Gettysburg Montessori Charter School

Board of Trustees

Policies and Procedures Manual

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Mission and Vision

Mission

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School is a K-6 public charter that embodies the theories of Dr. Maria Montessori while promoting a multifaceted, child-centered learning environment for Gettysburg and the surrounding area. Our Montessori trained, PA certified teachers provide children with a dynamic and engaging education using a holistic curriculum that blends the Montessori educational philosophy and the Pennsylvania State Academic Standards. Our mission is to develop the full diversity of human intelligence while nurturing the whole child and instilling a lifelong love of learning.

Values

Hands-on learning environment
Independent exploration
"Whole child" learning
Freedom within limits
Grace and courtesy
Family and community
partnerships Self-regulation
Mindfulness
Intrinsic motivation
Sensitivity, respect, and compassion

Vision

Our vision is to guide, inspire, and empower children. Our goal is to give them the tools and confidence to achieve their dreams, lead meaningful lives, and make positive contributions as world citizens in the 21st century.

(Revised 2020)

Administration

Adoption of Administrative Procedures

Written administrative procedures guide staff members in carrying out a particular responsibility or implementing Board policy. The Board may adopt, revise, or abolish administrative procedures at any established, advertised monthly public meeting of the Board, except in those cases where time restraints imposed by local, state, or federal law, or a decision by the Secretary of Education necessitates prompt and formal action by the Board.

Allowable Use of Funds and Adherence to Uniform Grant Guidance Policy

GMCS shall adhere to all applicable cost principles governing the use of federal and non-federal grants and contracts. This policy addresses the importance of properly classifying costs, both direct and indirect, charged to grant funded projects and that proposed and actual expenditures are consistent with the grant agreement and all applicable federal rules embodied in the Uniform Grant Guidance at 2 CFR 200 (UGG). GMCS personnel who are responsible for administering, expending, or monitoring grant

funded programs should be well versed with the categories of costs that are generally allowable and unallowable.

Bank Accounts

The Board shall designate one or more banks or bank and trust companies as depository for the safeguarding of school funds by a majority vote of the entire Board. Each designated depository shall furnish proper collateral for such deposits in the amount designated by the Board and in accordance with law. Each designated depository shall be advised not to cash checks payable to the school but to deposit said checks in the school accounts. Each designated depository shall be required to report to the Board monthly on the status of such funds in the manner required by law.

Board of Trustees

GMCS Board of Trustees (Board) shall have and exercise the corporate powers prescribed by the Laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, more particularly described in the Charter School Law, the Charter of GMCS (the "Charter"), and the Bylaws of GMCS, adopted July 24, 2010, and amended December 13, 2016. The essential function of the Board shall be policymaking, the assurance of sound management, and active participation in the provision of necessary funds. The board performs its work towards three main objectives: compliance with the law, including the on-going and continuous preparation for the school's next Charter renewal; academic excellence and performance; and fiscal health. The Board has ultimate responsibility to determine general, academic, financial, and personnel-related policies deemed necessary for the administration and development of the school in accordance with its stated purposes and goals, and the Board's Bylaws.

Bonding

Prudent trusteeship of the resources of GMCS dictates that the employees and Trustees responsible for the safekeeping of school funds be bonded. Enumeration and valuations of such bonds shall be determined annually. The school shall be indemnified against loss of money by bonding of employees including Trustee members holding the following positions:

- Board Secretary,
- Board Treasurer, and
- CEO/Principal.

The Board shall bear the cost of bonding each individual required to be bonded by this policy or by statute.

Cost transfers

Any costs charged to a federal or non-federal award that do not meet the allowable cost criteria must be removed from the award account and charged to an account that does not require adherence to federal UGG or other applicable guidelines. Cost transfers must be performed in accordance with the school's ***Journal Voucher Management*** policy.

Failure to adequately follow this policy and related procedures could result in questioned costs, audit findings, potential repayment of disallowed costs and discontinuance of funding. Grant Program Managers (GPM), school personnel and any other individuals responsible for expending grant funds are

held responsible for compliance with UGG and must understand that severe penalties and funding disallowances could result from instances of non-compliance.

Direct and Indirect Costs

Allowable and allocable costs must be appropriately classified as direct or indirect. In general, direct costs are those that can be identified specifically with a particular cost objective while indirect costs are those (a) incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective, and (b) not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefited, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. It is essential that each item of cost be treated consistently in like circumstances either as a direct or an indirect cost.

If an indirect cost rate is going to be utilized for charging indirect rates, the applicable approving authority must first approve the rate.

Establishing A Position

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Principal shall be responsible for recommending new or additional positions and whether these positions are permanent or temporary assignments. Recommendations for new or additional positions will include a description of the duties for which the positions were established, a title that conforms to the appropriate State certification that is required, supporting data, and other rationale for creating the position. The Board shall determine the initial salary or salary range for new positions at the time the position(s) is established, based upon the recommendation of the CEO/Principal, and supporting documentation. In the exercise of its authority to establish new or additional positions, the Board shall give primary consideration to the most effective management of the affairs of the school, the number of students enrolled, the special needs of students, the financial resources, and, above all, the education goals of the school. To maintain an effective school, the Board shall continually evaluate its staff and establish positions essential to the fulfillment of educational goals.

Full-Time Faculty and Staff

It is the responsibility of the CEO/Principal to justify to the Board why a position is needed (e.g., increased workload or enrollment, the impending departure of a current staff member, etc.), and how the position relates to the school's current staff structure (e.g., replacing a departing employee, adding a new position due to increased enrollment, etc.). Once the CEO/Principal has received Board approval to proceed with a new hire, the position may be advertised. Every effort should be made to reach out to, identify, and recruit candidates that ensure diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, and disability. Qualified candidates for instructional positions should always be interviewed by the CEO/Principal. Other employees may participate in the interview process as directed by the CEO/Principal. Candidates for non-instructional positions may be interviewed by the CEO/Principal or his/her designee. Once interviews are complete and a candidate has been selected, a minimum of two (2) reference checks must be completed by the school. The CEO/Principal will then present to the Board outlining the search and interview process and make a hiring recommendation. The board must approve all personnel actions with an up or down vote. Once the Board approves the hire, an offer of employment letter may be prepared by the CEO/Principal that includes a salary within the approved range. Each candidate must also pass the required background checks. The candidate's

application, resume, interview notes and forms, reference notes and forms, and a copy of the offer letter should be placed in a file that will become that person's personnel file, if hired.

Hiring Faculty and Staff

Individuals must meet the following requirements to be hired in any capacity at GMCS:

- Submit a current resume;
- Pass required background checks;
- Meet certification and educational requirements;
- Provide a minimum of two (2) professional references to verify identity, past record of employment, educational background, and professional licensure, if applicable. Preferred references include the candidates present employer, employer immediately preceding the present employer, professor, or other scholastic reference;
- Provide proof of citizenship, or authorization to work in the United States within 72 hours of commencing employment (non-compliance will result in termination of employment);
- Complete appropriate state and federal employee withholding allowance certificates;
- Complete appropriate state retirement forms; and
- All other forms contained in the school's new-hire packet.

Investments

All investments of GMCS by an employee of GMCS require Board approval in accordance with the following:

The Board shall authorize the Business Manager and CEO/Principal to invest such portion of monies as is determined to be available for investment in certificates of deposit issued by a full-service bank, savings bank, savings and loan association or other institutions insured by the F.D.I.C., U.S. Treasury bills or notes, or other investments authorized by the Public School Code, at the most favorable rate after soliciting quotations from at least three (3) institutions. All securities shall be purchased in the name of GMCS. Investments shall be reported to the Board monthly and acceptance of this report will ratify action. Borrowing, investing and fund depositories shall be authorized by the Board. All accounts and monies shall be handled as authorized by the Board. Accounting systems and procedures shall conform to sound business practices and the State Accounting Manual.

Long-Range Facilities Planning

The Board recognizes that sound planning based on accurate information is essential to the effective operation of GMCS. To ensure that future construction, alterations, remodeling, leasing, or purchasing is planned for and based on need, the Board and CEO/Principal will prepare long-range facilities plan and update the plan, as necessary.

In planning for the expansion or modification of its facilities, the Board shall consider the number of children whose educational needs must be met and the physical requirements of the program it deems best suited to meet those needs. The school building and site shall require accommodations to carry out the educational program of the school, including provision for the handicapped, pursuant to applicable

law and regulations. Planning for major rehabilitation and remodeling will be incorporated into the school master plan on a scheduled basis. All existing school facilities will be evaluated annually for their suitability to current needs. Any facility found to be substandard shall be corrected as quickly as possible.

Substitute Instructional Staff

The school should maintain a pool of qualified substitute teachers throughout the year. As the need arises, new substitute teachers should be recruited through newspaper advertisements, announcements in the school newsletter, contacting placement agencies, etc. The CEO/Principal shall submit a list of qualified substitutes to the Board for approval.

Teacher Responsibility for Substitute Teachers

It is the responsibility of the CEO/Principal to arrange for substitute teacher coverage. Upon receiving approval for leave time, the teacher should contact the CEO/Principal to ensure that a substitute is arranged from the approved list to cover the approved absence. In the event a teacher must take leave unexpectedly (because of illness or an emergency), the teacher should call the CEO/Principal by 6:00 a.m. with an explanation for the absence. The CEO/Principal or designee will arrange for substitute coverage. Teachers must maintain three (3) days of non-direct instructional materials, including lesson plans, the class roster, seating chart, group lists, schedules, independent projects, etc. A one-day emergency lesson plan must be filed in the school office for use by a substitute teacher.

Policy Adoption

To provide the public with greater opportunity to assess and react to proposed policies or policy changes, it shall be the policy of the Board to formally adopt, revise or abolish policies only after such proposed policies have been presented at the monthly meeting before the monthly meeting where such change is approved. The only exception to this will be in those cases where time restraints imposed by the local, state, or federal law, a court ruling or a decision by the Secretary of Education, necessitates prompt and formal action by the Board.

In the interest of efficient administration, the CEO/Principal shall have the power to decide all matters of detail that may arise for which no specific provision is made in the policies adopted by the Board, but no emergency action shall constitute official Board policy. The CEO/Principal shall present the matter at the next Board meeting, so the Board may consider policy to deal with that situation in the future.

Payment of Claims

It is the purpose of the Board to affect the prompt payment of bills, but at the same time to ensure that due care has been taken in the review of such bills. It shall be the responsibility of the CEO/Principal, upon the receipt of an invoice, to verify that the purchase invoice is in order; the goods were received in acceptable condition or services were satisfactorily rendered; funds are available to cover payment; the item is one for which the Board budgeted; and the invoice is for the amount

contracted. Should the invoice vary from the purchase order, the CEO/Principal shall document on the invoice the reason for such variance.

All claims for payment shall be submitted to the Board in the form of a listing including check number, check date, to whom paid, and the amount of remittance and account(s) charged. The bill list shall be placed in the monthly financial statements approved by the Board. Approval of the monthly statement shall be reflected in the Board's official minutes.

Travel

Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees who are in travel status on official business of GMCS. Such costs may be charged on an actual cost basis, on a per diem or mileage basis in lieu of actual costs incurred, or on a combination of the two, provided the method used is applied to an entire trip and not selected days of the trip.

Costs incurred by employees and officers for travel, including costs of lodging, other subsistence, and incidental expenses, must be considered reasonable and otherwise allowable only to the extent such costs do not exceed charges normally allowed by GMCS in its regular operations.

Travel Guidelines

Travel guidelines and request forms should be completed prior to any travel on behalf of the school. The form provides space for a brief description of the travel plans and the appropriate approval from the CEO/Principal.

Travel Reimbursement Policy - Federal

Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees who are in travel status on official business of a grant recipient. Such costs may be charged on an actual cost basis, on a per diem or mileage basis in lieu of actual costs incurred, or on a combination of the two, provided the method used is applied to an entire trip and not selected days of the trip, and results in charges consistent with those normally allowed in like circumstances in the recipient's non-federally funded activities and in accordance with the recipient's written travel reimbursement policies. 2 C.F.R §200.474(a).

