof of that insurance to the trip director prior to leaving campus; and 3) the student traveling must follow all the rules established by the school and trip director.

For its part, the Academy will maintain the safest travel conditions possible and provide appropriate supervision by the chaperones. On all trips, the Academy maintains a reasonable student-teacher chaperone ratio. For overnight trips, the chaperones will engage in periodic room checks to ensure that the travelers are adhering to the set curfew; students and adult chaperones will never share rooms. Parents who agree to be chaperones on trips must follow the guidelines established by the trip director and have their fingerprint clearance on file with the front office.

Students may not drive on trips off campus.

### **School-Sponsored Transportation**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the Academy to and from the event. The Headmaster, however, may make an exception if the parent makes a written request that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent, so long as the written request is presented before the scheduled trip.

Only designated students are allowed to ride in school vehicles. Students may neither ride the vehicle to a different location nor have friends ride the vehicle to participate in after-school activities.

Students are expected to assist school staff in ensuring that school vehicles remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding school vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Follow the driver's instructions at all times.
- Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, band instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Refrain from defacing the vehicle or its equipment.
- Refrain from putting his or her head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, holding any object out of the window, or throwing objects within or out of the vehicle.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the vehicle and before crossing in front of the vehicle.
- Refrain from eating and drinking in the vehicle.

When students ride in a school van or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened at all times.

Student misconduct while riding in a school vehicle will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, student transportation privileges may be suspended.

### **Campus Leave and Visitor Policies**

The Academy welcomes visitors for educational purposes. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, the Academy maintains a closed campus. Therefore, anyone wishing to enter the school property between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. must come directly to the school office and sign in to receive a visitor's badge.

The Headmaster or designee may take the following actions whenever there is a school visitor:

- Require the visitor to display his or her driver's license or another form of identification issued by a governmental entity containing the person's photograph.
- Establish an electronic database for the purpose of storing information concerning visitors. Information stored in the electronic database may be used only for the purpose of school security, and may not be sold or otherwise disseminated to a third party for any purpose.
- Verify whether the visitor is a sex offender registered with the computerized central database maintained by the Department of Public Safety or any other database accessible by the Academy.

Any visitor identified as a sex offender shall be escorted by school personnel at all times during a school visit and shall have access only to common areas of the campus.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted. Cell phone use is restricted to the front desk area and parking lot. We ask that all visitors put away their cell phones during their visit. This is essential to the cultivation of a small academy culture in which learning, discussion, and personal interaction take place without interruption.

In order to ensure faculty and administrators are able to carry out their monitoring duties properly, we ask that any substantive meetings be scheduled ahead of time rather than taking place without appointment directly before or after school. It is therefore strongly recommended that appointments be made during teacher free periods. However, with advance notice, it may be possible to schedule an appointment immediately before or after school.

#### Additional Guidelines:

- **Student Sign-out:** Parents wishing to sign out their children before the end of the school day (e.g. for a doctor's appointment) must park in the designated parking lot and walk directly to the main office.
- **Closed Campus:** Students are not permitted to leave campus during school hours or during after- school activities, unless accompanied by an authorized adult. Parental requests to excuse students to leave campus on their own for lunch will not be honored.
- **Non-custodial Parent Pick-up:** Non-custodial parents who wish to pick up a student during or after school must have a signed statement from the custodial parent for each occasion, or there must be a statement of permission on file with the office. If you plan on having other adults pick up your child, you must provide a written list of such authorized adults to the main office.
- **Alumni Visitors:** Alumni are invited to visit the Academy during the school day for several predetermined events throughout the school year. All alumni guests for such events must sign in at the front office upon arrival and wear a visitor badge during the visit. If alumni are interested in visiting the school during the day outside of these specified events, they must contact school leadership well in advance in order to receive approval. All alumni visiting a campus must check in at the front office upon arrival and wear a badge during the visit. Alumni must dress tastefully and appropriately and are expected to observe the school policies regarding the use of cell phones and electronic devices.
- **Former Students on Campus:** Former students who visit the school should check in at the front office. They are not allowed to visit on campus during school hours (unless the Headmaster has given written permission). Former students visiting a campus must obtain a badge and be in the presence of a teacher or administrator during the visit. Former students must dress tastefully and appropriately and are expected to observe the school policies regarding the use of cell phones and electronic devices.

#### Student Fees

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to students. Students are expected to provide their own consumable items, such as pencils, paper, pens, erasers, and notebooks. Students may be required to pay certain fees or deposits, including:

1. A fee for materials for a class project that the student will keep, if the fee does not exceed the cost of materials.
2. Membership dues in voluntary student clubs or organizations and admission fees for extra-curricular activities.
3. A security deposit for the return of materials, supplies, or equipment.
4. A fee for personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel, although a student may provide his or her own equipment or apparel if it meets reasonable requirements and standards relating to health and safety.
5. A fee for voluntarily purchased items, such as student publications, class rings, pictures, yearbooks, and graduation announcement.
6. A fee for voluntary student health and accident benefit plan.
7. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the actual annual maintenance cost, for the use of musical instruments and uniforms owned or rented by the School.
8. A fee for items of personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that become the property of the student.
9. A parking fee or a fee for an identification card.
10. A fee for a driver-training course, not to exceed the actual cost per student in the program for the current school year.
11. A fee for an optional course offered for credit that requires the use of facilities not available on campus or the employment of an educator who is not part of the School's regular staff.
12. A fee for summer school courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
13. A reasonable fee for transportation of a student who lives within two miles of the campus.
14. A reasonable fee, not to exceed \$50, for costs associated with an educational program offered outside of regular school hours through which a student who was absent from class receives instruction voluntarily for the purpose of making up the missed instruction and meeting the level of attendance required for class credit, so long as the fee would not create a financial hardship or discourage the student from attending the program.
15. A fee for lost, damaged, or overdue books.
16. A fee specifically permitted by any other statute.

The Academy may waive any fee or deposit if the student and parent are unable to pay. A request for such a waiver may be made using the school's Student Cost Waiver Application, which is distributed at the school office. Notification of eligibility for waived or reduced costs is determined using the same standards as those of Free and Reduced Lunch.

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## **Attendance**

If your child is not in school at 9:50 am, he/she is considered absent for the day. Frequent absences can cause your child to fall behind in his/her schoolwork, which makes it increasingly



difficult for our dedicated teachers to prepare your child for success. You will receive frequent communication regarding your child's attendance.

### **Compulsory Attendance**

The state compulsory attendance law requires that a student between the ages of five and 18 must attend school and school-required tutorial sessions unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused. The Academy employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission—including absence from any class, required special programs, or required tutorials—will be considered truant and subject to disciplinary action.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18th birthday is also required to attend each school day. The Academy may revoke a student's enrollment if the student is 18 years of age or older and has accumulated more than five unexcused absences in a semester. The student's continued presence on school property would be unauthorized and may, as allowed by applicable law, be considered trespassing.

### **Notice to Parents**

Under Texas Education Code § 25.095(a), you are hereby notified that if a student is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in any one school year or is absent for three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the parent is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code § 25.093, and a student age 12 through age 17 is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code § 25.094 or to referral to a juvenile court in a county with a population of less than 100,000 for conduct that violates that section.

### **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade**

Our general policy is that, in order to receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend at least 90% of the days the class is offered. These days include both excused and unexcused absences. A student who attends fewer than 90% of the days the class is offered will be referred to the Attendance Review Committee to determine whether the absences were due to extenuating circumstances (in which case credit may be granted) and how the student may regain credit or earn a final grade.

The Attendance Review Committee will consider the following factors when determining whether there are extenuating circumstances for an absence:

- All absences will be reviewed, both excused and unexcused, with consideration given to special circumstances discussed in the Texas Education Code.
- For a student transferring into the Academy after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- The committee will attempt to reach a decision that is in the student's best interest.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or parent could exercise control.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documentation expressing reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all

assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.

- The student, parent, or other representative will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to discuss ways to earn or regain credit.

If credit is lost or a final grade is not earned due to excessive absences, the Attendance Review Committee will decide how the student may regain credit or earn a final grade. If the committee determines that there are no extenuating circumstances and that credit and/or a final grade may not be earned, the student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to Superintendent by filing a written request with the Headmaster. The appeal notice must be received by the Academy within fifteen (15) days following the last day of instruction in the semester for which credit was denied or a final grade was not earned. After the Superintendent has reviewed the appeal and made the decision, the student or parent may decide to appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Board of Directors by filing a written request with the Superintendent. The appeal notice must be received by the Superintendent within fifteen (15) days following the issuance of the Superintendent's decision. The appeal will then be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Headmaster or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

### **Absences & Tardies**

In the event of a student absence, we ask that parents email the Registrar by 7:15am. If email is not accessible, call the attendance line before 8am. Upon returning to school, the student must bring a note, signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. Doctor's notes may be emailed to the Registrar as well. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted. Notes must be received within two (2) days of the absence, or the absence will be unexcused.

If an extended student absence is anticipated, we ask that the parents notify the Assistant Headmaster, the classroom teacher(s) and Registrar. It is the responsibility of the student to make up all missed assignments after any absence, planned or unplanned. Planned absences for family trips and vacations are highly discouraged, will affect the student's ability to keep up with the work of the classroom and may affect the student's final grade. Please see section below concerning GHWH's makeup policy.

### **Tardiness**

Students who arrive after 7:50 a.m. must report directly to the front office for a late pass in order to be admitted to class. If your child arrives late, a parent must park and sign them in at the office upon arrival. **In most situations, if you do not see a faculty member outside directing traffic, you are late and need to sign your student(s) in.**

**K-5 students** who arrive to their classroom after 7:50am will automatically be required to stay in the first 10 minutes of their next recess to complete that day's Morning Work/Bell Work and fill out their HW agenda. Please keep in mind that it takes students approximately 10 minutes to unpack their backpack, turn in their HW, complete their Morning Work/Bell Work and be ready to participate in the pledges. At 7:50am, pledges, moment of silence, classroom

announcements and the HW agenda are completed. When the student is tardy, he/she will be given the time between 7:50-8am to do all the things listed above to be prepared for the day and will do the Morning Work and agenda during the first 10 minutes of recess. If tardies persist, the Dean of Students will notify the parents and request a meeting.

**In cases of excessive tardiness, further disciplinary measures according to the Student Code of Conduct may be taken or may lead up to a parental meeting with the attendance committee.**

### **Make-Up Work**

Every day teachers work to fill every minute of your student's day with rich, meaningful learning opportunities. Our learning is done in community with pictures, reading, labs, activities, demonstrations, manipulatives, partner work, bell work/warm up activities, exit tickets, observations, drills, recitations and discussions. When a student is absent or late, we can give your student worksheets, a copy of the notes, and schedule another time for a test/quiz, but these things miss the heart and soul of what we do each day in the classroom. Because of the nature of each learning experience, it is nearly impossible to recreate the lesson/activities that are graded each day. Attendance is vitally important to any student's success in the classroom.

**K-5: If a student is unable to attend school and seeks his or her assignments, the student is responsible to check in with their teacher upon returning to school to collect make-up assignments. It is the teacher's responsibility to gather work and document what a student is missing throughout the day so they can make up the work when they return.**

An absence on the due date of a major assignment (essay, lab report, project, etc.) or exam may not extend the due date of that assignment. The student should expect to submit the work and/or make-up the exam on the day of his/her return. Likewise, absences during the preparation time of a major assignment may not extend the due date.