Costs incurred by employees and officers for travel, including costs of lodging, other subsistence, and incidental expenses, must be considered reasonable and otherwise allowable only to the extent such costs do not exceed charges normally allowed by GMCS in its regular operations as the result of its written travel policy. In addition, if these costs are charged directly to the federal award, documentation must be maintained that justifies that (1) participation of the individual is necessary to the federal award; and (2) the costs are reasonable and consistent with the Gettysburg Montessori Charter School's established policy. 2 C.F.R §200.474(b).

Nothing in this policy supersedes GMCS's school level travel policy.

Travel Reimbursement- Other

To request reimbursement for travel and other expenses incurred on behalf of the school, the employee should complete the Travel/Expense Reimbursement Form, obtain approval from the CEO/Principal, and submit to the CEO/Principal for payment.

Reason for Policy

A portion of financial support for GMCS comes from the federal government. This funding is in the form of direct support for programs and often includes reimbursement for indirect costs. The federal Uniform Grant Guidance identifies the criteria that must be met to properly charge these costs to federally funded projects. Individual non-federal awards may also include special terms and conditions that must be met before costs can be charged or reimbursed, which must also be considered before allocating certain costs to the award.

Policy Requirements

All costs expended using federal funds must meet the following general criteria laid forth in the UGG at 2 CFR 200, Subpart E:

- Be **necessary and reasonable** for the proper and efficient performance and administration of the grant program.
- Be **allocable** to federal awards under the provisions of the federal circular.
- Be authorized and not prohibited under state or local laws or regulations.
- Conform to any limitations or exclusions set forth in the principles, federal laws, terms and conditions of the federal award, or other governing regulations as to types or amounts of cost items.
- Be consistent with policies, regulations, and procedures that apply uniformly to both federal awards and other activities of GMCS.
- Be accorded consistent treatment. A cost may not be assigned to a federal award as a direct cost and be charged to a federal award as an indirect cost.
- Except as otherwise provided for in the federal circular, be determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
- Not included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements of any other federal award in either the current or a prior period.
- Be net of all applicable credits.
- Be adequately documented.

The cost guidelines of the UGG must be considered any time federal award funds are to be expended. GMCS may apply federal UGG requirements to non-federal projects as well.

Federal regulations also require that any other GMCS policies related to specific types of expenditures must also be followed, for example student incentives, travel, meals, or equipment.

Responsibilities

The Business Manager is responsible for creating, encumbering, and purchasing documents using grant funds at the request of the CEO/Principal. They should be familiar with the general cost principles embodied in the federal UGG and summarized above and the cost principles applicable to the specific program funds they expend.

Personnel must notify the CEO/Principal if they recognize a request is for an unallowable cost. The Business Manager and CEO/Principal must ensure that any costs charged to their award are aligned with applicable cost principles, are computed correctly, and would not create a compliance violation. The Business Manager should collect, maintain, and where applicable, submit copies of adequate documentation to support the expenditures. The CEO/Principal and Business Manager will monitor, review, and approve (or disapprove) grant funded personnel plans and requests. In addition, the CEO/Principal will monitor, review, and approve (or disapprove) requests and resolutions proposed to the Business Manager. Finally, the Business Manager will decide on compliance issues brought to them by the CEO/Principal and/ or other administrators.

Definitions

Direct costs are expenses that are specifically associated with a particular grant program that can be directly assigned to such activities relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy.

Indirect costs are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be readily and specifically identified with a particular program. They are expenses that benefit more than one grant. Common examples of indirect costs include utilities, local telephone charges, shared office supplies, administrative or secretarial salaries.

Contacts

- Grant Compliance Office
- Office of Grant Development
- Grant Fiscal Services
- Grants Oversight Committee
- Systems Administration Unit

Related Information

- Circular A-87
- SRC Policy 311: Employee Expense Reimbursement
- SRC Policy 324: Travel Policy for Gettysburg Montessori Charter School Employees
- SRC Policy 325: Meal Policy for Gettysburg Montessori Charter School Employees
- GP0200.5 Budget Amendments
- GP0400 Supplantation
- GP1200 Certification of Employee Time and Effort
- GP1200.1 Determining Employee Cost Objective Status
- GP1400 Documentation and Record Retention

- GP1600 Procurement Using Grant Funds
- GP1700 Contracted Services for Grant Funded Programs
- GP1800 Suspended, Disqualified or Debarred Vendors to be Paid with Grant Funds
- Excluded Parties List (ELPS) System
- Job Requisition Approval Form
- SRC Grant Resolution Form
- Meal Request Approval Form
- Grant Funded PD / EC Approval Form
- PD / EC Attendance Sign-In Log
- Grant Quotation Form
- Travel Form SEH 195
- Travel Form SEH 194
- SDP General Counsel Website
- SDP Instructions related to 313/316 and 324s: http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/c/compensation/s-313-and-s-316-coding-and-rate

History – Amended:

- Amended July 1, 2013 to include new policy and processing elements related to federal funds and the use of Form 324s and a new Student Sign-in Sheet.
- Amended 4/24/2015 to update references to the Uniform Grant Guidance and to make technical adjustments.

Allocation of Non-Personnel Costs to Grants Policy

Overview of Procedure

The Business Manager and the CEO/Principal are responsible for ensuring that all expenditures processed against grant funds are consistent with the terms of the grant and, for federal funds, compliant with the applicable federal Uniform Grant Guidance. Federal grant expenditures must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable. The Business Manager and the CEO/Principal or their designated representatives should review requests to expend prior to data entry into the Advantage Financial system.

Most non-personnel expenditures are processed initially through the Advantage Financial system before the obligation has been incurred. However, in the case of travel and meal requests, the obligations are typically incurred prior to the entry into the Advantage Financial system and therefore require special procedures.

Non-Personnel Cost Principles

As with personnel costs, non-personnel costs charged to federal funds with "Supplement, Not Supplant" provisions can only be used to provide additional programs and resources beyond what GMCS would have made available in the absence of the federal funding. Therefore, costs that would have been

incurred had the federal funds not been available are not chargeable to federal funds containing "Supplement, Not Supplant" provisions.

Under Uniform Grant Guidance provisions, all federal grant award expenditures must be allocable to the grant program. Federal grant funds must be expended in proportion to the federal program's benefit. For example, if a computer is purchased with 100% Title I, Part A funds, the computer must be used solely for Title I, Part A purposes. Likewise, if a computer is bought with 50% Title I, Part A funds and 50% non-federal funds, the computer must be used at least 50% of the time for Title I, Part A purposes. In addition, all costs supported in whole or in part with federal grant funds, must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable.

In some circumstances, costs related to a single, non-personnel activity may be apportioned across more than one funding source. According to the Education Department's General Administrative Requirements (EDGAR), GMCS may use funds under more than one program to support different parts of the same project if (1) GMCS complies with the requirements of each program with respect to the part of the project assisted with the funds under that program, and (2) GMCS has an accounting system that permits identification of the costs paid for under each program. Additionally, the Uniform Grant Guidance provides that costs be allocated among grants proportionate to the benefit received.

For example, contract costs to develop a system to help convert multi-year grant budgets to a 12-month fiscal year basis to improve management and decision-making benefits of all grant funds. An equitable methodology to apportion those costs among grant funds according to relative benefit could be to charge grants during the year based on the proportion of each grant's actual expenditures to total actual grant expenditures for the prior year. At the time of the yearly Financial Close, an analysis of each grant's actual expenditure to total actual grant expenditures for the current year could be made and a "true up" adjustment made to grant charges prior to the Financial Close.

Another example is the cost of developing a database to record employee time, produce Personnel Activity Reports (PARs), and to report time for the purpose of charging federal grants. An equitable methodology to apportion costs among the multiple federal cost objectives could be to charge federal grants based on the proportion of each federal grant's actual expenditures to total actual federal grant expenditures for the prior year. At the time of the yearly Financial Close, a "true up" calculation could be made as described above.

Another example is contract and other non-personnel costs that support general activities, but also benefit grants as well. The cost of the maintenance and administration of GMCS's budget development system and the development of expenditure projections and analysis falls into this category. If GMCS would incur these costs whether grants existed, then the costs are not allocable to federal grants with supplanting provisions. The costs potentially chargeable to grants are those additional costs that occur only because of grants, and there is an equitable methodology to define and apportion those costs to grants without a Supplement, Not Supplant provision. Given that the grant only portions of these activities are not readily "allocable," the costs of these activities in whole or in part would optimally be covered by an indirect cost rate.

Invoice Content

To reconcile that the goods or services being paid for through a vendor invoice were in fact the items ordered and are allowable, the invoice must detail the goods / services as described below. For goods, most purchases are made through vendors approved by the Board and the items purchased are almost always itemized with a cost for each item. The invoice should contain, in addition to standard elements (vendor name, address, date of invoice and number, etc.), the following:

- An itemized list of the service performed by date and hours to include a brief description.
- The number of hours or quantity of items provided and the cost (per hour or item cost) consistent with the terms of the contract, and the extended cost for the date (for example, number of hours x hourly rate = Cost for the date).
- Any other backup material that may be required by the terms of the contract (e.g., employee sign-in and sign-out sheets)

The CEO/Principal and the business manager should review the services to ensure the invoice is consistent with the services / goods received, the detail hours tied to a summary (if provided), and the rates are consistent with the contract. Once satisfied that the invoice represents a true statement, the CEO/Principal and the business manager should physically sign the invoice, date it, and indicate "approved for payment" or something similar. The invoice should be processed for payment against the encumbrance created for the good / service.

Travel and Meal Request Procedures

The Board has adopted policies and procedures that relate to travel, the purchase of food, and acceptable payment and reimbursement rates.

All personnel are required to follow these policies and procedures regardless of funding source. For grant funded purchases, when federal laws and rules conflict with Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or GMCS rules, the most restrictive requirements shall apply.

Travel Request Procedure Steps

For travel requests that use grant funds, a review is required **BEFORE** travel arrangements or commitments are made of any kind.

Meal Request Procedure Steps

Providing meals with grant funds requires a review at least 1 week **BEFORE** the event is advertised as having food or arrangements are made for acquiring food.

Meal Request Approval Form

The Meal request Form is to be completed by The Business Manager and the CEO/Principal and approved at least one week **BEFORE** the event.

Federal Cash Management Policy

GMCS will comply with applicable methods and procedures for payment that minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and disbursement by GMCS, in accordance with the Cash Management Improvement Act at 31 CFR Part 205. Generally, GMCS receives payment from the State Department of Education on a reimbursement basis. 2 C.F.R. § 200.305. However, if GMCS receives an advance in federal grant funds, GMCS will remit interest earned on the advanced payment quarterly to the federal agency consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.305(b)(9).

According to guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), when calculating the interest earned on ED grant funds, regardless of the date of obligation, GMCS will calculate the interest from the date that the federal funds are drawn down from the G5 system until the date on which the School disburses those funds.

Interest would not accrue if GMCS uses nonfederal funds to pay the vendor and/or employees prior to the funds being drawn down from the G5 system, commonly known as a reimbursement.

GMCS will remit interest earned on grant funds annually to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Payment Management System (regardless of the federal awarding agency for the grant) through an electronic medium using either Automated Clearing House (ACH) network or a Fedwire Funds Service payment. 2 C.F.R. § 200.305(b)(9).

Payment Methods – Reimbursements

GMCS will initially charge federal grant expenditures to nonfederal funds. GMCS's Business Manager will request reimbursement for actual expenditures incurred under the federal grants quarterly.

Reimbursement requests will be submitted through the IU system to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. All reimbursements are based on actual disbursements, not on obligations.

Consistent with state and federal requirements, GMCS will maintain source documentation supporting the federal expenditures (invoices, time sheets, payroll stubs, etc.) and will make such documentation available for the Pennsylvania Department of Education review upon request. Reimbursements of actual expenditures do not require interest calculations.

Advances

To the extent GMCS receives advance payments of federal grant funds, GMCS will strive to expend the federal funds on allowable expenditures as expeditiously as possible. Specifically, GMCS attempts to expend all drawn downs of federal funds within 72 hours of receipt.

GMCS will hold federal advance payments in interest-bearing accounts unless an allowable exception applies. GMCS will begin to calculate interest earned on cash balances once funds are

deposited into GMCS's account. Interest will be calculated and remitted consistent with PDE and federal guidelines.

GMCS may retain up to $500 of interest earned per year.

Non-Federal Cash Management Policy

The Board requires that incoming money be tracked at GMCS in accordance with GASB practices and laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It is the role of the CEO to implement procedures to prevent the mishandling of cash. An audit will be performed at least once a year by the Finance Committee and board treasurer to ensure accurate accounting practices are being implemented and all transactions are being recorded.

Conflict of Interest Policy – Federal Funds: Selection, Award and Administration of Contracts

Standards of Conduct

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. §200.18(c)(1), GMCS maintains the following standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts.

No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract.

Such related relationships are defined by the Public Employees Ethics Act.

The officers, employees, and agents of GMCS may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts, unless the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. Nominal value is defined as under $250 in value.

The officers, employees, and agents of GMCS must report conflicts of interest, both real and potential, in writing to the CEO/Principal. If the CEO/Principal is involved in the conflict of interest, the CEO/Principal will report such a conflict, real and potential to the Board Chair in writing.

GMCS will remove an employee from a procurement transaction if there is a conflict of interest, as well as requiring that the individual provide documentation to show that the employee has properly recused him or herself.

All members, officers, and agents of GMCS participating in procurement activities with the organization are responsible for ensuring that their behaviors comply with all applicable laws, program instructions, and guidance materials. If any employee, officer, or agent of GMCS violates the above code of conduct, he or she will be disciplined accordingly. That discipline may include termination.

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Expenditures and Costs Policy

Expenditures must be aligned with approved budgeted items. Any changes or variations from the state-approved budget and grant application need prior approval from the state.

When determining how GMCS will spend its grant funds, the Business Manager will review the proposed cost to determine whether it is an allowable use of federal grant funds *before* obligating and spending those funds on the proposed good or service. All costs supported by federal education funds must meet the standards outlined in EDGAR, 2 C.F.R. Part 3474 and 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E, which are provided in the bulleted list below. The Business Manager must consider these factors when making an allowability determination. Additional helpful questions to ask when making allowability determinations are located below.

- **Be Necessary and Reasonable for the performance of the federal award.** GMCS staff must consider these elements when determining the reasonableness of a cost. A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision to incur the cost was made. For example, reasonable means that sound business practices were followed, and purchases were comparable to market prices.

  When determining reasonableness of a cost, consideration must be given to:

  - Whether the cost is a type generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for the operation of GMCS or the proper and efficient performance of the federal award.
  - The restraints or requirements imposed by factors, such as: sound business practices; arm's-length bargaining; federal, state, and other laws and regulations; and terms and conditions of the federal award.
  - Market prices for comparable goods or services for the geographic area.
  - Whether the individuals concerned acted with prudence in the circumstances considering their responsibilities to GMCS, its employees, its students, the public at large, and the federal government.
  - Whether GMCS significantly deviates from its established practices and policies regarding the incurrence of costs, which may unjustifiably increase the federal award's cost. 2 C.F.R. §200.404

While 2 C.F.R. §200.404 does not provide specific descriptions of what satisfies the "necessary" element beyond its inclusion in the reasonableness analysis above, necessary is determined based on the needs of the program. Specifically, the expenditure must be necessary to achieve an important program objective. A key aspect in determining whether a cost is necessary is whether GMCS can demonstrate

that the cost addresses an existing need and can prove it. For example, GMCS may deem a language skills software program necessary for a limited English proficiency program.

When determining whether a cost is necessary, consideration may be given to:

- Whether the cost is needed for the proper and efficient performance of the grant program.
- Whether the cost is identified in the approved budget or application.
- Whether there is an educational benefit associated with the cost.
- Whether the cost aligns with identified needs based on results and findings from a needs assessment.
- Whether the cost addresses program goals and objectives and is based on program data.

- **Allocable to the federal award.** A cost is allocable to the federal award if the goods or services involved are chargeable or assignable to the federal award in accordance with the relative benefit received. This means that the federal grant program derived a benefit in proportion to the funds charged to the program. 2 C.F.R. §200.405. For example, if 50% of a teacher's salary is paid with grant funds, then that teacher must spend at least 50% of his or her time on the grant program.
- **Consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both federally financed and other activities of GMCS.**
- **Conform to any limitations or exclusions set forth as cost principles in Part 200 or in the terms and conditions of the federal award.**
- **Consistent treatment.** A cost cannot be assigned to a federal award as a direct cost if any other cost incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances has been assigned as an indirect cost under another award.
- **Adequately documented.** All expenditures must be properly documented.
- **Be determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), unless provided otherwise in Part 200.**
- **Not included as a match or cost-share unless the specific federal program authorizes federal costs to be treated as such.** Some federal program statutes require the non-federal entity to contribute a certain amount of non-federal resources to be eligible for the federal program.
- **Be the net of all applicable credits.** The term "applicable credits" refers to those receipts or reduction of expenditures that operate to offset or reduce expense items allocable to the federal award. Typical examples of such transactions are purchase discounts; rebates or allowances; recoveries or indemnities on losses; and adjustments of overpayments or erroneous charges. To the extent that such credits accruing to or received by the state relate to the federal award, they shall be credited to the federal award, either as a cost reduction or a cash refund, as appropriate. 2 C.F.R. §200.406.

Part 200's cost guidelines must be considered when federal grant funds are expended. As provided above, federal rules require state- and GMCS-level requirements and policies regarding expenditures to

be followed as well. For example, state and/or GMCS policies relating to travel or equipment may be narrower than the federal rules, and the stricter State and/or GMCS policies must be followed. Further, certain types of incentives are allowable under federal law, but are not allowable under State law.

Selected Items of Cost

Part 200 examines the allowability of 55 specific cost items (commonly referred to as Selected Items of Cost) at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.420-200.475. These cost items are listed in the chart below along with the citation where it is discussed whether the item is allowable. Please do not assume that an item is allowable because it is specifically listed in the regulation as it may be unallowable despite its inclusion in the selected items of cost section. The expenditure may be unallowable for several reasons, including: the express language of the regulation states the item is unallowable; the terms and conditions of the grant deem the item unallowable; or State/local restrictions dictate that the item is unallowable. The item may also be unallowable because it does not meet one of the cost principles, such as being reasonable because it is considered too expensive. If an item is unallowable for any of these reasons, federal funds cannot be used to purchase it.

GMCS personnel responsible for spending federal grant funds and for determining allowability must be familiar with the Part 200 selected items of cost section. GMCS must follow these rules when charging these specific expenditures to a federal grant. When applicable, GMCS staff must check costs against the selected items of cost requirements to ensure the cost is allowable. In addition, State, GMCS and program-specific rules may deem a cost as unallowable and GMCS personnel must follow those non-federal rules as well.

The selected item of cost addressed in Part 200 includes the following (in alphabetical order):

Item of Cost	**Citation of Allowability Rule**
Advertising and public relations costs	2 CFR § 200.421
Advisory councils	2 CFR § 200.422
Alcoholic beverages	2 CFR § 200.423
Alumni/ae activities	2 CFR § 200.424
Audit services	2 CFR § 200.425
Bad debts	2 CFR § 200.426
Bonding costs	2 CFR § 200.427
Collection of improper payments	2 CFR § 200.428
Commencement and convocation costs	2 CFR § 200.429
Compensation – personal services	2 CFR § 200.430
Compensation – fringe benefits	2 CFR § 200.431
Conferences	2 CFR § 200.432
Contingency provisions	2 CFR § 200.433
Contributions and donations	2 CFR § 200.434

Defense and prosecution of criminal and civil proceedings, claims, appeals and patent infringements	2 CFR § 200.435
Depreciation	2 CFR § 200.436
Employee health and welfare costs	2 CFR § 200.437
Entertainment costs	2 CFR § 200.438
Equipment and other capital expenditures	2 CFR § 200.439
Exchange rates	2 CFR § 200.440
Fines, penalties, damages, and other settlements	2 CFR § 200.441
Fundraising and investment management costs	2 CFR § 200.442
Gains and losses on disposition of depreciable assets	2 CFR § 200.443
General costs of government	2 CFR § 200.444
Goods and services for personal use	2 CFR § 200.445
Idle facilities and idle capacity	2 CFR § 200.446
Insurance and indemnification	2 CFR § 200.447
Intellectual property	2 CFR § 200.448
Interest	2 CFR § 200.449
Lobbying	2 CFR § 200.450
Losses on other awards or contracts	2 CFR § 200.451
Maintenance and repair costs	2 CFR § 200.452
Materials and supplies costs, including costs of computing devices	2 CFR § 200.453
Memberships, subscriptions, and professional activity costs	2 CFR § 200.454
Organization costs	2 CFR § 200.455
Participant support costs	2 CFR § 200.456
Plant and security costs	2 CFR § 200.457
Pre-award costs	2 CFR § 200.458
Professional services costs	2 CFR § 200.459
Proposal costs	2 CFR § 200.460
Publication and printing costs	2 CFR § 200.461
Rearrangement and reconversion costs	2 CFR § 200.462
Recruiting costs	2 CFR § 200.463
Relocation costs of employees	2 CFR § 200.464
Rental costs of real property and equipment	2 CFR § 200.465

Scholarships and student aid costs	2 CFR § 200.466
Selling and marketing costs	2 CFR § 200.467
Specialized service facilities	2 CFR § 200.468
Student activity costs	2 CFR § 200.469
Taxes (including Value Added Tax)	2 CFR § 200.470
Termination costs	2 CFR § 200.471
Training and education costs	2 CFR § 200.472
Transportation costs	2 CFR § 200.473
Travel costs	2 CFR § 200.474
Trustees	2 CFR § 200.475

Likewise, it is possible for the State and/or GMCS to put additional requirements on a specific item of cost. Under such circumstances, the stricter requirements must be met for a cost to be allowable. Accordingly, employees must consult federal, State and GMCS requirements when spending federal funds.

For a cost to be allowable, the expenditure must also be allowable under the applicable program statute

(e.g., Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), or the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins)), along with accompanying program regulations, non-regulatory guidance and grant award notifications.

Helpful Questions for Determining Whether a Cost is Allowable

In addition to the cost principles and standards described above, the Business Manager can refer to this section for a useful framework when performing an allowability analysis. To determine whether federal funds may be used to purchase a specific cost, it is helpful to ask the following questions:

- Is the proposed cost allowable under the relevant program?
- Is the proposed cost consistent with an approved program plan and budget?
- Is the proposed cost consistent with program specific fiscal rules?
    - For example, GMCS may be required to use federal funds only to supplement the amount of funds available from nonfederal (and possibly other federal) sources.
- Is the proposed cost consistent with EDGAR?
- Is the proposed cost consistent with specific conditions imposed on the grant (if applicable)?

As a practical matter, the Business Manager should also consider whether the proposed cost is consistent with the underlying needs of the program. For example, program funds must benefit the appropriate population of students for which they are allocated. This means that, for instance, funds allocated under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) governing language instruction programs for limited English proficient (LEP) students must only be spent on LEP students

and cannot be used to benefit non-LEP students. Further, under most major elementary and secondary education programs, recipients

Also, funds should be targeted to address areas of weakness, as necessary. To make this determination, the CEO/Principal should review data when making purchases to ensure that federal funds meet these areas of concern.

TIME AND EFFORT REPORTING

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the percent effort spent on all sponsored programs is an accurate reflection of what is reported and that all federal and state guidelines are strictly enforced. This policy will guide The PROGRAM, It's About Change in aligning personnel percent effort with mandates set forth by federal laws and regulations. This policy will also ensure equitable distributions of charges for employee's activities {sponsored projects, instruction, and other services). Percent effort misappropriations or misreporting can lead to severe financial penalties for both the individual and the organization.