**When a student is absent for illness, they have one calendar day for each day missed to complete any work or assignment that was missed.** Students are responsible to take home the absent work left for them on their desk or request the packet from their teacher. All tests/quizzes that were missed should be made up within one week of the absence unless other arrangements are made with the teacher. The late policy will take affect as soon as students have reached the number of "make-up days" allotted. Students in grades 3-5 should work to arrange with their teachers time outside of class or during tutoring to receive help for material they have missed and do not understand or make up tests.

HW/classwork/make-up work late policy:

- 10% off if not turned in the AM the day it is due
- 50% off if turned in 24 hrs late
- 75% off if turned in 48 hrs late
- 0% after 48 hrs late

Absences that are **unexcused** may result in zeros for many class activities that cannot be recreated. Please see the handbook for further information.

### **Types of Absences**

The Academy recognizes two kinds of absences: excused and unexcused. Students and parents should read this section carefully to understand the school's expectations. Students and parents should also be aware of the school's policy regarding homework, quizzes, and tests following an absence.

### **Excused Absences**

State law provides several exemptions to the compulsory attendance law for certain absences, so long as the student makes up all work missed. This includes absence for the following reasons:

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus;
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state;
- Mental health or therapy appointments; or
- Court-ordered family visitations or any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

Absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments.

For religious holy days, required court appearances, activities related to obtaining citizenship, and services an election clerk, one day of travel to the site and one day of travel from the site shall also be excused by the Academy. Please note that excused absences are considered absences and count toward the yearly total.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Any absence not listed above will be considered an unexcused absence. Examples of unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Car trouble
- Failure to bring a written note within two school days following an absence
- Leaving school without the permission of the School Administrator.
- Oversleeping
- Personal business
- Vacations

### **Notification to Parents**

When a student is absent, the school will make attempts to contact the guardian if a reason for the absence has not been communicated. When a scholar reaches 5 unexcused absences, a meeting with the Attendance Committee will be held.

In accordance with **Section 25.095(b)** of the **Texas Education Code**, Great Hearts is required to provide notice to parents when their child has been absent from school without excuse on **3 or more days** or parts of days within a **4- week period**. Your partnership will include monitoring your child's school attendance and will require him/her to attend school on time daily. Parents will meet with school officials regarding their child's recurring absences.

### **Required Attendance for Music Concerts**

Students in K-5, as part of their music grade, must attend and participate in the Winter and Spring Music Concerts (or the concert that corresponds with the semester they are taking Music). The only exceptions would fall under the same criteria for an excused absence under the above stated attendance policy. There are no make-up assignments given for reasons falling the unexcused absence list.

### **Release of Students from School**

A parent or other authorized adult must go to the front office to sign the student out. The Academy will check the identity of the adult seeking to sign the student out. After the adult's identity is verified, the Academy will call for the student. For safety reasons and to preserve the learning environment, the Academy does not allow parents to go to a classroom to retrieve a child. If the student returns to school later that day, the parent or authorized adult must accompany the student to the front office and sign the student in and provide documentation concerning the reason for the absence. The Academy will not release a student to anyone other than a parent or other adult authorized by the parent.

A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the Headmaster and/or school nurse. The Headmaster and/or school nurse will decide whether the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent of the student's illness. The sign-out procedures discussed above must be followed.

Parents should list all persons authorized to pick up a student on their registration paperwork. Requests to add additional individuals will only be taken in person. Staff members are not able to confirm an identity from a phone call or email. Furthermore, requests to notify students of changes in pick up (i.e. going home with a different individual) must be submitted in writing or in person and will not be accepted over the phone. Parents should make every effort to coordinate transportation arrangements prior to the start of the school day.

Doctor's appointments or meetings with other professionals should be scheduled at times when the student will not miss instructional time, if possible. Except for medical related or Headmaster-approved circumstances, parents should not sign students out during the final 30 minutes of the school day. Students signed out during this time for medical appointments will need to bring in a doctor's note the following school day.

### **Families with Custody Agreements**

The school follows court orders and will only release students and student information according to verified legal documents and is not authorized to deviate from them.

## **Withdrawal from School**

### **Voluntary Withdrawal**

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent or legal guardian. The Academy requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. A withdrawal form may be obtained from the Registrar. The Headmaster or other administrator will verify the information on the withdrawal form when the parent arrives to sign withdrawal papers to complete the process. The parent shall also provide the name of the new school in which the student will be enrolled and must sign the formal withdrawal form.

Withdrawing students and parents are expected to:

- Return all textbooks and checked-out materials and equipment;
- Pay any unpaid balance for student fees, if any

In all cases, withdrawal forms must be appropriately completed and signed before withdrawal is complete.

### **Involuntary Withdrawal**

The Academy may initiate withdrawal of a student under the age of 18 for non-attendance if:

- The student has been absent ten consecutive school days; and
- Repeated efforts by the attendance officer and/or Headmaster to locate the student have been unsuccessful.

## **Student Code of Conduct and Discipline**

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All of the information below is directed toward the common good of the Academy and its maintenance as a place of learning and moral development. We believe that habits of behavior play a significant part in forming habits of mind. The Academy's teachers will make every effort to enforce the rules below consistently, informatively, and with a heart of mercy for the student's overall well-being.

Students at the Academy strive to make the most of their educational opportunities. No less than their parents and the faculty, our students appreciate the overall environment that they help maintain for the good of the entire school community. It does not take long for our students to recognize the benefits of mutual encouragement, respect, courtesy, and helpfulness. As many students and parents will gratefully attest, the Academy is a very good place to be.

Nevertheless, our students are young and human, and they will make mistakes in speech or behavior—they are still learning how appropriately to comport themselves. Many such behavioral mistakes, while requiring correction, need not be punished. Sometimes, however,

their mistakes can be disruptive to other students and to our teachers. Therefore, for the sake of orderly and productive community life, it is necessary to discuss school expectations and sanctions so that students and families can have a blueprint for conduct which contributes to a wholesome academic environment and to each student's self-esteem and success.

The philosophy of the Academy is that students are young adults in the making who will learn civil, polite and respectful conduct by the example of their teachers and other adults. Consequently, students will be treated with respect and courtesy by the Academy staff and will be expected to treat not only all adults on campus with such respect, but one another as well. Several very obvious signs of such respect are a student's willingness to refrain from talking in class when others have the floor; a respect for the property of the school and of other students; a willingness to refrain from sarcastic or critical comments towards others; and a willingness to ask (and give) forgiveness when someone has been wronged.

In conjunction with parents, the Academy has the goal of developing not only habits of good scholarship and critical inquiry, but the character traits of courtesy, promptness, forgiveness, self-control, responsibility, diligence, courage, generosity, and magnanimity. Good behavior is expected of all students and will not be specially rewarded at school. It is its own reward in the esteem the student earns from his teachers and his fellow students.

The Academy's guiding policy is to be fair, firm, and consistent in the application of discipline for inappropriate behavior. However, the following guidelines for discipline are not intended to be exhaustive. The school reserves the right to exercise reasonable judgment as an individual circumstance might dictate.

To function properly, education must provide an equal learning opportunity for all students by recognizing, valuing, and addressing the individual needs of every student. In addition to the regular curriculum, principles and practices of good citizenship must also be taught and modeled by school staff. To foster an orderly and distraction-free environment, the Academy has established this Student Code of Conduct ("the Code") in accordance with state law. The Code outlines prohibited behaviors and consequences for such behavior.

The Code has been adopted by the Board of Directors, and provides information to parents and students regarding expectations for behavior, consequences of misconduct, and procedures for administering discipline.

In accordance with state law, the Code will be posted at each school campus or will be available for review at the office of the Headmaster. Parents will be notified of any violation that may result in their student being suspended or expelled from the school.

Students must be familiar with the standards set forth in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules.

The Code does not define all types and aspects of student behavior, as the Academy may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Code. These rules may be posted in classrooms or given to the student and may or may not constitute violations of the Student Code of Conduct. When students participate in student activities, they will also be expected to follow

the guidelines and constitutions that further specify the organization's expectations, student behavior and consequences.

### **Jurisdiction**

The Academy has disciplinary authority over a student:

1. During the regular school day and while the student is going to and from school;
2. While the student is in attendance at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
3. For any misconduct, regardless of time or location, that impacts the learning environment or another student's learning or well-being at school;
4. For any mandatory or discretionary expulsion violation committed while on or off school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of another district in Texas;
5. When retaliation against a school employee or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
6. When the student commits a felony, as provided by Texas Education Code 37.006 or 37.0081; and
7. When criminal mischief or acts are committed on or off school property or at a school-related event.

Note: In addition to disciplinary consequences, misdemeanor and felony offenses committed on campus will be reported to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

### **Approach to Student Discipline**

In general, discipline is intended to correct misconduct, to promote each student's development in character and the virtues, and to foster the common good of the school community.

Disciplinary action will draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of disciplinary techniques. Disciplinary action correlates to the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, and the effect of the misconduct on the school environment.

## **GHWH Student Code of Conduct (Behavior)**

**We, the students of Great Hearts Western Hills, in an effort to flourish, will allow the virtues to guide our behavior and help us make wise choices.**

### **Responsibility**

We accept obligations related to our own good and the good of others, and we act on those obligations in a manner suitable to their timely and satisfactory fulfillment. We are willingly accountable for what we do and say, and we seek to learn from our mistakes.

### **Perseverance**

We spurn despair and strive to complete tasks to the best of our abilities, regardless of the difficulty. We respond creatively to overcome obstacles and ask for help when necessary.



**Integrity**

We are individuals of strong ethical values, who make consistently good choices in keeping with our knowledge of right and wrong. We seek the wisdom of others in cases of moral uncertainty.

**Honesty**

We never knowingly induce another to believe what is false. We are always truthful in what we say and do, regardless of the circumstances or consequences.

**Courage**

We always do what we know to be right despite fear, hardship, and opposition. We resist negative peer pressure, defend our rights and the rights of others, and encourage others to do the same.

**Citizenship**

We honor rules and laws and respond to authority in obedience. We give of our time and abilities to others. We uphold liberty and social equality through respect for individual differences and knowledge of our democratic system.

**Humility**

We do not brag or compare ourselves to others. We always strive to do our best whether we are recognized or not.

**Friendship**

We regard others and ourselves as deserving of kind and just treatment. Our conduct is considerate and polite. We look for the good in others and demonstrate compassion. Our attitudes toward others and their property reflect the way we wish to be treated.

**Wisdom**

We learn from our mistakes and think before we act. We look to the great thinkers of the past for guidance on making good choices.