WHAT IS EFFORT AND EFFORT REPORTING

Effort is defined as the amount of time spent on a particular activity. It includes the time spent working on a sponsored project in which salary is directly charged or contributed (cost-shared effort). Individual effort is expressed as a percentage of the total amount of time spent on work related activities for which the organization compensates an individual. Effort reporting is the mandated method of certifying that the effort charged or contributed to each award has been completed.

OVERVIEW:

Regular and routine effort reporting is a requirement for The PROGRAM recipients of federal and federal sub-recipient awards as a means of attesting to the appropriateness of salaries and wages charged to the sponsored programs. Funding agencies require reasonable assurances that labor costs charged to a sponsored project reflect the actual effort expended on the project.

EFFORT REPORTING POLICY

Guiding Principles:

The PROGRAM's time and effort policy is guided by the following principles:

- The system utilizes the principle of after-the-fact confirmation or determination that costs distributed represent actual costs.
- The system accurately reflects the activity for which the employee is compensated

Employees Subject to Personnel Effort Reporting:

The PROGRAM employees who meet the following criteria are covered by the personnel effort reporting system:

- Employees with any portion of their salary charged directly to a sponsored program. Employees expending effort on any sponsored project, federal or non-federal, will be included.

Procedures:

- All employees paid from sponsored funds are required to report their effort monthly.
- The employee, or responsible individual will report percent effort using suitable means of verification.
- Supervisors are responsible for certification of time and effort for personnel associated with their sponsored programs.
- If the Supervisor is the employee completing the effort report, the CEO must certify the percent effort level.
- If the CEO is the employee completing the effort report, an Officer of The PROGRAM's Board of Directors must certify the percent effort report.

Requirements:

- Total effort cannot exceed 100% and should include only those activities for which the individual receives regular compensation.
- The percent effort of all persons on a grant or other sponsored project shall be in concert with the percent effort that is officially reported as faculty load.
- Failure to verify time and effort or improper allocation of employee's time can lead to breach of contractual agreement, loss of current and future awards, and adverse public image and fines for The PROGRAM.
- Failure to follow the provisions of the PROGRAM's time and effort reporting policies and procedures may subject the individuals responsible for the violation(s} to disciplinary action. Specifically, and without limitation:
    - The CEO and Board of Directors will be notified of non-compliance.
    - The CEO and Board of Directors may suspend submission of any new activities' until time and effort reports are up-to-date and properly completed and certified;
    - All payroll expenditure transactions may be reversed for the period not certified.

(Approved October 2024)

Procurement Using Grant Funds Policy

GMCS is committed to securing goods and services using grant funds from reputable and responsible suppliers in an equitable and competitive manner and in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and guidance.

Reason for Policy

2 CFR Part 200.317 requires that grantees and subgrantees will use their own procurement procedures which reflect applicable state (PA School Code Section 807.1) and local laws and regulations, if procurements conform to applicable federal law and other standards. In using federal funds for procurements, GMCS is bound to adhere to all the procurement standards identified in 2 CFR Part 200.317 et. seq. If GMCS's procurement policies and procedures are more restrictive than state or federal laws and regulations, GMCS policies must be followed. 2 CFR Part 200.318 includes but is not limited to the following requirements:

- GMCS will use its own procurement procedures which reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable Federal law and regulations
- GMCS will have written selection procedures for procurement transactions
- Any lists of prequalified persons, firms, or products to be used by GMCS will be updated regularly and will ensure open and free competition

- Only responsible contractors that can successfully complete contract terms will be used
- If available and applicable, excess federal property and equipment will be used before purchasing new equipment
- GMCS will ensure no real or apparent conflicts of interest arise during procurement activities and will adhere to its Code of Ethics.
- All transactions will be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition (*See 34 CFR 80.36(c) for examples of restrictive procurement situations*)
- Unnecessary or duplicative purchases will be avoided
- GMCS will perform a cost or price analysis in connection with every procurement action including contract modifications
- Detailed records to substantiate procurement decisions, rationale and history will be maintained
- GMCS will handle and resolve any contract or procurement disputes
- GMCS must make available, upon request of the awarding agency, technical specifications on proposed procurements where the awarding agency believes such review is needed to ensure that the item and/or service specified is the one being proposed for purchase
- Any applicable bonding requirements will be followed
- GMCS's contracts must contain provisions of paragraph 2 CFR 200.326.
- Contracting with faith-based organizations is allowed provided there is no discrimination for or against the organization and provided that the faith-based organization offers any religious worship, instruction, or proselytization at a time and in a location separate from any programs or services provided to GMCS and any participation in such services by beneficiaries of grant programs is voluntary

Policy Requirements

Purchasing procedures using federal and non-federal grant funds will conform to applicable state, local and federal law and any regulations identified in 2 CFR. Procurements may be awarded through noncompetitive means under certain circumstances such as if the goods/services are only available from a single source, public exigency or emergency necessitates noncompetitive procurement, the awarding agency authorizes it, or if competition is deemed inadequate. See 2 CFR Part 200.320 for additional guidance on when noncompetitive procurement may be used.

Federal regulations (See 2 CFR Part 200.320) stipulate that procurements under $150,000 may be conducted via less formal competitive procedures such as price or rate quotations.

Procurement of goods and services using federal or non-federal grant funds must also adhere to GMCS policies and procedures:

Documentation of procurement processes should be maintained according to GMCS's Record Retention

Policy.

Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Office will communicate the needs of the program to GMCS staff and assist in the evaluation of competitive bidders and vendors responding to Request for Proposals (RFPs).

Fund Balance Policy

Purpose

The Board recognizes that the maintenance of a fund balance is essential to the preservation of the financial integrity of the school and is fiscally advantageous for both the school and the taxpayer.

Definitions

Fund balance is a measurement of available financial resources. Fund balance is the difference between total assets and total liabilities in each fund.

GASB Statement 54 distinguishes fund balance between amounts that are considered non-spendable, such as fund balance associated with inventories and other amounts that are classified based on the relative strength of the constraints that control the purposes for which specific amounts can be spent. Beginning with the most binding constraints, fund balance amounts shall be reported in the following classifications:

Restricted - amounts limited by external parties, or legislation (e.g., debt covenants and grants.)

Committed - amounts limited by Board policy or Board action (e.g., future anticipated costs). The Board must take action to commit fund balance for the designated purpose prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Assigned - amounts that are intended for a particular purpose. Generally, balances in special revenue funds or capital project funds will be designated as assigned.

Unassigned - amounts available for consumption or not restricted in any manner.

Authority

An official Board resolution shall be required to establish, modify, or rescind a commitment of fund balance.

Guidelines

Use of Fund Balance

The goal shall be to use any excess fund balance for non-recurring expenditures, not for normal operating costs.

The restricted fund balance shall be reduced to the extent that the underlying reason for the restriction has been eliminated.

If the school experiences an excess of expenditures over revenues for a given fiscal year, the fund balance shall be consumed in the following order:

1. Restricted fund balance to the extent that expenditures related to the restriction contributed to the excess of expenditures over revenues.
2. Committed fund balance to the extent that expenditures related to the commitment contributed to the excess of expenditures over revenues. If a plan for periodic use of committed fund balance is reviewed and approved by the Board, the committed fund balance will not be reduced by more than the amount designated in the plan.
3. Assigned fund balance to the extent that expenditures related to the assignment contributed to the excess of expenditures and revenues.
4. Unassigned fund balance for any remaining excess of expenditures over revenues.
5. The Board may elect to consume unassigned fund balance prior to restricted, committed or assigned fund balance.

Delegation of Responsibility

The CEO/Principal may assign fund balance for items deemed appropriate at any time prior to the issuance of the audited financial statements for a given year.

(Revised/Approved December 2019)

Parental Involvement Compact

The parental involvement compact provides an understanding of the joint responsibility of GMCS and parents/guardians for improving student achievement and school performance. GMCS provides opportunities for parental involvement at the school level.

Parent/Guardian Involvement

Convening an annual meeting at a convenient time to which all parents/guardians of participating students are invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents/guardians of their school's participation under Title I and to explain the requirements of Title I, and the right of parents/guardians to be involved.

The CEO/Principal or designee will:

1. Invite all parents/guardians to the annual meeting at school.
2. Explain the rights of parents/guardians to be involved in establishing this compact.
3. Introduce and involve representatives on the charter school level committee.

4. Provide an overview of Title I and give parents/guardians an opportunity to express questions and concerns.
5. Indicate the mechanisms by which the committee work will be communicated.
6. Seek the involvement and input of parents/guardians.
7. Provide childcare so that all parents/guardians who would otherwise be unable to attend may attend.

Offering a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning and evening, and may provide with funds provided by Title I transportation, childcare, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement.

The CEO/Principal or designee will:

1. Provide parents/guardians with opportunities to ask questions and dialogue informally about student academic achievement and school performance.
2. Engage building-based parent organizations to assist with communication and implementation needs.
3. Develop and use outreach programs to involve community groups and organizations.

Involving parents/guardians in an organized, ongoing and timely manner in the planning, review and improvement of programs under Title I, including the planning, review and improvement of the school parental involvement policy and the joint development of the school-wide program plan, except that if a school has in place a process for involving parents/guardians in the joint planning and design of the school's programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents/guardians of participating students.

The CEO/Principal or designee will:

1. Identify and establish a process by which an adequate representation or parents/guardians of participating students can occur.
2. Establish a schedule for the committee to plan, review and recommend improvements to the charter school parental involvement policy.

The CEO/Principal or designee will:

1. Provide parents/guardians timely information about programs.
2. Communicate updates through use of school newsletters, charter school website, email and telephone contact, and home visits if needed.

The CEO/Principal or designee will provide a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.

The CEO/Principal or designee will:

1. Provide parents/guardians, upon request, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their students, and to respond to any suggestions as soon as practicably possible.

2. Develop a feedback loop for parents/guardians to ask questions and receive follow-up.

If the school-wide plan is not satisfactory to the parents/guardians of participating students, the CEO/Principal or designee will:

1. Submit any comments when the school makes the plan available to the Board.
2. Provide a process for parents/guardians to express concerns and complaints.

Shared Responsibilities for High Academic Achievement

The school is responsible for providing a high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables students served under Title I to meet the state's student academic achievement standards.

Each parent/guardian is responsible for supporting their student's learning by:

1. Monitoring attendance, homework, and television viewing.
2. Volunteering in their child's classroom and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to their student's education and extracurricular activities.

Communication between teachers and parents/guardians occurs on an ongoing basis through:

1. Parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact will be discussed as the compact relates to the individual student's achievements.
2. Frequent reports to parents/guardians on their child's progress.
3. Reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their student's class, and observation of classroom activities.

<u>Building Capacity for Involvement</u>

To ensure effective involvement of parents/guardians and to support a partnership among the schools involved, each school will:

1. Provide assistance to parents/guardians in understanding the state's academic content standards and state student academic achievement standards, state, and local academic assessments, and how to monitor a student's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their students.
2. Provide materials and training, such as literacy, technology, etc., to help parents/guardians work with their students to improve their student's achievement.
3. Educate teachers and other staff in the value and utility of contributions of parents/guardians and how to effectively communicate and work with parents/guardians as equal partners.
4. Implement and coordinate parent/guardian programs that will build ties between them and the school.
5. To the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parental involvement programs and activities with other relevant programs and conduct other activities, such as parent/guardian resource centers, which encourage and support parents/guardians in more fully participating in their student's education.
6. Ensure that information is sent to the parents/guardians of participating students in a format and language that they can understand.
7. Involve parents/guardians in the development of training for teachers and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training.
8. Provide necessary literacy training from funds provided to relevant programs by Title I if the charter school has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training.
9. Pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parental involvement activities, including transportation and childcare costs to enable parents/guardians to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions.
10. Train parents/guardians to encourage and enhance the involvement of other parents/guardians.
11. Use outreach programs to involve community groups and organizations.
12. Arrange school meetings at a variety of times or conduct in-home conferences between teachers and other educators and parents/guardians, to maximize parental involvement and participation.
13. Adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement.
14. Establish a charter school-wide parental advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in supported programs.
15. Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parental involvement activities.
16. Provide other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents/guardians may request. In carrying out the parental involvement requirements of this compact, the school, to the extent practicable, will provide full opportunities for the participation of parents/guardians with limited English proficiency, or disabilities, including

providing information and school reports in a format and a language parents/guardians can understand, to the extent practicable.

(Revised/Approved September 23, 2021. May 17, 2022, May 17, 2023, May 15, 2024)

School-Level Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School ("GMCS") has developed a policy jointly with and agreed upon by parents and family members of Title I children. The policy is written in an understandable format and provided in a language parents can understand. The policy will be distributed to all parents and family members of Title I children and will be made available to the community. The policy will be updated annually to meet the changing needs of parents, family members, and the school.

- GMCS will involve parents and family members in the planning, review, and improvement of the School-Level Parent and Family Engagement Policy.
    a. Parents and family members will be involved in the review and development of the School-Level Parent and Family Engagement Policy at the annual meeting and at workshops and training conducted throughout the school year. Feedback and comments from the parents will be incorporated into the policies. Annual surveys distributed to the parents will be used to measure the effectiveness of the program and to recommend any changes.
- GMCS will conduct an annual meeting at a convenient time. GMCS will invite all parents and family members of participating children and encourage all to attend. GMCS will inform parents of GMCS's participation as a Title I school and will explain the requirements and rights for parents to be involved.
    a. The annual meeting will be hosted at the beginning of the school year so parents and family members can discuss and review this School-Level Parent and Family Engagement Policy and provide feedback and changes. The recommendations of the parents and family members will be incorporated into the policy.
- GMCS will offer a flexible number of meetings, in the morning and/or the evening.
    a. Workshops and training sessions will be held at meetings throughout the school year to inform parents about standardized testing, academic standards and curriculum, strategies to help children with reading and mathematics, and how to monitor their child's progress.
- GMCS will provide parents of participating children with timely information about the Title I program.

    a. Information will be distributed to parents and family members at the annual meeting and the workshops and training throughout the school year. Any new information will be sent to parents and posted on GMCS's website. The information will be in an understandable format and in a language parents can understand.

- GMCS will provide parents of participating children with a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessments used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging state academic standards.
    a. Workshops and trainings will be conducted throughout the year to explain curriculum, academic standards, standardized testing, and how to monitor their child's progress. GMCS will distribute PDE resources to parents for additional information.
- GMCS will provide, if requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.
    a. GMCS will facilitate parent teacher conferences and meetings when requested by the parents. [Insert sentence about who should be contacted to facilitate these meetings.]
- GMCS will provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, including education about the harms of copyright piracy, as appropriate, to foster parent involvement.
    a. GMCS will provide workshops to parents on how to work with their children to improve their children's achievement. Strategies will also be discussed during the annual meeting with parents and during parent teacher conferences.
- GMCS will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other federal, state, and local programs, including public preschool programs, and conduct other activities that encourage and support parents and family members in more fully participating in the education of their children.
    a. GMCS will work with local Head Start Programs to involve parents and family members and will hold orientations for new students and families entering the school.
- GMCS will, to the extent practicable, provide opportunities for the informed participation of parents and family members (including parents and family members who have limited English proficiency, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members of migratory children).

a. GMCS will provide information to parents in a format and language that is understandable to them and will receive parent feedback in the annual meeting and annual evaluation distributed to parents regarding supports which will help parents and family members of migratory children, parents and family members with disabilities, and parents and family members who have limited English proficiency.

- GMCS and parents and family members will jointly develop a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share in the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and how the school and parents will build and develop partnerships to help children achieve the state's high standards. The compact shall:
- describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the challenging state academic standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time
- address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum:

i. parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement; ii. frequent reports to parents on their children's progress;

iii. reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities; and ensuring regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand.

(Revised/Approved September 23, 2021, May 17, 2022, May 17, 2023, May 15, 2024)

Parent and Family Engagement Policy for the LEA

Part I. General Expectations

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School ("GMCS") agrees to implement the following requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA"):

- GMCS will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the engagement of parents in all its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with section 1116. Those programs, activities and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.
- In carrying out the Title I, Part A parent and family engagement requirements to the extent practicable, GMCS and its Title I schools will provide full opportunities for the informed participation of parents (including parents with limited English proficiency, limited literacy, disabilities, of migratory children, who are economically disadvantaged, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background), including providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 of the ESSA in an understandable and uniform format including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.
- If GMCS's plan for Title I, Part A, developed under section 1112 of the ESEA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, GMCS will submit any parent comments with the plan when GMCS submits the plan to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
- GMCS will be governed by the following statutory definition of parent involvement, and expects that its Title I schools will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition of Section 8101 of the ESSA:

  Parental involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—

  (A) That parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;

  (B) That parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;

  (C) That parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and

  (D) The carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1116 of ESEA.

Part II. Description of how GMCS will Implement Required LEA-Level Parent and Family Engagement Policy

GMCS will develop the LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy jointly with parents and family members, incorporate it into the Title I Plan (Consolidated Application), and distribute to parents of participating children in a formation and language that parents can understand. Such programs, activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented through meaningful consultation with parents and family members of participating children.

1. GMCS will involve parents and family members in the joint development of the Title I Plan.
    a. GMCS will conduct, at least annually, a meeting with parents, family members, and school staff to develop and implement the Title I Plan. The meeting will be advertised and sent to parents of students in Title I A programs and held at a convenient location and time to ensure maximum participation and parental engagement.
2. GMCS will involve parents and family members in the process of school review and improvement.
    a. GMCS will conduct meetings with parents, family members, and school staff throughout the school year to gather feedback and recommendations as well as administer an annual survey to parents and family members. GMCS will conduct workshops where parents and family members can make comments and recommendations.
3. GMCS will provide technical assistance and support to schools in planning and implementing effective parent and family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance.
    a. GMCS will provide workshops to parents on:
        i. Standardized testing
        ii. Academic standards and curriculum
        iii. Strategies to help children with reading and mathematics
        iv. How to monitor their child's progress
        v. Provide resources to parents from the Pennsylvania Department of Education regarding assessments and Title I Part A
4. GMCS will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies with other federal, state, and local laws and programs.
    a. GMCS will coordinate with local Head Start Programs to provide guidance and resources for parents and students transitioning into GMCS.

5. GMCS will conduct, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of all schools, including identifying: barriers to greater participation by parents and family members, with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background; and the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers, and strategies to support successful school and family interactions. GMCS will use findings of the annual evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parent and family involvement, and revise, if necessary, the Parent and Family Engagement Policy.
    a. GMCS will distribute a survey to parents annually to determine the effectiveness of the programs and parent and family engagement policies. These surveys will allow parents to provide feedback including recommendations on how to improve programs.
6. GMCS will involve parents and family members in the activities of the school, which may include establishing a parent advisory board composed of a sufficient number and representative group of parents or family members to adequately represent the needs to the population; revising; and reviewing the Parent and Family Engagement Policy.
    a. GMCS will create a committee of parents and family members who will provide advice and recommendations on how to improve parental involvement in the program and make changes to the Parent and Family engagement policy. This committee will receive training on how to enhance parental involvement. GMCS teachers, administrators, and other staff will receive guidance on how to coordinate and work with parents and family members as equal partners.

(Revised and approved October 21, 2019)

Part III. Adoption

This GMCS LEA-level Parent and Family Engagement Policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed on with, parents of children participating in the Title I, Part A program. GMCS will distribute this policy to all parents participating in the program. The policy was reviewed and adopted on September 23, 2021.

(Reviewed at Title Meetings: May 17, 2022, May 17, 2023, May 15, 2024)

School/Parent Organizations

The Board believes that the involvement of parents, in a collaborative effort with the staff of GMCS, will lead to enhanced school life for all students. The Board encourages this kind of involvement from recognized parent organizations and welcomes their support in the following areas:

- Fundraising,

- Recruitment of parent volunteers to assist staff and students, and
- Planning special programs and events for the school.

The CEO/Principal will be the contact person for the school in working with all such groups, and all activities conducted by any student/parent organization must have the approval of the CEO/Principal.

(Revised/Approved September 2021)

Fundraising Policy

Definition

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School ("the Charter School") is often looking for opportunities to raise additional funds for their programs. Fundraising campaigns are defined as organized efforts to solicit gifts and grants for the explicit purpose of enhancing the Charter School's budget in accordance with its mission. These charitable donations will arise from multiple private sources such as individuals, firms, corporations, groups, and/or foundations. This Policy applies to all forms of fundraising campaigns for the benefit of the Charter School whether conducted by the Charter School, or individuals or organizations outside of the Charter School.

Examples of fundraisers include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Items for sale, produced by the organization (e.g., bake sales);
2. Items for sale, directly related to the organization's mission or goals;
3. Items for sale, directly promoting school spirit;
4. Services for sale;
5. Cash donations for raffles;
6. Resale of items (e.g., silent auction, rummage sale) donated to the organization;
7. Direct requests.

Guidelines

The following guidelines are applicable to fundraising activities by an organization on behalf of Charter School property:

1. The fundraising activity must offer a benefit that is consistent with the Charter School's mission.
2. The Board in cooperation with the sponsoring organization will create a fund development plan. The CEO must approve any fundraising event or request if it is not discussed in the fund development plan;
3. The purpose for which the funds are raised must not violate the Charter School's charter in any way;

4. A member of the sponsoring organization must be present during the entire time of the event;
5. In the absence of an exemption, the sponsoring organization is responsible for ensuring the collection and reporting of applicable taxes;
6. The sponsoring organization must ensure that the fundraising event complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations;
7. Fundraising events must be clearly identified by a sign indicating the name, good, service, price, and purpose of the event;
8. Commercial or corporate sponsorship of fundraising events is subject to review by the Charter School Board;
9. The Charter School needs to adhere to all school policies regarding third party participants;
10. The Charter School reserves the right to approve the identity of a proposed third-party sponsor;
11. The Charter School reserves the right to restrict all fundraising activities to reasonable times, places, and manners;
12. The Charter School prohibits the following:
    a. Third party fundraising through credit card or telephone card companies;
    b. Sale or distribution of items that violate school codes, trademark rights, or existing contracts.

Solicitations

Often, organizations wish to solicit goods and services from area merchants, to be utilized for raffles and silent auctions. When approaching area merchants, the Charter School recommends the following:

- Begin by mailing a letter to merchants, which should be written on school letterhead. Specify a clear purpose of your desired partnership (e.g., silent auction) and the benefit to the third party (e.g., tax write off);
- If approaching the merchant directly, always take a letter of support with you. Merchants, typically, will not donate goods without a letter. Always dress professionally or wear Charter School attire;
- Do not solicit individuals or third-party organizations for cash donations without first speaking with and gaining approval from an officer of the sponsoring organization.

Additional Restrictions and Requirements

The Charter School acknowledges that a policy of this nature may not anticipate every possible issue that may arise with respect to fundraising activities. As a result, the Charter School reserves the right to impose reasonable restrictions and/or requirements with respect to the time, place, and manner of fundraising activities. These restrictions may be in addition to, or in lieu of, those set forth in the policy.

All additional requests for funds or items, e.g., wish lists other than in the Board approved budget, will be reviewed by the CEO, who in consultation with the finance committee will approve or deny such requests.

The Charter School reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.

Public Participation in Board Meetings

To permit fair and orderly expression of public comment, the Board will provide a period for public comment at business meetings of the Board. Prior to any period of public comment, the Board may limit the time for each individual speaker. The presiding officer at each advertised action meeting of the Board shall conduct a period of public comment in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Public participation shall be permitted only as indicated on the order of business in the Procedures of the Board.
2. Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name and group affiliation.
3. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually.
4. The presiding officer may interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant; request any individual to leave the meeting when the person does not observe reasonable decorum; request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting; call a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action.
5. Electronic recording devices and cameras other than those used as official recording devices will not be permitted at meetings under the rules provided by the Board.
6. No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room or on school grounds without prior approval from the CEO/Principal.