**We further agree to use the virtues to reflect on poor choices and to use them guide us back onto the path of success. We will own our mistakes, endeavor to learn from them and move ahead with fortitude. We will face correction with a teachable spirit and humility.**

**Academy Honor Code (Academics)**

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The objective of the Academy Honor Code is to build trust among students and to maintain an academic community in which a code of values is shared. The Academy Honor Code is given below:

As a student and citizen of the Academy, I agree to the following when I sign on the Signature Page at the end of this *Family Handbook*:

- *I will not lie, cheat, or steal in any of my academic endeavors.*
- *I will forthrightly oppose each and every instance of academic dishonesty.*
- *I will not request, receive, or give aid in examinations/tests/quizzes.*
- *I will not give or receive illicit aid in class work, homework, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the teacher as the basis of grading. I will understand the difference between studying and reviewing with others (which often is acceptable) and producing written documents that are submitted under my name for credit (which can only be done alone).*

- *I will not copy from or collaborate with others in completing homework. When I put my name on a homework assignment, I attest that all of the work on the assignment is my own in origin and content.*
- *In the case of all essays and research papers, I will carefully cite all external sources. I will not represent someone else's work as my own. I will do my very best to learn from my teachers the clear distinctions between appropriate research and plagiarism, intentional or unintentional.*
- *I will never use any "study aids" such as Cliff's Notes, Sparks Notes, or other materials, nor will I watch a movie/video version of a work of literature before or during study of it in school, unless I've been given specific permission (in a unique circumstance) to do so. I will do the reading for myself and strive to understand it for myself.*
- *I will give prompt (and confidential) notification to the appropriate faculty member or the Dean and Headmaster if I observe academic dishonesty in any course. I will let my conscience be my guide if I should make such a report.*
- *I will never attempt to pass off work completed in class or during instructional time as if it had been completed the night before as homework.*

The faculty manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code. On some occasions, teachers may ask students to write "AHC" (Academy Honor Code) on the heading of their assignments to remind them of the details and spirit of this honor code.

Please see the Discipline Section for information on how violations of the Academy Honor Code are addressed by teachers and the Headmaster. Since academic dishonesty is viewed as a serious offence, even first offenders may be punished with a suspension. The Academy Honor Code is typically reviewed in class with students during the first week of school each year.

*-Portions of this honor code are derived from the current Duke University and Stanford University honor codes.*

### **Logical Consequences**

The following approaches may be used-alone or in combination-for misbehavior violating the Code or campus or classroom rules:

- Assignment of school service or community service duties such as scrubbing desks or picking up litter
- Behavioral agreements
- Cooling off time or "time out"
- Counseling by teachers, counselors, or administrative personnel
- In school suspension or detention, as specified in the suspension section of the Code
- Expulsion, as specified in the expulsion section of the Code
- Grade reductions as permitted as policy
- Out of School Suspension, as specified in the suspension section of the Code

- Parent-Teacher conferences
- Referral to an outside agency and/or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by the School
- School assessed and school administered probation
- Seating changes within the classrooms
- Sending the student to the office or other assigned area
- Techniques or penalties identified in individual student organization's extracurricular standards of behavior
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process
- Verbal correction
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities and eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, and/or membership in school sponsored clubs or organizations
- Other strategies and consequences as specified by the Code

Students may be removed from class for a short duration following a perceived disciplinary infraction while an administrator collects an account of the situation. During this time, a student may be asked to sit quietly in an administrator's office and provide a description of the incident. In response to the student's behavior, a teacher or administrator may assign a lunch-, recess-, or after-school-detention. In the case of more serious misbehavior the parent will be contacted and other disciplinary measures taken, up to and including suspension and expulsion.

#### **Note Concerning Detention**

Students who violate the Student Code of Conduct may also be assigned detention, lose the privilege of lunch-time recess or participation in extra-curricular activities.

Any student who fails to report to detention at the scheduled time will receive additional penalties (typically an additional detention). Students should not ask to have a detention rescheduled; detentions are by their very nature inconvenient, and students should view the inconvenience that detention causes to be a direct result of the misbehavior that incurred the punishment in the first place. Exceptions may be made in the event of a family emergency or serious scheduling conflict. All matters pertaining to the scheduling and serving of detentions should be directed to the faculty member designated as the Detention supervisor.

Detentions can be serious in nature and a high number of detentions can indicate a student's general unwillingness to cooperate with the school. The accumulation of numerous detentions may result in a suspension based on the judgment of the Headmaster. A student may be suspended if many of the detentions are received for the same offense (such as tardiness), or if the Headmaster determines that the detentions are of a serious nature and warrant immediate action.

In the case of more serious misbehavior, such as forging a parent's signature, lying to an adult, cheating on exams and/or academic assignments, fighting, theft, willful destruction of property, defiance of authority, disrespect of adults, leaving campus without permission, skipping class, or any other serious offense listed in the Student Code of Conduct, the parent will be contacted and other disciplinary measures taken, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Threats of violence and physical, verbal or sexual harassment are illegal and will result in parent contact and, depending on the nature of the offense, may result in other disciplinary measures, including notification of law enforcement authorities, suspension, and expulsion.

#### **Note Concerning Corporal Punishment**

The Academy will not administer corporal punishment upon a student for misconduct.

### **Conferences, Hearings and Appeals**

All students are entitled to conferences, hearings, and/or appeals of disciplinary matters as provided by state and federal law and school policy.

### **Gun-Free Schools Act**

In accordance with the Gun-Free Schools Act, the Academy shall expel, from the student's regular program for a period of one year, any student who is determined to have brought a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school. The Headmaster may modify the term of expulsion for a student or assess another comparable penalty that results in the student's expulsion from the regular school program on a case-by-case basis.

For the purposes of this law, "firearm" means:

1. Any weapon – including a starter gun – which will, or is designed to, or which may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive from the frame or receiver of any such weapon;
2. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer;
3. Any destructive device. "Destructive device" means any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than 1/4 ounce, mine, or device similar to any of the preceding described devices. It also means any type of weapon – other than a shotgun shell or a shotgun that is generally recognized as particularly suitable for sporting purposes – by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than 1/2 inch in diameter; and any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into a destructive device as described, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

**For a list of Offenses and Consequences, please see Appendix A.**

### **Student Acceptable Use of Technology Policy**

#### **Technology Resources**

The Academy has made a substantial investment in technology for instructional purposes. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents must read and agree to abide by the Student Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.

### **Technology Statement**

The Academy is committed to utilizing appropriate technology to enhance student learning and increase teacher effectiveness in accordance with its mission and vision.

### **Student Safety**

The Academy is aware that resources that are inappropriate or not designed for use in the educational setting may be accessed on the Internet. To protect students and staff from such inappropriate material, the school's Internet access is filtered with one of the highest-rated Internet filtering systems available. However, users must recognize that it is impossible for the Academy to restrict access to all controversial material and individuals must be responsible for their own actions in navigating the network.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure school-level compliance with all procedures and regulations regarding the local area network and Internet usage. All students, parents, teachers, administrators and school employees who obtain their Internet access through the Academy are expected to use these services appropriately.

### **User Responsibilities**

The use of the Internet is a privilege. Inappropriate or abusive conduct will lead to the privilege being revoked. **The Academy is providing Internet resources for educational purposes only.** Student/staff use of Internet resources must be related to an expressed educational and/or administrative goal or objective.

1. The use of the Academy Internet and computer network must be in support of educational goals, research, and class assignments and be consistent with the educational objectives of the school.
2. Users must have a valid, authorized account to access the network, and use only those computer resources that are authorized. Accounts may be used only in accordance with authorized purposes.
3. Individual accounts may be used only by the owner of the account except where specifically authorized by the Academy administration. In the case of class accounts, all use must be under the supervision of the sponsoring teacher/supervisor.
4. The user is responsible for safeguarding the computer account. Users are expected to protect access to accounts by periodically changing the password and keeping it confidential. They must respect the privacy of others by not tampering with their files, passwords or accounts.

### **Policy – Terms and Conditions**

#### **Acceptable Use of Technology**

Users are to properly use school network resources for educational and/or administrative purposes. Respectful and responsible network etiquette and behavior should be in keeping with the school's mission statement. Students and staff are expressly prohibited from accessing obscene, profane, vulgar, or pornographic sites or materials.

Students are prohibited from sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, students involved in "sexting" or the sharing of inappropriate images or other content may also be disciplined for violating the Academy anti-harassment and bullying policies.

### **Monitored Use**

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by students and employees shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated school staff to ensure appropriate use for educational or administrative purposes. Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic mail messages is prohibited. Only the school's authorized IT Manager may read, delete, copy or modify the electronic mail of other system users.

### **Vandalism**

Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, disrupt or destroy data of another user of the Academy network or any other agencies or networks that are connected to the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses. Any of these actions may be viewed as violations of school policy, administrative regulations and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. Users must respect the privacy of other users, and will not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify any file, data, or password belonging to another user, or represent themselves as another user unless explicitly authorized. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance and/or degrade, disrupt or bypass system security are violations of school policy and administrative regulations, and may constitute criminal activity under applicable laws.

Any prohibited behavior under this policy will result in the cancellation of technology privileges. The Academy will, in accordance with school policy, cooperate with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the Academy network.

### **Network Etiquette**

Each network user is expected to:

1. Be polite (i.e., an all-caps message implies shouting);
2. Use appropriate language;
3. Refrain from any activity that may be considered "cyber bullying," including but not limited to threats of violence, extortion, obscene or harassing messages, harassment, stalking, child pornography, and sexual exploitation;
4. Maintain confidentiality of the user, colleagues, and students;
5. Respect copyright laws; and
6. Be respectful in all aspects of network use.

## **Consequences**

Violation of the Academy policies and procedures concerning use of the computer on the network will result in the same disciplinary actions that would result from similar violations in other areas of school policy, including the Student Code of Conduct. Any or all of the following consequences may be enforced if a student violates the terms of this policy:

1. Loss of computer privileges/Internet access, with length of time to be determined by campus administration.
2. Any campus-based disciplinary consequence, including suspension, as deemed appropriate by the administration.
3. Suspension and/or expulsion may be considered for flagrant violations or violations that corrupt the educational value of the computers or the Internet.
4. Expulsion may be considered in instances where students have used the Academy Internet access to engage in conduct that constitutes felony criminal mischief, and/or have deliberately attempted to bypass installed security software or copy/modify another student's work files.

## **Electronic Devices, and other Prohibited Items**

Smart watches (including Fitbits), I-pods or other portable music players, pagers, cameras, electronic games, laser pointers, skateboards, roller blades, and other toys that are not part of the academic or extra-curricular program are prohibited on campus. Students may be disciplined for the possession or use of such technology on school grounds, and such items will be confiscated and returned only at the parent's request.

Tobacco, other legally controlled substances, lighters, matches, pocket knives, weapons of any kind, and sexually explicit materials are also prohibited on campus at all times. Possession of these items will result in immediate disciplinary action.

## **Cell Phones and Personal Technology**

The use of electronic devices is a major source of distraction in the classroom. For this reason, students are not permitted to use items such as smart watches, radios, mp3 players, video cameras, DVD players, cameras, video games, other electronic devices, or any internet-enabled devices at school, unless prior written permission from the Headmaster has been obtained.

The use of cell phones during the school day is prohibited. Parents sometimes provide cell phones to their children in order to promote the safety of their children or to communicate regarding unanticipated changes in transportation. In light of this, the following restrictions/allowances apply:

A student may keep a cell phone **turned off and stored** in his or her locker/backpack during the school day. **If a student needs to contact a parent about after school arrangements, the student may request the use of the classroom or front desk phone. Cell phones should not**

**be used anywhere on campus before, during, or after school, including at school sanctioned events being held on campus.**

Any non-permitted use or possession of a cell phone will result in confiscation of the phone and disciplinary action.

If a school employee observes a student using a cell phone or other paging device during the school day or at a school-related activity, the employee will collect the item and turn it in the designated administrator's office. If a parent and student have executed a waiver permitting the student to possess a cell phone or other paging device at school, school officials may power on and search the device if there is reasonable cause to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, school policy, or school regulation.

A parent will be contacted to pick up the confiscated item.

The Academy will not be responsible for damage to or loss or theft of confiscated items. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Disruptions**

In order to protect student safety and sustain an educational program free from disruption, state law permits the Academy to take action against any person – student or nonstudent – who:

- Disrupts classes while on school property or on public property that is within 500 feet of school property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; entering a classroom without authorization; and disrupting the activity with profane language or any misconduct.
- Interferes with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Interferes with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to school property.
- Interferes with the movement of people in an exit, an entrance, or a hallway of a school building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interferes with the transportation of students in school vehicles.
- Uses force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Uses force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving school property without authorization from an administrator.
- Uses force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.

### **Photography and Public Internet Postings**

1. The name and crest of the Academy are the property of the school and may be used only for official school business. Any Academy student who, without written permission from the headmaster, posts the crest or logo of the Academy on the internet or in any other public forum for purposes of identifying themselves or other students is subject to school disciplinary action.



2. All personal photography, including the taking of videos, is banned on campus and at school events. No photos of minors may be publicly displayed without the consent of the parent(s) or guardian. Any Academy student found to be in violation of these rules is subject to school disciplinary action.
3. Any public display or posting by an Academy student, on the internet or in any other public forum, of derogatory, offensive, or harassing speech directed against another student, teacher, or other member of the school community is in violation of the standards of the Academy and is subject to school disciplinary action.

### **Displaying a Student's Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work**

Teachers may display student work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement. However, the Academy will seek parental consent before displaying student artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and other original works on the Academy website, on any campus or classroom website, in printed materials, by video, or by any other method of mass communication. The Academy will also seek consent before displaying or publishing an original video or voice recording in this manner.

### **Great Hearts Policy: Addressing the “No Pop-Culture Rule”**

Great Hearts is very intentional about creating a common and civil community among its students and in preserving an educational environment free from distractions. This includes manners of speech, habits of respect during discussions with others, attention to the content of the curriculum to the exclusion of references either to current pop-culture personalities, music, movies, and even politics and current events. To further this educational environment, Great Hearts also requires students to use back-bags, lunch bags, and other accessories that are free from such images or references.

The intention and educational purpose is to pull students out of the parochial thought-worlds of their times and that of their peers, and introducing them into the broader and more permanent concerns of the human community. In this environment of learning, students will take authors and artists of historical times and different cultures seriously and better envision and entertain ideas such as goodness, virtue, and heroism from many prior historical and cultural contexts within which they have arisen.

Great Hearts also seeks to avoid cultivating a “chronological snobbery” in our students, and in furtherance of this, we avoid contemporary comparisons during classes and school activities. Overall, Great Hearts asks and challenges students to step out of themselves—to step out of their times, their familiar idioms, even their preferred styles in art and music, in order to appreciate the goods and virtues of other times and places. This is the essence of a classical education.

Great Hearts seeks to develop the unique character and quality of each student; however, this uniqueness and true self is not encouraged through participation in consumerism and mass marketing. Great hearts desires to free the educational environment from consumerism and external marketing influences through this policy of “no pop culture” in school. Its purpose includes:

1. to give young people an educational space free from popular examples that may be merely superficial and time-bound, while we try to introduce them to more permanent and universal aspects of human nature and human community
2. to give them educational space from the peer pressure to be media and celebrity “literate”
3. to elevate their imaginations and their thoughts above the low the base, and the mediocre
4. to create points of reference and a common ground for conversation that transcends the student’s age, experience, and the biases of his peer group
5. to give them the broadest range of images and ideas from which they will eventually address the concerns of their own time and place.

This policy creates and preserves the desired educational environment and improves the educational process for the benefit of all students, and acts as a shield against what is shallow and temporary in popular culture on behalf of what is serious and permanent. Students will learn to think for themselves and develop deep critical thinking skills and analytical ability. It is in that ability that we hope to see meaningful distinctions in our students and not in clothing or accessories. It is also the intention of this policy to improve student learning, to reduce disciplinary referrals, to improve morale and to instill self-worth and self-confidence in students that are lasting traits.

### **Policy on Hazing**

Hazing, solicitation to engage in hazing, and aiding and abetting another person who is engaged in hazing is strictly prohibited. A person is considered a “student” who has enrolled, who has been accepted for enrollment, or intends to enroll within the next 12 calendar months. This policy applies to all students until graduation, transfer, promotion, or withdrawal from the school.

“Hazing” is defined as any intentional, knowing or reckless act committed by a student, whether individually or in concert with other persons, against another student, and in which both of the following apply:

- The act is committed in connection with an initiation into, an affiliation with or the maintenance of membership in any organization that is affiliated with an educational institution; and
- The act contributes to a substantial risk of potential physical injury, mental harm or degradation or causes physical injury, mental harm or personal degradation.

“Organization” means an athletic team, association, order, society, corps, cooperative, club or other similar group that is affiliated with an educational institution and whose membership consists primarily of students enrolled at that educational institution.

Violations of this policy do not include customary athletic events, contests or competitions that are sponsored by an educational institution or any activity or conduct that furthers the goals of a legitimate educational curriculum or legitimate extracurricular program.

It is no defense to a violation of this policy if the victim consented or acquiesced to hazing. All students, teachers, and staff shall take reasonable measures within the scope of their individual authority to prevent violations of this policy.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Students and others should report hazing to the Headmaster, but may also report hazing to another professional staff member. If an individual besides the Headmaster receives the report, the individual receiving the report will submit a report of the incident to the Headmaster. The individual shall respect the confidentiality of those involved, disclosing the incident only to those with a need to know or as required by law. Any incident of hazing that includes possible violation of state or federal statutes shall be treated as required by statutory requirements and reported to law enforcement.

All violations of this policy shall be treated in accordance with the discipline procedures and penalties in effect for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

If an organization knowingly permitted, authorized, or condoned hazing activity, its permission to conduct operations at the Academy may be revoked or suspended.

### **Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying**

Great Hearts Western Hills prohibits bullying as defined by this section, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process. Bullying means a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student; or
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or the School; or
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Cyberbullying means bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

The school's bullying policy applies to:

- Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
- Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
- Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying:
  - Interferes with a student's educational opportunities; or

- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

### ***Reporting Procedures***

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced any form of bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to the Headmaster or designee, a teacher, counselor, or other school employee. A report may be made orally or in writing, and may be submitted anonymously. Any school employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the Headmaster or designee. The Headmaster or designee will notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any student witnesses of available counseling options.

The Headmaster or designee shall provide notice of incident of alleged bullying to:

- A parent or guardian of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the date the incident is reported; and
- A parent or guardian of the alleged bully within a reasonable amount of time after the incident.

### ***Investigation of Report***

The Headmaster or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited harassment and, if so, proceed under that policy instead. The Principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report, and shall take prompt interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

The Headmaster or designee shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including a determination of whether bullying occurred. If the results of an investigation indicated that bullying occurred, the school shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Great Hearts Western Hills may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the school concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying under this policy.

Discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities shall comply with applicable requirements under federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Section 1400 *et seq.*). Great Hearts Western Hills may not impose discipline on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying, based on that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying.

The Headmaster, or the Headmaster's designee, may make a report to the police department of the municipality in which the school is located or, if the school is not in a municipality, the sheriff of the county in which the school is located if, after an investigation is completed, the Principal or designee has reasonable grounds to believe that a student engaged in conduct that constitutes an offense under Section 22.01 (Assault) or 42.07(a)(7) (Harassment), Texas Penal Code.

### ***Confidentiality***

To the greatest extent possible, Great Hearts Western Hills shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation.

### ***Appeal***

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the Great Hearts Western Hills grievance procedure.

## **Social Media**

The Academy reserves to itself the right to investigate allegations of bullying, harassment, intimidation, and threats that occur in social media venues and which disrupt the learning environment of the school. Not everything said or done by students online is the school's business, but actions and words directed against fellow students, parents, or school staff will be considered as such. The school will also notify law enforcement when credible threats of violence are detected.

## **Alcohol-Free School Notice**

In order to provide a safe and alcohol-free environment for students and employees, all alcoholic beverages are prohibited on school property at all times, and at all school-sanctioned activities occurring on or off school property. Student violators are subject to the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

## **Tobacco-Free School Notice**

Smoking and using smokeless tobacco, including electronic cigarettes, are not permitted in school buildings, vehicles, or on or near school property, or at school-related or school-sanctioned events off school property. Students may not possess tobacco products at any of the locations or activities listed above. All violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law. Additionally, student violators are subject to the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

## **Drug-Free School Notice**

The Academy believes that student use of illicit drugs is both wrong and harmful. Consequently, the Academy prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs by students on school premises or any school activity, regardless of its location. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

## **Suspension**

### **Process for Suspensions Lasting up to Five Continuous Days**

In addition to the above list of Code of Conduct violations, the Headmaster has authority to suspend a student for a period of up to five continuous school days at a time for any of the following reasons:

1. The need to further investigate an incident;
2. A recommendation to expel the student; or
3. An emergency constituting endangerment to health or safety.

### **Prerequisites to Suspension**

Prior to suspending a student, the Headmaster or designee must attempt to hold an informal conference with the student to:

1. Notify the student of the accusations against him/her,
2. Allow the student to relate his or her version of the incident, and
3. Determine whether the student's conduct warrants suspension.

### **Notification to Parents/Guardians**

If the Headmaster or designee determines the student's conduct warrants suspension during the school day, the Headmaster or designee will make reasonable effort to notify the student's parent(s) that the student has been suspended before the student is sent home. The Headmaster or designee will notify a suspended student's parent(s) of the period of suspension, the grounds for the suspension, and the time and place for an opportunity to confer with the Headmaster.

### **Credit During Suspension**

A student shall receive credit for work missed during the period of suspension if the student makes up work missed within the same number of school days the student was absent on suspension.

### **Process for Out-of-School Suspensions over Five Days and Expulsion**

**Notice:** When the Headmaster or designee determines that a student's conduct warrants suspension for more than five days or expulsion, but prior to taking any expulsion action, the Headmaster or designee will provide the student's parent(s) with written notice of:

1. The reasons for the proposed disciplinary action; and
2. The date and location for a hearing before the Headmaster, within five school days from the date of the disciplinary action.

The notice shall further state that, at the hearing, the student:

1. May be present;
2. Shall have an opportunity to present evidence;
3. Shall be apprised and informed of the school's evidence;
4. May be accompanied by his or her parent(s); and
5. May be represented by an attorney.

### **Expulsion Hearing Before VP of Academies**

The Academy shall make a good faith effort to inform the student and the student's parent(s) of the time and place for the hearing, and the school shall hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parent(s) or another adult representing the student attends. The VP of Academies may audio record the hearing.

Immediately following the hearing, the VP of Academies will notify the student and the student's parent(s) in writing of his or her decision. The decision shall specify:

1. The length of the suspension or expulsion, if any;
2. When the expulsion is not permanent, the procedures for re-admittance at the end of the expulsion period; and
3. The right to appeal the VP of Academies' decision to the Superintendent of Great Hearts Texas.