Public Relations

Clear, effective communication is important to advance the goals of GMCS. The CEO/Principal should cultivate an environment where parents are made to feel welcome and valued at all times. Faculty and staff should communicate frequently with parents/guardians via email, notes, phone calls, and other appropriate means, including formal parent/teacher conferences to facilitate open communication between parents and teachers regarding students' progress, which may be used as a key tool in highlighting students' success, advertising upcoming events, alerting parents/guardians to changes in policies and procedures, and generally involving parents/guardians in the life of the school. Scheduled parental visits to the classroom should be encouraged.

The Board shall provide parents/guardians and other community members with opportunities to obtain information and receive an orientation of the school, and it will use appropriate means to achieve the following objectives:

1. Explain the programs, achievements and needs of the school to parents/guardians, community members, local and state officials, community leaders in business and industry, and special interest groups;
2. Keep parents/guardians informed regarding school events and activities and to provide opportunities for them to actively participate in the life of the school community;
3. Recognize students and student-accomplishments, listen to student/parent concerns, provide reasons for policies and practices which relate to students and parents, impress upon students and parents that their attitudes and actions will affect community opinion and support of the School; and
4. Recognize staff and staff-accomplishments and keep staff fully informed of school policies and procedures, school-wide activities, staff responsibilities, and their rights within the school policy and under the law.

Policy Regarding Public Gifts and Donations to the Charter School

The Gettysburg Montessori Charter School ("Charter School") Board of Trustees ("Board") has the authority to accept gifts and donations as may be made to the Charter School.

The Board reserves the right to refuse to accept any gift that does not contribute toward the achievement of the goals of this Charter School and the ownership of which would tend to adversely affect the Charter School.

Any gift accepted by the Board shall become the property of the Charter School, may not be returned without the approval of the Board, and is subject to the same controls and regulations as are other properties of the Charter School. The Board shall be responsible for the maintenance of any gift it accepts, unless otherwise stipulated.

The Board will make every effort to honor the intent of the donor in its use of the gift but reserves the right to utilize any gift it accepts in the best interest of the educational program of the Charter School.

In no case shall acceptance of a gift be an endorsement by the Board of a commercial product or business enterprise or institution of learning.

The Charter School CEO shall:

- Encourage individuals and organizations considering contributions to the Charter School to consult with the CEO on the appropriateness of any such gifts.
- Report to the Board all gifts that have been offered to the Charter School, for their review and action.

- Acknowledge the receipt and value of any gift accepted by the Charter School, and prepare fitting means, as appropriate, for recognizing or memorializing gifts to the Charter School.

Gifts shall be recorded in appropriate inventory listing and property records.

Public Records

The Board recognizes the importance of public records as a record of and repository of information for actions taken by the Board and the school. The public has the right under law to inspect and to procure copies of such records with certain exceptions subject to the guidelines below.

The public records of this Board shall mean any account, voucher or contract dealing with the receipt or disbursement of funds; acquisition, use or disposal of services, supplies, materials, equipment, or other property; or any minutes, orders or decisions fixing the personal or property rights, privileges, immunities, duties or obligations of any person or group of persons. The Board shall make public records available for inspection, and copies thereof in accordance with these guidelines, except for those records exempted from such inspection and copying by law and the rules of this Board. Records exempted by law include the following:

Reports, communications, or other items relating to an investigation, where such publication of which would disclose the institution, progress, or result of an investigation.

Any record, document, material, exhibit, report memorandum, or other paper that access to or publication of is prohibited, restricted or forbidden by law or court order or degree; or which would operate to the prejudice or impairment of a person's reputation or personal security; or result in the loss of federal funds, except the record of a conviction for any criminal act.

Records concerning individual students. The Board declares disclosure of certain public records to be inimical to the public interest and therefore exempts from public inspection records concerning the following:

Any material, the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy such as any record, data, reports, recommendations, or other personal material, including but not limited to information relative to the individual's personal and family circumstances, unless the individual concerned (or, in the case of a minor or incompetent, his/her guardian) shall request in writing that the same be disclosed publicly;

Procedures and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and property of the public where such disclosure would impair such protection;

Pending or anticipated litigation, contract negotiations (other than in the collective bargaining process), and other issues that may fall within the privileged relationship between the Board and its attorney or other consultants and special agents.

The Board declares disclosure of the following records to be likely to violate the privacy of individuals and therefore exempts from public inspections:

1. The home address or telephone number of any student or employee of the Board, except as the individual student or employee may wish such information to be released;

2. Notations and tape recordings made and temporarily retained by an individual solely as an administrative convenience in the performance of assigned duties, except that tape recordings of public meetings may not be exempted from public inspection;

3. Records privately made and retained by an individual which express personal impressions, opinions, and conclusions, and the disclosure of which would tend to violate the recorder's privacy.

The public may inspect and procure copies of the public records of the Board, except exempted records as enumerated above, during the regular business hours of the office in which such records are maintained, provided a written request is submitted to the Board at a regular meeting. A citizen may obtain copies of the public record of this Board upon payment of the Board approved fee which shall be based upon the total number of pages or parts thereof being copied:

- First page to tenth page free
- Eleventh page to twentieth page $.10 per page
- All pages over 20 $.25 per page

No public record may be removed from the control or supervision of the designated custodian. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as preventing a Board member from inspection of any record of the Board or the school in the performance of his/her official duties.

The CEO/Principal shall develop procedures to implement this policy which include the following:

1. A retention schedule which shall conform to law;
2. The permanent safeguarding of Board minutes, annual audit reports and permanent student records;
3. Retention of all fiscal records required for audit until said audit has been received and approved;
4. Provisions to guard the confidentiality of records exempted from the availability of public records; and
5. Procedures by which a citizen denied access to any public records may appeal that decision.

Parent/Public Complaint Policy

Any parent, resident or community group shall have the right to present a request, suggestion, or complaint concerning school personnel, the program, or the operations of the school. At the same time, the Board has a duty to protect its staff from unnecessary harassment. It is the intent of this policy to provide a fair and impartial manner for seeking appropriate remedies. Any misunderstandings between the public and the school shall be resolved by direct discussions of an informal type among the interested

parties. It is only when such informal meetings fail to resolve the differences that more formal procedures will be employed.

GMCS CEO/Principal and Board strongly believe that parent/guardian support and input are vital to school accountability and success. Communication between home and school is a critical part of the educational process and school leadership takes all concerns/complaints very seriously.

It is the intent of the Board and the school staff that concerns/complaints be resolved as quickly and amicably as possible, in a fair and impartial manner, and with the best interests of the students held firmly in mind. These procedures shall be made known to staff and parents/guardians so that all communication may be carried out in an open and convenient way. If parents have a concern about the school, they should adhere to the following policy regarding informal and formal complaints to reach a satisfactory resolution.

The following applies to all concern/complaints:

1. All matters related to a complaint shall be kept as confidential as possible, but in some circumstances absolute confidentiality cannot be assured.
2. All documents, communications, and records dealing with the complaint shall be placed in a school complaint file.
3. No reprisals shall be taken against any participant in a complaint procedure by reason of such participation.
4. Time limits specified in these procedures may be reduced or extended in any specific instance by written mutual agreement of the parties involved. If specified or adjusted time limits expire, the complaint may proceed to the next step.
5. Any complaint not taken to the next step within the prescribed time limits shall be considered settled based on the answer given at the preceding step.

Note: Any health or safety issue should immediately be taken directly to the CEO/Principal. This policy is not intended to address suspensions or expulsions. See *Suspensions and Expulsions* in the Students' Rights and Responsibilities section of this manual for information on how to address or appeal a decision.

Nature of the Concern/Complaint

Informal concerns/complaints typically relate to activities or behaviors that are an issue between parties

(students, parents, school personnel) and may include academic concerns; classroom issues between students or between a student and teacher; individual classroom practices; school personnel; or school-wide rules, procedures, or practices. They **do not** represent public safety issues or personal endangerment to others. Ideally, informal concerns/complaints should be handled directly between school staff and the complainant, rather than the Board.

Procedures for Addressing Informal Concerns/Complaints

GMCS Board encourages students and parents to first discuss their concerns/complaints with the appropriate teacher or staff member and to work together to resolve the situation. Parents/guardians should also familiarize themselves with the school's guidelines and policies by referencing the parent-student handbook and any other school-issued materials. Determine whether the school's actions fall within the school's policies.

Step 1. Contact the Appropriate Staff Member

For all informal complaints, parents/guardians should contact the child's teacher or the appropriate school personnel (specials teacher, counselor, staff, principal, etc.) to discuss the issue. If the concern/complaint relates to a specific action or incident, parents/guardians should contact the school within five (5) days of the incident.

School personnel shall respond to all concerns/complaints in a timely manner, whether by telephone or email, and if an in-person meeting is requested, it shall be held within five (5) school days of the request. Parents/guardians should note, however, that email should not be relied on for time-sensitive communication with school personnel, and that all time-sensitive concerns shared over email should be followed up with a phone call during the next school day.

Every effort should be made to resolve the concern/complaint at the teacher level when issues are related to a particular child.

Step 2. Contact the CEO/Principal

For any concerns/complaints regarding a school-wide rule, practice, or policy, or if a concern/complaint remains unresolved after communication with the teacher or other school personnel, then the parents/guardians should contact the CEO/Principal.

Complaints should be submitted in writing to the CEO/Principal and should outline previous steps taken to resolve the issue. The CEO/Principal shall respond to all concerns/complaints in a timely manner, whether by telephone or email, and if an in-person meeting is requested, it shall be held within five (5) school days of the request. Parents/guardians should note that email should not be relied on for time-sensitive communication with school personnel, and that all time-sensitive concerns shared over email should be followed up with a phone call during the next school day.

Formal complaints involve allegations of significant breaches or violations of school policy or procedure, the school's charter, applicable laws, or criminal offenses. Formal complaints also include any

parent or employee complaints concerning the CEO/Principal. All formal concerns/complaints shall be addressed employing the following procedures detailed below.

Procedures for Addressing Formal Complaints

Complainants should first familiarize themselves with the school's guidelines and policies by referencing the parent-student handbook, the employee handbook in the case of an employee complaint,

and any other school-issued materials to determine whether the school's actions fall within the school's policies.

A formal complaint **must** be submitted in writing and delivered to the Board and may be mailed to the attention of the Board President at 888 Coleman Rd., Gettysburg, PA 17325 or submitted by email to board@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org, ATTN: Board President.

To help ensure a thorough and timely response, formal complaints should include the following information:

1. A detailed statement of the nature of the complaint. Please explain why you believe a policy, practice, or law was violated and describe related events.
2. The response received from the principal and/or teacher or other school personnel that you dealt with regarding the complaint.
3. Copies of any correspondence between complainant and the principal and/or teacher.
4. Solutions that would be acceptable to you in resolving the complaint.
5. The complainant's name, address, email address, and telephone number.
6. Signature and date.

The Board will assign members to investigate the concern/complaint and shall consider it in a timely manner. Members may meet with parents/guardians, the CEO/Principal, and/or additional school personnel as determined to be necessary before bringing the issue to the board for consideration.

If the complaint is submitted to the Board five (5) school days prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the complaint will be addressed at that Board meeting. If the complaint is submitted fewer than five (5) business days before a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the complaint will be addressed at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board. Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board responding at or prior to its next regularly scheduled meeting. Depending on the nature of the concern/complaint, the Board may opt to hear the issue in executive session or address it outside of the meeting.

Note: Individual Board members do not have the authority to resolve complaints and should not be approached individually with any concerns. All concerns/complaints must be submitted to the Board in writing in accordance with these procedures.

For all formal complaints, the Board shall render a determination in writing. If parents/guardians are not satisfied with the Board of Trustees' decision, and if the complaint involves a violation of either the school's policies or its charter, a formal complaint may be submitted to the school's authorizer, the Gettysburg Area School District (GASD). It is very important that before a complaint is escalated to the level of the GASD, the complainant determines that it involves a violation of the school's charter or the law. **Informal complaints that do not violate either the school's charter or state charter law should be resolved between the parent and the school's leadership.**

Parent-Board Member Complaint Policy

It is the intent of the Board that any conflict between a Parent-Board member and the school be resolved as quickly and amicably as possible, in a fair and impartial manner. To remove any potential conflict of interest when a parent who is also a sitting member of the Board has a concern/complaint about the school, they should adhere to this policy rather than the Parent/Public Complaint Policy to reach a satisfactory resolution.

The following statements apply to all concerns/complaints:

1. All matters related to a complaint shall be kept as confidential as possible, but in some circumstances absolute confidentiality cannot be assured.
2. All documents, communications, and records dealing with the complaint shall be placed in a school complaint file.
3. No reprisals shall be taken against any participant in a complaint procedure by reason of such participation.
4. Time limits specified in these procedures may be reduced or extended in any specific instance by written mutual agreement of the parties involved. If specified or adjusted time limits expire, the complaint may proceed to the next step.
5. Any complaint not taken to the next step within prescribed time limits shall be considered settled based on the answer given at the preceding step.
6. At all times, parents, school leadership, and members of the Board are expected to act professionally and handle complaints with discretion and the preservation of dignity for all parties involved

Procedures for Addressing Complaints between Parent Board Members and the CEO/Principal

If a concern/complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the Parent-Board member after discussions with school leadership, or if the concern/complaint is regarding the CEO/Principal, a letter of complaint should be submitted in writing to the Board. Concerns/complaints can be mailed to the attention of the Board at 888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325 or submitted by email to board@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org.

When there is another parent/guardian who is not a sitting member of the Board, the Board strongly encourages that parent to submit any concerns/complaints regarding the CEO/Principal and to represent their student during the resolution process.

To help insure a thorough and timely response, letters should include a description of the concern/complaint; any previous steps taken to address the issue; copies of any correspondence between complainant and teachers, staff, or the CEO/Principal; what action or relief the complainant is seeking; and the complainant's name, address, telephone, and email address.

The Board will assign members to investigate the concern/complaint and shall consider it in a timely manner. Members may meet with the parent, the CEO/Principal, and/or additional school personnel as determined to be necessary before bringing the issue to the board for consideration.

If the complaint is submitted to the Board five (5) school days prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the complaint will be addressed at that Board meeting. If the complaint is submitted fewer than five (5) business days before a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the complaint will be addressed at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board. Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board responding at or prior to its next regularly scheduled meeting. Depending on the nature of the concern/complaint, the Board may opt to hear the issue in executive session or address it outside of the meeting. The Board shall render a determination in writing if appropriate or required.

Individual Board members do not have the authority to resolve complaints and should not be approached individually with any concerns. All concerns/complaints must be submitted to the Board in writing in accordance with these procedures.

Parent-Board Member Conflict of Interest Guidelines

To maintain the integrity of the Board and its work on behalf of the school, Parent-Board members who submit a written complaint must recuse themselves from any related board discussions, committee work, or votes until all involved parties agree that the complaint has been fully resolved.

If a Parent-Board member does not voluntarily recuse him/herself from the Board during the time that a complaint is under investigation, the Board Chair has the right to ask the Parent-Board member to refrain from participating in any related Board discussions, committee work, or votes.

Use of Facilities and School Equipment by Staff

School equipment and facilities may not be used by staff, on or off school property, for personal reasons without explicit authorization or administrative permission. School equipment, including the copier and fax machines, is to be used for school business only.

Advertising, Promotion, and Distribution of Flyers

Students must be protected from possible exploitation in considering requests that they be involved in advertising, promoting, or distributing flyers of any non-school agency or organization. The school may cooperate in furthering the work of any non-profit community-wide social service agency provided that it does not interfere with the educational program of the school. Community-wide social service agencies that wish to distribute flyers to students using school facilities must have the material reviewed by the CEO/ Principal and receive his/her approval before any materials are distributed to students. Printed material, such as handbills, pamphlets, brochures, or posters may be distributed and/or posted in the school when such materials are in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Materials are not inflammatory and/or designed to incite acts of violence;

2. Materials do not attack or seek to generate hostility towards any ethnic or religious group;
3. Materials are not obscene or pornographic;
4. Materials do not libel or defame the character of any person or persons;
5. Materials do not advocate interference with the normal operation of public schools;
6. Materials are not advertisements for profit-oriented, non-school, commercial businesses;
7. Materials do not favor or oppose candidates for the Board or other public office, or the defeat or adoption of Board budgets or other public questions; and
8. Materials are not submitted to the electorate at any general municipal or school election.

It shall be the responsibility of the CEO/Principal to review materials intended for distribution or posting and to determine where the materials shall be placed in the school.

Lending of School Owned Equipment and Books

School equipment may be removed from school property by students or staff members only when such equipment is necessary to accomplish tasks arising from their school or job responsibilities. The prior approval of the CEO/Principal or other administrator directly responsible for the equipment must be obtained before removing equipment from school property.

Document Destruction Policy

GMCS acknowledges its responsibility to preserve information relating to litigation, audits, and investigations. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of July 30, 2002, makes it a crime to alter, cover up, falsify, or destroy any document to prevent its use in an official proceeding. Failure on the part of employees to follow this policy can result in possible civil and criminal sanctions against the school and its employees and possible disciplinary action against responsible individuals (up to and including termination of employment). Each employee has an obligation to contact the president of the Board and the CEO/Principal of a potential or actual litigation, external audit, investigation, or similar proceeding involving GMCS that may have an impact on the approved records retention schedule. All documents will be retained for periods applicable under laws.

Care of School Property

The Board believes that the school should help students learn to respect property and develop feelings of pride in community institutions. The Board also recognizes the relationship between effective use of property and school financial solvency.

The Board charges each student with responsibility for the proper care of school property and the school textbooks, supplies and equipment entrusted to his/her use. Students who willfully cause damage to school property shall be subject to disciplinary measures. Students and others who damage or deface school property may be prosecuted and punished under law. Parents and guardians of students shall be held accountable for student actions. The CEO/Principal may report to the appropriate authorities any student whose damage of school property has been serious or chronic in nature.

The CEO/Principal shall develop procedures to implement this policy that include rules for safekeeping and accounting of property, preparation of a schedule of fines or repayment for lost or damaged property, and a report to the Board on the nature and incidence of vandalism. This report shall include the number and kind of incident, the cost of vandalism to the school, and such related facts and comments as the CEO/Principal may wish to make.

School Register

The school register serves as a source document for the enrollment certifications of all students. It shall be the responsibility of the Principal to ensure the attendance of those students enrolled in the school in accordance with state law.

Each student's attendance should be monitored so that a student is not absent for three (3) or more school days without an investigation of the reason. The school must make a good faith effort to determine the reasons for the absence. Truancy must be reported to the district of residence.

If the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student have requested that the student transfer back to the district of residence or attend a nonpublic school, the school must immediately notify the school district of residence of this situation.

See also ***Student Attendance*** in the Students' Rights and Responsibilities Section of this manual.

Admission of Students, Process

Purpose: GMCS adheres to the state law that requires admission be open to all Pennsylvania residents by lottery or criteria that addresses the preferences under 17-1723-A et seq.

Delegation of Responsibility: The CEO/Principal shall conduct the application process and the lottery with the oversight of the Board.

Guidelines:

1. Students who are not residents of the GASD (non-resident students) may be admitted only if there are no GASD students applying for that grade. Non-resident students per pupil allotment must be paid by the district in which the non-resident student resides.

2. Timely submission of a completed Charter School application is required for participation in the lottery.

Lottery:

All students currently enrolled in the school from the prior school year are exempt from the lottery process.

The child(ren) of a current employee or original founding member of the school is

exempt from the lottery process if there is space in the grade sought.

Siblings (defined as children having one common parent) of students enrolled at the school from the prior school year are exempt from the lottery provided there is space available for the grade sought. A sibling lottery will be held if there are more siblings than seats available in any grade.

All other applicants, other than those identified above, are included in the lottery process.

The lottery is conducted annually on the first working Monday of April and will include all applications received by March 31. Applications must be submitted annually for participation in the annual lottery. The wait list from the prior school year is discarded and is not applicable to the next school year lottery.

Each application received will be designated a number related to the student's name, beginning with kindergarten, and proceeding to sixth grade. Numbers will be in a container/bag and shaken. Each number will be individually drawn by a Board Trustee or a Board designee. Each number will be read aloud and entered on a written list, kept by a second Board Trustee or designee, who will record the number and then identify the student's name and "seat number" on this list. Each name drawn will be assigned a sequential number from one until all cards have been drawn for that grade.

Notification of Applicants:

1. The results of the lottery will be a part of the Board meeting minutes and entered in an official written/database as recorded. In the case of an applicant who has been assigned to the wait list because of the sequential number assigned from the drawing, a "W" will be entered into the database field.

2. The school will generate letters to each individual applicant indicating their status and guidance for the completion of the enrollment process. All letters will be sent to parents/guardians via first class mail. Two distinct letters will be created:

a. Congratulations on selection in lottery

b. Notification of placement on Wait List

Post-Lottery Application Submissions:

Applications received after the lottery has been conducted will be entered into the database, coded as "W," and assigned the next sequential number from the lottery process for the grade sought.

Student Enrollment

Purpose: The Board recognizes that its enrollment policy must reflect current requirements of the Pennsylvania Public School Code and 22 Pa. Code, Chapter 11. Therefore, GMCS, as a public charter school, complies with these enrollment procedures to ensure that both resident and eligible non-residents are promptly enrolled through the policy provisions set forth below.

Entitlement to Education: The school refers to its Student Admission/Lottery Process policy which set forth the process for the school's lottery under 24 17-1723-A et seq. Every child of school age who is a resident of a Pennsylvania school district is entitled to a public-school education. A student is a PA resident if the student resides with a parent(s) or is living with a resident of a Pennsylvania school district who is supporting the child gratis and is seeking enrollment to the school. After the lottery has been conducted, the school will request the required enrollment documentation described below. Once the required enrollment documentation is provided, the school must enroll the student and permit them to attend school. A child should be permitted to attend school on the next school day after the day on which the child is presented for enrollment, and in all cases within five (5) business days of the school's receipt of the required documents if a space exists pursuant to the school's Admission/Lottery Policy.

Required Enrollment Documentation: Except when a child is homeless, whenever a child of school age is presented for enrollment by a parent(s), a Pennsylvania school district resident, or any other person having charge or care of the child, the school shall require that the following information be documented before enrolling the child and allowing the child to attend school:

1. Proof of the child's age: Acceptable documentation of age include the child's birth certificate; a notarized copy of birth certificate; baptismal certificate; a record of baptism that is notarized or duly certified and shows the date of birth; a notarized statement from the parents or other relative indicating the date of birth; a valid passport; or a prior school record indicating the date of birth.
2. Immunizations required by law: Acceptable documentation includes the child's immunization record; a written statement from the former school district or medical office indicating that the required immunizations have been administered or that a required series is in progress; or verbal assurances from the former school district or a medical office that the required immunizations have been completed, with records to follow.
3. Proof of residency: Acceptable documentation includes a deed, a lease, current utility bill, current credit card bill, property tax bill, vehicle registration, driver's license, or Department

of Transportation identification card. While more than one form of residency confirmation may be required, the school should be flexible in verifying residency, and should consider what information is reasonable considering the family's situation. See the subsection on Homeless Students below for guidance in that situation.

4. Parent Registration Statement: A sworn statement attesting to whether the student has been or is suspended or expelled for offenses involving drugs, alcohol, weapons, infliction of injury or violence on school property must be provided for a student to be admitted to any school entity. The school may not deny or delay a child's school enrollment based on the information contained in a disciplinary record or sworn statement. However, the school may wait to enroll a student until a current period of expulsion has expired.

5. Home Language Survey: All students seeking first time enrollment in the school shall be given a home language survey in accordance with requirements of the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. Enrollment of the student may not be delayed for administration of the Home Language Survey.