The notice shall also state that failure to timely request such a hearing constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter.

#### **Appeal to the Superintendent**

The student or his or her parent(s) may appeal the expulsion decision to the Superintendent by notifying the Headmaster in writing within seven calendar days of the date of receipt of the Headmaster's decision. The Superintendent will review the audio or transcribed record from the hearing before the Headmaster at a specially called meeting. The Superintendent will notify the student and his or her parent(s) of its decision, in writing, within five calendar days of the hearing. Parents will be notified of the right to appeal the Headmaster's decision to the Board of Great Hearts Texas.

#### **Appeal to the Board of Directors**

After appealing the expulsion decision to the Superintendent, the student or his or her parent(s) may appeal the expulsion decision to the Board of Directors by notifying the Headmaster in writing within seven calendar days of the date of receipt of the Headmaster's decision. The Board will review the audio or transcribed record from the hearing before the Headmaster at a specially called meeting. The Board will notify the student and his or her parent(s) of its decision, in writing, within five calendar days of the hearing. The decision of the Board is final and may not be appealed.

Discipline consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of an appeal of an expulsion to the Board.

#### **No Credit Earned**

Except when required by law, students will not earn academic credit during a period of expulsion.

#### **Emergency Placement and Expulsion**

If the Headmaster or designee reasonably believes a student's behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with a teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students in a class, with the ability of a student's classmates to learn, or with the operation of the school or a school-sponsored activity, the Headmaster or designee may order immediate removal of the student. Immediate suspension may be imposed by the Headmaster or designee if he or she reasonably believes such action is necessary to protect persons or property from eminent harm.

At the time of such an emergency removal, the student will be given verbal notice of the reason for the action and appropriate hearings will be scheduled within a reasonable time after the emergency removal.

*Note: Colleges routinely ask students and/or schools to report all suspensions or expulsions in the college application paperwork. The Academy honestly answers such questions and reports all suspensions at the high school level. (Colleges will take into consideration the timeframe and nature of the suspension, and students with suspensions have been accepted into top colleges.)*

### **Placement of Students with Disabilities**

All disciplinary actions regarding students with disabilities shall be conducted in accordance with the most current federal and state laws.

### **Suspension/Expulsion Requirement**

A student with a disability shall not be excluded from his or her current placement pending appeal to the Board of Directors for more than ten days without ARD Committee action to determine appropriate services in the interim. Pending appeal to a special education hearing officer, a student with a disability shall remain in the present education setting, unless the Academy and the student's parents agree otherwise.

### **Removal from School Transportation**

A student being transported by the Academy transportation to or from a school-sponsored or school-related activity may be removed from a school vehicle for conduct violating the Academy's established standards for conduct in a school vehicle.

## **Lower School Uniform and Dress Code**

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Great Hearts Western Hills has a primary objective of developing a "community of learners," dedicated to the highest standards of academics and deportment. As such, a distinctive uniform is a unifying factor within our school community. It is also a visible signature of our school to the larger community, an indicator of our unity and of our pride of purpose. This is one of the most important functions of a uniform: it identifies its wearer as part of a distinctive group with a distinctive purpose. It is a reminder to its wearer of that purpose and of one's responsibility to that group.

Our school is also committed to the development of individual personality and character--not through the external 'expressions' of dress and appearance, which can easily be purchased or affected, and which can quickly divide students through the power of snap judgments and prejudices—but through personal qualities, virtues, quirks, and traits. It seems countercultural to assert this in our age, but the Academy holds that the school uniform is an essential condition for cultivating genuine individuality in the school community. It is not this or that particular element of the uniform that "matters" more than any of the others; rather, the uniform as a whole is what matters.

While students are responsible for their clothing and appearance, it is the parents who are responsible for providing the conditions required for meeting the standard, e.g. haircuts, proper shoes, shirts, skirts and pants that fit properly, etc. Parents are urged to understand the uniform requirements below, and to ensure that their children go to school each day in the right attire, from head to toe. It is an uncomfortable experience for a child to be corrected for a uniform violation, and repeated uniform issues can become an enormous distraction for students.

The uniform is the basis of a dress code with a "professional," business-like standard. Our students should dress their best, look their best, and do their best. All clothing must be clean, neat, reasonably pressed, and in properly fitting condition. If a child is deemed to be wearing



inappropriate attire, the parent will be notified, and a change of clothing may be required for attendance that day. If in doubt about the appropriateness of an article of clothing, check with the school office before purchasing.

Decisions about the appropriateness of apparel may be referred to the Headmaster, whose judgment will be final. The school will make specific exceptions to the dress code as required by particular religious customs; parents should address specific concerns to the Headmaster, Assistant Headmaster or Dean before the second week of school.

**Students must stay in uniform whenever they are on campus (including the parking lot) during a school day or when visiting another school's campus. This means arriving on campus fully in uniform and leaving campus fully in uniform (correct shoes, shirts tucked in, etc.). Students may only change out of uniform after school with teacher/coach permission to participate in an approved curricular or extracurricular activity that requires an immediate change in dress.**

Parents must provide their student(s) with the required uniform, except in the case of educationally disadvantaged students as provided in the Texas Education Code. The Academy may provide a uniform for such students. If you would like to request financial assistance, please contact the Director of Campus Operations, Jennifer Cape, at [Jennifer.cape@greatheartwesternhills.org](mailto:Jennifer.cape@greatheartwesternhills.org) for more information.

**Purchasing Note:** Some components of the uniform must be purchased from Dennis Uniforms ([www.dennisuniform.com](http://www.dennisuniform.com)) or Flynn O'Hara ([www.flynnohara.com](http://www.flynnohara.com)), whereas other items can be purchased from JCPenney, Old Navy or other vendors. Please see the note under each item.

## Boys Uniform Information

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### K-5 Boys Uniform Required:

- Short sleeve polo or long sleeve polo Color: white or light blue  
Vendor: Dennis Uniforms or Flynn O'Hara
- Navy blue pants or shorts  
Vendor: Dennis, Flynn O'Hara, Old Navy, Land's End or similar vendor
- Navy blue sweater – button up or pullover  
Vendor: Dennis Uniforms or Flynn O'Hara
- Navy blue quarter zip sweatshirt with Logo

Vendor: Dennis Uniforms or Flynn O'Hara

**Pants:** All dress slacks must reach to the shoe but should not drag on the ground. The slacks must have belt loops and a solid, dark belt must be used. **No jeans (including khaki-colored denim) or pants with external sewn pockets, rivets, or other jean like characteristics are permitted.** No Dickies, cargo pants, oversized pants, super-baggy pants, dungarees, extra pockets, extra zippers, or extra seams will be permitted.

**Shorts:** Shorts should go to just above the knee but not below and should not be excessively tight or loose fitting. Shorts should be worn at the waist (and no boxers or undergarments may be visible – including at sports practices and games). **No jean shorts (including khaki-colored denim) or shorts with external sewn pockets, rivets, or other jean like characteristics are permitted. No Dickies, cargo shorts, oversized shorts, super-baggy shorts, extra pockets, extra zippers, or extra seams will be permitted.** The shorts must have belt loops and be worn with a dark belt. (Kindergarten is exempt from wearing a belt for toileting purposes.)

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## Footwear K-5 Boys

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Students may wear either Keds School Days shoes (white and navy blue) or any all-white or all black athletic shoe. Please, if possible, avoid the K-Swiss all white shoe because it is very difficult to keep them tied and are not suitable for PE/athletics. Students must wear **solid** white, navy, or black socks that are free of logos. Socks must be visible. No-show socks are not permitted.



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## K-5 Grooming for Boys

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**Boy's Hair** should be clean and neatly combed or styled. Hair must be above the top of the shirt collar. Hair should be styled so that it does not fall below the eyebrows or past the midpoint of the ear. Hair must be natural looking and conservative in its color and cut (no bleaching or unnatural streaking/highlighting, no artificial jet-black coloring, and no unnatural colors). Accommodations for religious reasons are permitted. The hair is to be neatly combed before the beginning of each school day. No artificial coloring of the hair, extreme spiking of the hair or mohawks (including combed down or over and some facsimile of a mohawk). Hair gel that helps

the hair stay in place or controls curly hair is allowable. Any item considered a distraction by the teacher may be confiscated and arrangements will be made with the parent to send the item home. student may be subject to an infraction, detention, and possible removal from the classroom if he is not in compliance with the school dress code.

**Facial Hair:** Boys should be clean shaven daily. Beards and/or mustaches are prohibited. Noticeable facial hair such as “stubble,” “peach fuzz,” and “5 o’clock shadows” are not allowed.

**General Grooming:** As boys’ bodies begin to mature, it is important that they pay attention to their own personal grooming which includes the use of deodorant, showering regularly, and washing their hair.

**Jewelry:** A necklace is permitted, it must be tucked into the shirt and not visible. A simple analog or digital watch (no smart watches or Fitbits) may be worn. Any watch that is Bluetooth capable and connects to the WIFI or internet is considered a smart watch. A (one) simple bracelet may be worn. Any item that is considered a distraction by the teacher may be confiscated and arrangements may be made with the parent to have the item sent home. The student may be subject to an infraction, detention, and possible removal from the classroom if she is not in compliance with the school dress code.

## Girls Uniform Information

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### K-5 Girls Uniform Required:

- Short sleeve polo or long sleeve polo  
Color: white or light blue  
Vendor: Dennis Uniforms or Flynn O’Hara
- Navy blue pants or shorts  
Vendor: Dennis, Flynn O’Hara, Old Navy, Land’s End or similar vendor
- Navy blue sweater – button up or pullover  
Vendor: Dennis Uniforms or Flynn O’Hara
- Navy blue quarter zip sweatshirt with Logo  
Vendor: Dennis Uniforms or Flynn O’Hara



### **K-2 ONLY Option:**

- Plaid jumper  
Vendor: Dennis Uniforms or Flynn O'Hara
- Peter pan collared short-sleeve or long sleeve blouse.  
Color: White  
Vendor: Dennis Uniforms or Flynn O'Hara

\*Jumper must be worn with the peter pan blouse, not a polo shirt

**Skirts & Jumpers:** The skirt or jumper hem may be no higher than just above the knee, both in front and in back. To measure a correct skirt/jumper length: properly adjust the skirt at the waist, kneel on a level surface, and measure at least two inches between skirt's hem and the floor. Skirts must be worn at the waist. **5<sup>th</sup> grade girls choosing to wear the upper school skirt must still wear modesty shorts underneath.** Leggings are not allowed under skirts.

**Pants:** Girls **dress slacks** must reach to the shoe but should not drag on the ground. The slacks must have belt loops and a solid, dark belt at least 3/4" wide must be used. **No jeans (including khaki-colored denim) or pants with external sewn pockets, rivets, or other jean-like characteristics are permitted.** No Dickies, cargo pants, oversized pants, super-baggy pants, dungarees, extra pockets, extra zippers, or extra seams will be permitted. Slacks should be worn at the waist and no undergarments may be visible, including at sports practices and games. No skinny pants.

**Shorts:** Shorts must be worn with a dark, solid belt at least 3/4" wide. Shorts should go to just above the knee but not below and should not be excessively tight or loose fitting. Shorts should be worn at the waist (and no boxers or undergarments may be visible – including at sports practices and games). **No jean shorts (including khaki-colored denim) or shorts with external sewn pockets, rivets, or other jean like characteristics are permitted.** No Dickies, cargo shorts, oversized shorts, super-baggy shorts, extra pockets, extra zippers, or extra seams will be permitted.

## **Footwear K-5 Girls**

**Footwear:** Students may wear either Keds School Days shoes (white and navy blue) or any all-white or all black athletic shoe. Please, if possible, avoid the K-Swiss all white shoe because it is very difficult to keep them tied and are not suitable for PE/athletics. Students must wear **solid** white, black, or navy socks that are free of logos. Socks must be visible. No-show socks are not permitted.



**Girls:** Tights/knitted stockings or knee socks must be solid white or solid navy, free of logos and designs. No ankle-high/no-show socks are permitted with long pants. White and ankle-high socks and fold over socks (including the ruffle ones sold at Dennis) may be worn with shorts. Leggings are not allowed even under uniform skirt.

## K-5 Grooming for Girls

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**Girls' Hair:** Hair should be clean and neatly combed or styled. Neat small bows, barrettes, headbands, and hair ties are permissible so long as they coordinate with the uniform colors and are worn to secure hair (e.g. not worn as jewelry). Acceptable colors are white, light or navy blue, black, shades of brown and matching plaid. Hair must be natural looking and conservative in its color and cut (no bleaching or unnatural streaking/highlighting, no artificial jet- black coloring, and no unnatural colors). Accommodations for religious reasons are permitted.

**K-5 girls:** Fingernails should be kept clean, neat and trimmed and natural nails may be painted with clear, french, or light pink polish.

**Jewelry:** Simple stud-style earrings may be worn (no dangling or hoop earrings). If a student wears a necklace, it must be tucked into the shirt and not visible. A simple analog or digital watch (no smart watches or Fitbits) may be worn. Any watch that is Bluetooth capable and connects to the WIFI or internet is considered a smart watch. One (1) simple bracelet may be worn. Female students may wear one (1) simple ring on each hand. No costume jewelry. Any item that is considered a distraction by the teacher may be confiscated and arrangements may be made with the parent to have the item sent home. The student may be subject to an infraction, detention, and possible removal from the classroom if she is not in compliance with the school dress code.

**General Grooming:** As girls' bodies begin to mature it is important that they pay attention to their own personal grooming which includes the use of deodorant, showering regularly, washing their hair, and wearing appropriate undergarments.

## Additional Guidelines for all K-5 Students

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A simple analog or digital watch (no smart watches or Fitbits) may be worn. Any watch that is

Bluetooth capable and/or connects to WIFI or internet is considered a smart watch.

No other piercings, body art, or temporary tattoos should be worn to school. Radical hair color changes during the school year are not permitted. Non-compliance to the school dress code may result in an infraction, detention, and possible removal from the classroom. Any item considered a distraction by the teacher may be confiscated and arrangements will be made with the parent to send the item home.

**Outerwear:** Jackets and sweatshirts may be worn to school for warmth but must be free of logos and messages, with the following exceptions: small sports team logos (e.g., Griffins, Diamondbacks) and small brand name logos (e.g. the Ralph Lauren “polo”) are acceptable, provided they are tasteful and do not make inappropriate allusions. All jackets and sweatshirts must be solid colored and may have no patterns or distracting/oversized logos of any kind.

Jackets and sweatshirts must remain in the lockers, cubbies, or desks for the remainder of the school day. Great Hearts Western Hills uniform sweaters (from Dennis Uniforms/Flynn O’Hara) may be worn throughout the school day all year long. The only outerwear allowable to be worn in the school building are the official school sweater or pullover with the Great Hearts logo.

#### **Additional Guidelines:**

- Hats and sunglasses may only be worn on campus at recess and must be stored in their cubby, backpack, or locker during the school day. They may not be worn in the building.
- No tattoos, temporary or permanent are permitted. This prohibition includes pen and ink drawings on the skin.
- No oversized or baggy clothing will be permitted.

**House Patches:** House patches must be worn centered on the left sleeve just above the cuff of the sleeve every day of school – it is considered part of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade uniform. It should be securely fastened with a simple slipstitch, ironed on, or attached with velcro. 5 initial house patches will be distributed free of charge during the house “Choosing Day,” and additional patches may be purchased through the school.

#### **Spirit Days:**

Kindergarten through 4th Grade scholars may wear a spirit shirt on the last Friday of each month.

5<sup>th</sup> grade scholars may wear a House shirt every Friday because they will be participating in House Competitions, meetings, and team-building activities with their houses. Students wearing who are wearing a house shirt on Friday will receive one house point toward the House Cup. Any House shirt created by the school for intramurals or PSO (spirit store) may be worn. Since our logos are controlled by our branding rights, the House shields/logos should not be used without the academy’s permission to make personal shirts, etc.



## **Dress Code for Athletics and Intramural Practices and Field Days**

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All shirts worn for athletic practices and field day should be modest, loose fitting, in good repair (no holes, torn sleeves, etc.), should be worn either tucked in or well over the waist of the pants/shorts if not tucked in. No midriffs may be shown. T-shirts are preferred—no tank tops, camisoles, or sports bras may be worn as outer garments. Sleeveless shirts may be worn if modest.

Pants/shorts should be modest, in good repair (no holes, torn sleeves, etc.). Pants should be worn at the waist and should be no shorter than mid-thigh, and no-longer than just below the knee. No short-shorts or long baggy shorts may be worn. No boxers or undergarments may be visible.

Jackets and sweatshirts may be worn to school for warmth but must be free of logos and messages, with the following exceptions: sports team logos (e.g., Lions, Spurs) and apparel brand name logos (e.g. the Ralph Lauren “polo”) are acceptable, provided they are tasteful and do not make inappropriate allusions.

Footwear should be athletic in nature: no sandals, open-toed, or platform shoes. Hats and sunscreen may be appropriate if the students will be in the sun. Hat styles should follow the same guidelines as above.

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## **Concert Attire Requirements for K-5**

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### **Boys**

- Black dress pants
- White dress shirt
- Black necktie
- Black dress socks
- Black dress shoes
- Hair needs to be combed and out of the eyes
- Black belts are optional, no suspenders



### **Girls**

- Black modest-length skirt with white blouse or black modest-length dress with a white cardigan (No spaghetti-straps)
- Girls may choose but not required to wear black or nude tights
- Black dress shoes or black dress sandals (no flip-flops)
- Hair should be neat and not distracting to the scholar nor the audience. No distracting hair accessories (no "cheer" size bows). If using one,





bows or hairbands should be solid white or solid black

\*If you are in doubt on an item, please check with your child's teacher or an administrator.

## **Student Culture**

### **Classroom Celebrations**

In an effort to foster inclusivity, GH does not celebrate holidays. On the other hand, as classicists we see celebrations of those things we have in common as an essential way of participating in living the "Good Life." To that end, each grade level plans special celebrations centered around their curriculum. The teachers will plan the event with approval from school leadership, along with the assistance of classroom parents who will help execute those celebrations in an intentional and orderly way.

### **Birthdays**

**K-5:** Students may bring special edible treats on their birthday to their homeroom, including one for every student. The teacher will plan when during the day it would be most suitable to share them with the class. If school is not in session on the student's actual birthday, the parent should coordinate a day with the teacher in which their child will bring in treats. Parents may NOT bring food to share at lunch to, in a sense, host a mini party. Students with special food allergies may bring in a box of allergy free treats that are non-perishable for the teacher to keep for the student on those days in which birthday treats being served do not meet their dietary restrictions. Students may not bring in party favors, gifts or party favors. 5<sup>th</sup> grade students may celebrate a friend by decorating the birthday person's locker with tasteful and simple decorations.

### **Athletic Field Day, Academic Field Day (5<sup>th</sup>), Character Dress Up Day, Great Hearts Day, Assemblies, 5<sup>th</sup> gr House Events**

In an effort to foster community, the faculty hosts several cultural activities during the school day throughout the year that celebrates and enhances the mission, vision and curriculum of GHWH. These activities are meant for the students and their teachers and do not allow for parent spectators. From time to time parents may be asked to help organize or execute portions of these events. Information pertinent to these celebrations will be sent home through school newsletters, grade level blogs and teacher emails.

### **Field Trips**

Each grade level team of teachers in coordination with school leadership arranges one field trip a year for each grade that in some way enhances or compliments an area of study in that year's curriculum. A small number of parents will be asked to volunteer to help with the monitoring of students on the day of the event. If the location of the field trip is also open to the public that day, any parent may show up at the same time as the class and pay the entrance fee to "tagalong" with their student, otherwise, only parent volunteers sanctioned by the school may attend and assist. Parent volunteers may not ride in the provided school transportation. (See school transportation guidelines for further info.)

## **Student Clubs**

Clubs are meant to give students the opportunity to enjoy further study and practice of a fine or common art that serves to build community, foster life-long learning, and edify the soul. Students who want to join a particular club must follow the registration process (which is first come first served) and pay the designated fee. Participation is a privilege that may be revoked if the student does not follow the Student Code of Conduct.

## **Library (The Spartan library is currently under construction!)**

When the library is open, students will have the opportunity to visit the school library with their class on a biweekly or monthly basis. Students may check out one book at a time and will receive a paper receipt at the time of checkout. The following guidelines pertain to checked out books:

- Two-week loan period
- No fines for late books
- Email sent to the classroom teacher listing all students with overdue books
- Replacement fee will be issued for the cost of lost books unless parent wants to find and replace
- No report card until library fee paid or book replaced

## **5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Grades House System**

The house system at Western Hills is designed to help build smaller communities within the larger school community so that all may belong to something meaningful; all may grow in friendship, charity, citizenship, and that all may thrive as they strive to live life to the fullest, now and in years to come. Through the houses, friendships are strengthened, camaraderie is forged, and school life is more fulfilling. At GHWH, education works to invest in its students a culture of virtue, wisdom, purpose, and courage. All parts of our institution bear a responsibility to advance this culture, cultivating in students a desire for excellence in their minds, spirits, and bodies. The chemistry class, the basketball squad, the music choir, and the debate team all exist because they can uniquely offer students a valuable way of becoming more virtuous, wise, purposeful, and courageous - a means of more wholly becoming Renaissance men and women. The house system follows in this same vein. The community and relationships we will create around our house traditions will be passed down from class to class for years to come. As GHWH grows, the Spartan community that lives out this culture grows larger. While that growth brings great encouragement and opportunity, it also presents dangers. We never want students to be anonymous to, unaccountable to, or unchallenged by their peers. Teaching, exhortation, accountability, leadership, and challenge come in the forms of relationships. To preserve and enrich a community with students reaching across lines of grades, classes, and interests in order to establish meaningful relationships that manifest encouragement, accountability, leadership, challenge, and joy, is the house system's primary goal. By organizing the older grades of the Lower School and the Upper School into houses, a way is made for the students themselves to take ownership of and leadership in pursuing these aims.

Our house system encourages friendship, teamwork, and leadership. There will be a weekly House Meeting during the Lyceum period. This time will be used to build school culture and community, planning upcoming events (including community service ideas), working in committees, discussing history, reviewing point totals from the previous weeks, among other things and competing against other houses in traditional games.

Students will be inducted into their designated houses at the Choosing Ceremony on the first official day of school. Students will be issued 5 free official house patches that are to be worn centered on the left sleeve just above the cuff. Additional house patches may be purchased. The house patch is a part of the 5th - 8th grade school uniform and must be worn daily to be in compliance with dress code.

### **5th - 8th Grade Intramurals**

Great Hearts Western Hills Intramural program is designed with two very intentional goals. The first goal is that Great Hearts Western Hills wants to create an opportunity to form habits of excellence in the part of one's character that can only be tested in competition and one's ability to work on a team. We seek to create an environment where students can experience winning and losing, while coming to see the correct and humble response that both require. We seek to create an environment where the individual can come to find their place on a team; where the needs of interpersonal communication and individual effort meet in the beautiful crescendo of the perfect pass or excellent play that is completed in the goal or win.

Our secondary goal is to support our upper school athletic program by introducing the Great Hearts students to athletics in a much more controlled, friendly, and peer-based environment. Coaches will approach practice and competition with Great Hearts intentional athletic philosophy, with a major goal being the mastery of fundamental and basic skills of each offered sport. We want the intramural program to be both a source of competition, but also one of fun and joy. We will be playing friend against friend and house against house. There will not be any traveling and our students will practice and play games here on campus.

There will be four houses each of which will be broken into 2 clans (one representing 5&6 gr and one representing 7&8 grade) and therefore 8 teams for each offered activity. We will have three seasons as part of the intramural program. Our fall season will comprise of Girls' Volleyball and Boys' Flag Football. The winter season will comprise of both Boys' and Girls' Soccer. The spring season will comprise of Girls' and Boys' Basketball.

It is important that we begin the academic year correctly and form our classroom habits without disruption; we therefore plan to begin our first practices starting in the first week of September. In order not to overwork or overload students who are still coming to terms with up to an hour or more of homework each night, we plan to run one hour practices twice per week, with a game held once every other week. We will complete each season with a playoff tournament in which each team will have a final chance to play for the championship. There will be a \$100 fee per season for each student (this will cover the price of a t-shirt, coaches, and referee costs).

Student athletes must be eligible to participate by maintaining passing grades, pass a physical examination (see forms on the school's athletic site), and demonstrate excellent moral choices in the classroom and during practice.

### **Young men and women**

Although the Academy does sponsor social events, these events should not be viewed as the promotion of romantic relationships between our young men and young women. The Academy

believes that young men and women should be friends. We encourage their socializing together and the development of healthy relationships among them. Romantic relationships, on the other hand, can take up an enormous amount of the consciousness of young people. This absorption can be a direct challenge to focusing their consciousness on learning and thinking. This is why the Academy prohibits activity like holding hands, kissing, and other overt forms of romantic behavior among students while on campus and at all Academy-related events.

### **Guidelines for all Academy Social Activities**

Students **only** (no guests) will be allowed to attend school functions unless otherwise specified prior to the event. All school functions will be closed. No 'in and out' privileges. Entrances and exits will be monitored.

Dress code regulations for each function will be outlined prior to the function and will be enforced.

Vulgar, obscene, or profane language will not be tolerated. Respectful behavior will be expected:

All adults are treated with equal respect—DJ, chaperones, teachers, etc.

All fellow students will be treated with respect: no fighting, roughhousing, or bullying

All attendees will be respectful of the facility and the grounds.

Alcohol use or intoxication, tobacco, drug use (legal or illegal), and weapons are prohibited.

All behavioral/social guidelines outlined in the *Handbook* will be enforced as applicable.

Chaperones/teachers may take actions they judge necessary to enforce these guidelines, up to and including removal of a student from the event. Parents will be notified if student is denied entry or ejected for violations.

Misconduct at a school-sponsored social event can result in disciplinary sanctions at school.

### **Community Service**

The Academy will sponsor voluntary involvement in a number of off-campus community service activities throughout the year. The school will offer an orientation for community service near the beginning of the year for all students who might want to participate. Parents and faculty are welcome to participate.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

We believe that students are happier and more successful at the Academy if they are involved in one or more of our extra-curricular activities. The creative and/or physical outlet provided by such participation promotes a well-balanced life. Extra-curricular participation also builds teamwork and school spirit among the community of learners. Still, we recognize that students must show a special commitment, especially for athletics, in attending events/practices/games and also completing homework. Nonetheless, some of our most accomplished students at our sister schools have professed that the discipline gathered from participation (in terms of time management and personal habits) has greatly helped their academic growth. There is a range of supervised activities to select from: after school clubs, Math League, Chess Tournaments, and

5th - 8th grade intramurals. We encourage the parents to work closely with the teachers and administration in supporting superb extra-curricular offerings for our young people.

### **Participation**

Participation in school extracurricular activities, both athletic and non-athletic, is a privilege and not a right. Students can be suspended from extracurricular activities for academic or behavioral reasons at any time by decision of the coach, the athletic director, or the school administration.

### **Fees**

Activities will require a fee for supplies, rented venues, and equipment. Checks are to be made out to the school and not any particular coach. All extra-curricular programs at the Academy are required to be self-supporting through income from fees and tax credits. The primary academic budget of the school is not able to manage such costs. The Academy maintains an official extracurricular fee schedule, set annually and consistently throughout the Great Hearts network. **The fee for an extra-curricular activity must be paid prior to the student joining the team or activity, even for practice. The school is not able to carry balances for fees or manage payment plans by parents. The school, however, does take a credit card as a form of payment for fees.**

### **Athletics**

Athletics play an important role in the life of a school due to their inherent nobility and the communal spirit that accompanies them. It is important to recognize and reward athletic achievement in its physical component, and even more important to develop the integration of the person (body, intellect, will, and emotion) through sport. There are many virtues developed through athletics (self-discipline, solidarity, perseverance), and one we particularly aim for is the integration of the body with the faculties of the soul, the integration between persons enacted in the solidarity of a team, and the integration gained by the school community pulling itself together to support its students and its good name in the noble endeavor of athletic competition. The Academy supports the renewal and restoration of athletics according to its noble purpose as a fundamental aspect of the school community.

The Academy is committed to ordering athletics within the mission of the school and preventing the emergence of a “second culture” as is often seen at other schools. At the Academy, athletics does not exist as an island of its own, but as a noble enterprise that assists the Academy mission of developing students in character and wisdom.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible for athletic activities at The Academy, the student must maintain passing grades in all subjects and must have displayed good behavior. If a student is found to be failing, he or she will be notified and be put on probation and will no longer be able to play in competitive games. If the student does not achieve a passing score at the end of a quarter, he or she may be suspended from all the Academy’s sports competitions for the first half of the following quarter, at which point the athlete’s eligibility will be reviewed again.

Additionally, eligibility for participation in many school-related activities is governed by state

law and rules of the Texas Charter School Association, a statewide association overseeing competition between charter schools, as well as the University Interscholastic League, the statewide public school athletic association. Additional information regarding extracurricular activities, clubs, and organizations may be obtained from the Assistant Headmaster.

**Please note:** Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior – including consequences for misbehavior – that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation of organization rules is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization.



## **Donate to your Great Hearts Academy and Support Your Faculty and Programs!**

### **Community Investment and a Great Hearts Education**

#### **What is the Community Investment campaign?**

Great Hearts is committed to transforming students into leaders who are prepared for the 21st-century. We do this by teaching the skills necessary for success; the ability to innovate through creativity, the ability to communicate clearly, the ability to apply critical thought through analysis and questioning the world around us, and through building virtue and character in order to demonstrate ethical judgment and integrity. The unique Great Hearts educational model is made possible by the annual Community Investment campaign.

Charter schools are funded differently than district schools. The Community Investment campaign was created to help our schools cover the gap between what we need to deliver a top-tier education and what we receive through public funding.

Your Community Investment gift helps us pay, reward, and retain our excellent and dedicated faculty, so that we can continue to provide the full Great Hearts educational model to our students.

We ask each family to contribute to help cover the gap between what we need for our unique academic model and what we receive from public funding.

We recognize every family in our community has unique circumstances. **Every family's participation, at any level, is appreciated, and vital to supporting the teachers and educational priorities of our academy.**

## Signature Page

Thank you for taking the time to read the Academy *Family Handbook*. If you have any questions or comments about this Handbook, please contact the school office. Please sign and return this Signature Page to the front office.

We understand and agree to abide by the rules, guidelines, and procedures outlined in the Academy *Family Handbook*.

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(if more than one Academy student in family)

## Faculty and Staff E-Mail Reference

To speak to anyone at the school, please call the school at **210-888-9488** and listen for the extension of the party you are wanting to reach, or go to the school website and click on the appropriate email.

### APPENDIX A

#### Offenses and Consequences

##### Level I Offenses:

The following behaviors are prohibited at all school and school-related activities:

1. Violating dress and grooming standards as communicated in the Handbook. See “Dress and Grooming,” pages 46-54
2. Littering
3. Chewing gum on campus
4. Insubordination
5. Cheating or copying the work of another
6. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by others
7. Defacing or damaging school property, including textbooks, lockers, furniture, and other equipment, with graffiti or by other means
8. Failing to comply with directives given by school personnel
9. Falsifying records, passes, or other school-related documents
10. Fighting or scuffling
11. Forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force
12. Gambling
13. Hazing. See “Freedom from Hazing,” page 65
14. Improperly discharging a fire extinguisher
15. Engaging in any misbehavior that gives school officials reasonable cause to believe that such conduct will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence
16. Engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors directed toward another student or a District employee. See “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation,” page 61
17. Engaging in disruptive actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities
18. Engaging in harassment motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age and directed toward another student or school employee. See “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation,” page 61
19. Engaging in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual contact directed toward another student or a school employee
20. Engaging in threatening behavior toward another student or school employee on or off school property
21. Engaging in verbal or written exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property
22. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of a student’s private body parts
23. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission
24. Making false accusations or hoaxes regarding school safety



25. Possessing a cellular telephone or other telecommunications device at school during the school day
26. Abusing a prescription drug, giving a prescription drug to another student, or possessing or being under the influence of another person's prescription drug on school property or at a school-related event
27. Possessing a stun gun
28. Possessing ammunition
29. Possessing an air gun or BB gun
30. Possessing fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device
31. Possessing mace or pepper spray
32. Possessing pornographic material
33. Possessing or selling a "look-alike" weapon
34. Possessing or selling look-alike drugs or items attempted to be passed off as drugs or contraband
35. Possessing or selling seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount
36. Possessing or using a laser pointer for other than an approved use
37. Possessing or using any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the Headmaster or designee determines that a danger exists
38. Possessing or using matches or a lighter
39. Possessing published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety; using e-mail or Web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior; or threatening school safety
40. Possessing, smoking, or using tobacco products
41. Possessing, using, giving, or selling paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance
42. Refusing to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or Headmaster
43. Repeatedly violating campus or classroom standards of behavior
44. Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal
45. Stealing from students, staff, or the school
46. Repeated tardiness
47. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage
48. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the educational program
49. Violating computer use policies, rules, or agreements signed by the student, and/or agreements signed by the student's parent. See "Student Acceptable Use Policy," page 86
50. Being a member of, pledging to become a member of, joining, or soliciting another person to join, or pledge to become a member of a public school fraternity, sorority, or gang, as defined by Texas Education Code § 37.121
51. False accusation of conduct that would constitute a misdemeanor or felony
52. Forgery of school documents at school or otherwise
53. Hit list under Texas Educational Code 37.001(b)(2)
54. Knife possession – not an illegal knife
55. Non-Title five felony; school is notified by police
56. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by others
57. Possession of stolen property

58. Threats – student on personnel/facility
59. Threats – student on student
60. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the school program Violating the School’s medication policy, See “Administration of Medication,” page 71
61. Simple assault
62. Bullying and/or cyberbullying, including intimidation by name-calling, using ethnic or racial slurs, or making derogatory statements that could disrupt the school program or incite violence. See “Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying,” page 64
63. Burglary of a motor vehicle on campus
64. Deliberate destruction or tampering with school computer data or networks
65. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward another student or school employee
66. Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony under Title 5, Texas Penal Code, when the conduct occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and (1) the student receives deferred prosecution; (2) a court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct; or (3) the Superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that the student engaged in the conduct
67. False alarm or report
68. Inappropriate sexual conduct
69. Issuing a false fire alarm
70. Repeated failure to comply with directives given by school personnel
71. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marihuana, controlled substance, dangerous drug, or alcoholic beverage

Disciplinary Consequences (may not necessarily be followed in order, and progressive disciplinary measures are not required)

1. After school detention
2. Application of one or more Discipline Management Techniques listed on page 27
3. Confiscation of cell phones or other electronic devices
4. Grade reductions for academic dishonesty
5. In-school suspension
6. Removal from the classroom and/or placement in another classroom
7. Restitution/restoration, if applicable
8. Saturday Detention
9. Out-of-school suspension for up to three days
10. School-assessed and school-administered probation
11. Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process
12. Verbal correction
13. Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities and eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, and/or membership in school- sponsored clubs or organizations

Level II Offenses:

The following behaviors are prohibited at all school and school-related activities:

1. Engaging in verbal or written exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a

- school employee, or school property
2. Failing to comply with directives given by school personnel
3. Repeated tardiness
4. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage
5. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the educational program
6. Falsifying records, passes, or other school-related documents
7. Possessing, smoking, or using tobacco products
8. Possessing, using, giving, or selling paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance
9. Refusing to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or Headmaster
10. Repeatedly violating campus or classroom standards of behavior
11. Forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force
12. Possessing or selling look-alike drugs or items attempted to be passed off as drugs or contraband
13. Possessing or selling seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount
14. Possessing or using any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the Headmaster or designee determines that a danger exists
15. Possessing or using matches or a lighter
16. Being a member of, pledging to become a member of, joining, or soliciting another person to join, or pledge to become a member of a public school fraternity, sorority, or gang, as defined by Texas Education Code § 37.121
17. False accusation of conduct that would constitute a misdemeanor or felony
18. Fighting
19. Assault (Class C misdemeanor) – student on student or student on staff member
20. Bullying and/or cyberbullying, including intimidation by name-calling, using ethnic or racial slurs, or making derogatory statements that could disrupt the school program or incite violence. See “Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying,” page 64
21. Engaging in any misbehavior that gives school officials reasonable cause to believe that such conduct will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence
22. Forgery of school documents at school or otherwise
23. Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another’s reputation, or illegal
24. Stealing from students, staff, or the school
25. Gang activity
26. Harassment under Texas Education Code § 37.001(b)(1)
27. Hazing under Texas Education Code § 37.151(6)
28. Engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors directed toward another student or a school employee. See “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation,” page 61
29. Hit list under Texas Educational Code 37.001(b)(2)
30. Knife possession – not an illegal knife
31. Non-Title 5 felony; school is notified by police
32. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by others
33. Possession of stolen property
34. Threats – student on personnel/facility
35. Threats – student on student

36. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the school program
37. Violating the School's medication policy. See "Administration of Medication," page 71
38. Engaging in harassment motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age and directed toward another student or school employee. See "Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation," page 61
39. Engaging in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual contact directed toward another student or a school employee
40. Engaging in threatening behavior toward another student or school employee on or off school property
41. Abusing a prescription drug, giving a prescription drug to another student, or possessing or being under the influence of another person's prescription drug on school property or at a school-related event
42. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of a student's private body parts
43. Improperly discharging a fire extinguisher
44. Possessing a razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person.
45. Any discretionary or mandatory expulsion violation under Texas Education Code, Chapter 37
46. Any offense listed in Sections 37.006(a) or 37.007 (a), (b), and (d) of the Texas Education Code, no matter when or where the offense takes place
47. Arson
48. Burglary of a motor vehicle on campus
49. Commission of a felony offense listed under Title 5, Texas Penal Code
50. Conduct endangering the health and safety of others
51. Deliberate destruction or tampering with school computer data or networks
52. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward another student or school employee
53. Committing or assisting in a robbery or theft even if it does not constitute a felony
54. Defacing or damaging school property, including textbooks, lockers, furniture, and other equipment, with graffiti or by other means
55. Possessing a stun gun
56. Possessing ammunition
57. Possessing an air gun or BB gun
58. Possessing fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device
59. Possessing mace or pepper spray
60. Possessing pornographic material
61. Possessing or selling a "look-alike" weapon
62. Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony under Title 5, Texas Penal Code, when the conduct occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and (1) the student receives deferred prosecution; (2) a court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct; or (3) the Superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that the student engaged in the conduct
63. False alarm or report
64. Felony criminal mischief against school property, another student, or school staff
65. Gang activity (violent)

66. Making false accusations or hoaxes regarding school safety
67. Possessing published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety; using e-mail or Web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior; or threatening school safety
68. Inappropriate sexual conduct
69. Engaging in disruptive actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities
70. Indecency with a child
71. Indecent exposure
72. Issuing a false fire alarm
73. Manslaughter
74. Murder
75. Persistent Level I offenses (two or more Level I offense committed in any one school year)
76. Persistent Level II offenses (two or more Level II offenses committed in any one school year)
77. Possessing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of inhalants
78. Possessing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of a simulated controlled substance
79. Public lewdness
80. Repeated failure to comply with directives given by school personnel
81. Required registration as a sex offender
82. Retaliation against any school employee or volunteer at any time or place
83. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, controlled substance, dangerous drug, or alcoholic beverage
84. Setting or attempting to set fire on school property (not arson)
85. Sexual abuse of a young child or children
86. Sexual assault
87. Targeting another individual for bodily harm
88. Use, exhibition, or possession of a firearm, illegal knife, club, or prohibited weapon
89. Conduct punishable as a felony
90. Criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder
91. Criminally negligent homicide
92. Vandalism of or conduct constituting criminal mischief with respect to school facilities or property
93. Aggravated assault
94. Aggravated kidnapping
95. Aggravated robbery
96. Aggravated sexual assault
97. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail (obtaining money or another object of value from an unwilling person)
98. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of a student's private body parts
99. Capital murder
100. Engaging in bullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide.
101. Inciting violence against a student through group bullying.
102. Releasing or threatening to release intimate visual material of a minor or a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.

Disciplinary Consequences (may not necessarily be followed in order, and progressive disciplinary measures are not required)

1. Any applicable Level I Disciplinary Consequence
2. Out of school suspension for five–ten days
3. Expulsion

Disciplinary actions may be used individually or in combination for any offense.

## **Appendix B**

### **Sec. 3.10.1. BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING PROHIBITED**

Great Hearts Western Hills prohibits bullying, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process.

Bullying means a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that satisfies the applicability requirements provided by Section 3.10.2 below, and that;

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
3. Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or Great Hearts Western Hills; or
4. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying also includes cyberbullying, which means bullying done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

### **Sec. 3.10.2. APPLICABILITY OF POLICY**

This Policy applies to:

1. Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
3. Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying (i) interferes with a student's educational

opportunities or (ii) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, Great Hearts Western Hills; or a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

### **Sec. 3.10.3. RETALIATION**

Great Hearts Western Hills prohibits retaliation against any person, including a victim, witness, or another person who, in good faith, provides information concerning an incident of bullying.

### **Sec. 3.10.4. REPORTING PROCEDURES**

Reports of bullying and/or cyberbullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. Reports should generally be made to the Principal or to a student's teacher. Failure to immediately report may impair Great Hearts Western Hills's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

Any Great Hearts Western Hills employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying and/or cyberbullying shall immediately notify the Principal or designee.

A report may be made orally or in writing. The Principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form. The Superintendent or designee shall develop a written form on which incidents of suspected bullying may be reported. The form shall allow for the anonymous submission of reports of suspected bullying.

#### **Sec. 3.10.4.1. False Claim**

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with Great Hearts Western Hills investigation regarding bullying and/or cyberbullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

#### **Sec. 3.10.4.2. Notice to Parent or Guardian**

The Principal or designee shall provide notice of an incident of bullying to:

1. A parent or a guardian of the alleged victim on or before the third school day after the date the incident is reported; and
2. A parent or guardian of the alleged bully, within a reasonable amount of time after the incident.

### **Sec. 3.10.5. INVESTIGATION OF REPORT**

The Principal shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited discrimination and/or harassment, and if so proceed under Board Policy PG-XX (Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation) instead.

The Principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report, and shall take prompt interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of the investigation, if appropriate.

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten Great Hearts Western Hills business days from the date of the initial report. However, the Principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

Following completion of the investigation, the Principal or designee will prepare a written decision regarding the complaint. If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying and/or cyberbullying occurred, Great Hearts Western Hills shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Great Hearts Western Hills may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if Great Hearts Western Hills concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying and/or cyberbullying as defined in this policy.

Great Hearts Western Hills may not impose disciplinary measures on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying on the basis of that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying.

Discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities must comply with applicable requirements under federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

#### **Sec. 3.10.5.1. Confidentiality**

To the greatest extent possible Great Hearts Western Hills shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

#### **Sec. 3.10.5.2. Appeal**

A parent or student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal under Board Policy PG-3.XX (Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances).

#### **Sec. 3.10.6. ASSISTANCE FROM PRINCIPAL**

Any student who feels that he or she may be the victim of bullying should contact the Principal to obtain assistance and intervention in response to the potential bullying.

The Principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any student(s) who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.

#### **Sec. 3.10.7. ACCESS TO POLICY**

Information regarding this policy shall be distributed annually to Great Hearts Western Hills employees and included in the Student Handbook. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the Great Hearts Western Hills administrative offices.



### **Sec. 3.10.8. REPORT TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT**

A Headmaster or the Headmasters' designee may make a report to local law enforcement officials if, after an investigation is completed, the Headmaster has reasonable grounds to believe that a student engaged in conduct that constitutes an offense under Section 22.01 (Assault) or 42.07(a)(7) (Harassment) of the Texas Penal Code.

A Headmaster's designee may include any employee under the supervision of the Headmaster, other than a school counselor.

A report to local law enforcement officials may include the name and address of each student the Principal or designee believes may have participated in the conduct.

**Bullying** is defined as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that (1) has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student; (3) materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or the School; or infringes on the rights of the victim at school. Bullying also includes "cyberbullying," which means bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device including a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool. Bullying conduct includes conduct (1) that occurs on or is delivered to School property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property; (2) that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and (3) cyberbullying that occurs off School property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying (i) interferes with a student's educational opportunities or (ii) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, the School, or a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

**Intimate Visual Material** means visual material that depicts a person (a) with the person's intimate parts exposed; or (b) engaged in sexual conduct.