Documents That May Be Requested But Are Not a Condition of Enrollment: Although the school may ask for any of the information below, the school may not require it as a condition of enrolling or admitting a child and a child's enrollment or attendance may not be delayed until these documents are provided. Among the documents that the school may request are:

- picture identification
- health or physical examination records
- academic records
- attendance records
- Individualized Education Program, and other special education records.

In addition, a school district may not require that a physical examination be conducted as a condition of enrollment.

Registration Form: A registration form, filled out by families for student enrollment, may include the following: name, address, telephone number, name of parent(s) or guardian(s) or resident adult(s) with whom the student is living, emergency contact information, former school information, and other locally required information. Failure to complete this form will not be made a condition of the student's enrollment. However, the school will require that the student's parent or guardian fill out the school Enrollment Notification required for a local school district to process the school's per pupil allocation.

Documentation Required from Other Sources: The school is also entitled by law to receive information on an enrolling student from the previous school, public, charter, nonpublic or private, which the student attended. However, the provision of this information rests with the educational entity and not the family, and so, the school, as the receiving local educational agency, will not require this information as a precondition to enrollment and will not delay a student's admission for lack of this information.

Student Education Records: Upon enrollment, the school contacts the student's former school for a copy of the student's education records. The former school district or charter school, if within this Commonwealth, is required to respond by forwarding the records within 10 business days of the date upon which a student's records are requested by the school. School districts shall enroll students within 5 business days regardless of receipt of records from the previous districts.

Disciplinary Records: Whenever a pupil transfers to another Pennsylvania school entity or nonpublic school, a certified copy of the student's disciplinary record shall be transmitted to the school entity or nonpublic school to which the pupil has transferred. GMCS will request the record from the school entity or nonpublic school from which the student has transferred. The sending school entity or nonpublic school shall have 10 days from receipt of the request to supply a certified copy of the student's disciplinary record. Failure to receive the student's discipline record cannot be used to deny or delay the student's enrollment or school attendance. A school district may not deny or delay a child's school enrollment based on the information contained in a disciplinary record or sworn statement.

Items Which May Not Be Requested: For both enrollment and for residency determinations, the school will not request or require any of the following:

- social security number,
- the reason for a child's placement if not living with natural parents,
- a child's or parent's visa,
- agency records, and
- except in the limited circumstances described in the next section, a court order or records relating to a dependency proceeding.

A child's right to be admitted to school may not be conditioned on the child's immigration status. The school will not inquire as to the immigration status of a student as part of the admissions process.

Student Classifications for Education Entitlement

Resident Students and Court Orders or Custody Agreements: The school may require a parent/guardian to provide a custody or dependency order when the child is being enrolled at the school pursuant to parent relying on court order or custody agreement as the basis for enrollment. The school will not require a custody order or agreement as a condition of enrollment in any circumstances other than the circumstance specified above.

Students Living With a Resident Adult other than a Parent: When a child is living with an adult other than a parent, who is supporting the child without personal compensation, (gratis) the child may attend the public schools of that adult's school district, provided that resident makes application and supplies the required enrollment information noted in the subparagraph entitled, "Required Enrollment Documentation." In addition, before accepting the child as a student, the school shall require the resident to file only one of the following:

1. A sworn and notarized statement from the resident of the school district indicating that the signer is a resident of the school district, is supporting the child without receiving personal compensation, that the child is living with the resident continuously and not just for the

school year, and that the resident will accept all responsibilities relating to the child's schooling)

2. Appropriate legal documentation to show dependency or guardianship, which may include a custody order. The school may require other information to be submitted by the resident to substantiate the sworn statement. The natural parent(s) or former guardian(s) of the student may not be required to provide information. Once the requested information is provided, the school will enroll the child and permit him or her to begin to attend school without delay, but in no case more than 5 days, if a space exists pursuant to the school's Admission/Lottery Policy
3. A resident's receipt of payments, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Transitional Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), pre-adoptive or adoptive support, maintenance on public or private health insurance, support from the military or military personnel or other payments for or on account of the child such as child support, shall not be deemed to be personal compensation or gain.

Foster Children: While the Public School Code provisions governing nonresident children placed in foster care are not applicable to charter schools pursuant to the Pennsylvania Charter School Law, the school will use such Public School Code provisions for guidance in such situations in conjunction with consultation with the school's legal counsel.

Nonresident Children Living in Facilities or Institutions: A child living in a district in which there is located a licensed shelter, group home, maternity home, residence, facility, orphanage or other institution for the care or training of children or adolescents, shall be admitted to that district's schools if living at or assigned to the facility or institution. If the school district or residence of a child living at or assigned to a facility or institution cannot be determined, but the child is determined to be a resident of the Commonwealth, the child shall be permitted to attend the public schools of the district. This includes a child placed by the child's resident parents or guardians at a facility or institution and subsequently abandoned or deserted.

Emancipated Minors: An emancipated minor is a student under the age of 21 who has established a domicile apart from the continued control and support of parents or guardians or who is living with a spouse. The school district in which this student is living is his or her resident school district, and the student may enroll at the school without any additional assistance from an adult.

Homeless Students under the McKinney Vento Act

A. Definitions

1. *Homeless children and youths* are individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The categories of children who are "homeless" and entitled to the protections of the federal include (a) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in

hospitals; (b) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; (c) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; (d) *migratory children* who qualify as homeless under federal law because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (a) through (c) above. The term "migratory children" means children who are (or whose parent(s) or spouse(s) are migratory agricultural workers, including migratory dairy workers or migratory fishermen, and who have moved from one school district to another in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain (or accompany such parents or spouses in order to obtain) temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work; and (e) *unaccompanied homeless youth* (i.e., a youth experiencing homelessness while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian). This category of students could include youths who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, or been abandoned by parents or guardians.

2. *School of origin* means the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.
3. *Supervised or licensed shelters* are those facilities which provide temporary shelter for a specified, limited period.
4. *Enroll and "enrollment* are defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

B. Procedures

1. If a space exists pursuant to the Admissions/Lottery Policy, GMCS will immediately enroll the homeless child or youth in school, even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical or immunization records, or proof of residency.
2. If a space exists pursuant to the Admissions/Lottery Policy, GMCS will immediately enroll an unaccompanied homeless student without documents and without the help of an adult.
3. GMCS shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, as provided to other children and youths and shall, according to the child's best interest (a) continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or (b) for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or (c) enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.
4. GMCS designates Leigh Gugliette (leigh@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org) as GMCS's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths ("Homeless Liaison"). The Homeless Liaison or her designee is responsible for the following:

a. Identifying homeless children and youths with assistance by GMCS personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;

b. Informing parents or guardians of educational rights and related opportunities available to their homeless children and provide them with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;

c. Disseminating public notice of the educational rights of homeless students where children and youths receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act (such as schools, family shelters and food pantries);

d. Mediating enrollment disputes in accordance with the Enrollment Dispute section;

e. Informing the parent or guardian of a homeless child, youth, and any unaccompanied youth, of all transportation options, including to the school of origin, and assist in accessing these transportation services;

f. Ensuring that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement;

g. Assisting homeless children and youths who do not have documentation of immunizations or medical records to obtain necessary immunizations or necessary medical documentation;

h. Understanding the guidance issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) for the education of homeless students and be ready to explain this guidance related to homeless education to GMCS staff;

i. Getting to know the resources in the community to assist families with referrals for things such as shelter, counseling, food, and transportation;

j. Distributing information on the subject of homeless students and arrange staff development workshops and presentations for school personnel, including office staff;

k. Providing standard forms and information about enrollment procedures and key school programs to each shelter in the districts that GMCS serves;

l. Becoming familiar with the various program materials that are available from PDE;

m. Collaborating with GMCS's special education program to ensure that homeless children who are in need of special education and related services are located, identified, and evaluated. This is a requirement under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which mandates that highly mobile children with disabilities, including homeless children, be identified, and served. The Homeless Liaison should also ensure that homeless youth, who have or may have disabilities, have a parent or a surrogate parent to make special education or early intervention decisions. In the case of unaccompanied homeless youth, if a student is disabled or may be disabled and the youth does not have a person authorized to make special education decisions, the following people can be temporary surrogate parents: staff in emergency shelters; transitional shelters; independent living programs; street outreach programs; and state or child welfare agency staff involved in the education or care of the child. This rule applies only to unaccompanied homeless youth;

n. Identifying preschool-aged homeless children by working closely with shelters and social service agencies in the area. In addition, the Homeless Liaison should inquire, at the time they are enrolling homeless children and youths in GMCS, whether the

family has preschool-aged children;

o. Identifying unaccompanied homeless youth while respecting their privacy and dignity by providing specific outreach to areas where eligible students who are out of school may congregate;

p. Ensuring that public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in locations frequented by parents and guardians of such children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth;

q. Ensuring that unaccompanied youths are enrolled in school and have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards as the state establishes for other children and youths, are informed of their status as independent students under Section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and their right to receive verification of this status from the local liaison.

5. In determining the best interest of the homeless child or youth, GMCS shall (a) to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's or youth's parent or guardian; (b)provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, to the homeless child's or youth's parent or guardian, if GMCS sends such child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian; and (c) in the case of an unaccompanied homeless youth, ensure that the Homeless Liaison assists in placement or enrollment decisions under this subparagraph, considers the views of such unaccompanied homeless youth and provides notice to such youth of the right to appeal.

6. Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other GMCS students including, but not limited to, transportation services; school nutrition programs; kindergarten programs; programs for students with limited English proficiency; and educational services for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as programs for disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities.

C. <u>Homeless Students Residing in Shelters, Facilities, or Institutions</u>

1. Children in temporary shelters and children who "lack a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence" – homeless children – are entitled to free school privileges from either the school district in which their person or the shelter is located or the school district of origin.

2. Where there is an agency, supervised or licensed shelter, group home, maternity home, residence, facility, orphanage or other institution for care or training of children or

adolescents located in the districts GMCS serves, GMCS shall admit school-aged children who are living at or assigned to the facility or institution.

D. Homeless Students Not Residing in a Shelter, Facility, or Institution

In order to maintain continuity and school stability for homeless children in compliance with law, homeless children are entitled to attend school in any school district where a parent, guardian, an adult caring for them or where an unaccompanied child (a) spends the greatest percentage of their time; or (b) has a substantial connection such as where they are (i) regularly receiving day shelter or other services involving any of the 16 McKinney-Vento Activities (42 U.S.C.A. 11433(d)) for individuals who are homeless; (ii) conducting daily living activities; or (iii) staying overnight on a recurring basis.

E. School/Health Records

GMCS should immediately enroll and begin to provide instruction to homeless children. GMCS may contact the school district of origin for oral confirmation that the child has been immunized. Oral confirmation between professionals is a sufficient basis to verify immunization with written confirmation to follow within 30 days. The instructional program should begin as soon as possible after the enrollment process is initiated and should not be delayed until the procedure is completed.

1. If the homeless child or youth needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, GMCS shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the child or youth to the liaison who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.

F. Transportation

1. If the homeless student continues to live in the area served by GMCS, GMCS must provide or arrange transportation on equal terms as it provides to other students. If the homeless student moves to an area served by another school district, though continuing his or her education at GMCS as the school district of origin, GMCS and the school district in which the student is living must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to GMCS. If GMCSs cannot agree upon such a method, the responsibility and costs must be shared equally. Distance, time of year, options available, the effects of a transfer, etc., should all be addressed.
2. The provision of transportation to the school of origin is based on a students' status as homeless. The provision to remain in the school of origin during the remainder of the academic year is offered to provide for school stability. GMCS shall continue to provide transportation to and from the school of origin to formerly homeless students who have become permanently housed for the remainder of the academic year during which the child or youth becomes permanently housed.

G. Dispute Resolution Process

1. Level 1 – A dispute may be raised with GMCS

a. If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the homeless child or youth involved must immediately be admitted to the school in which they are seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute.

b. The parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth who initiates the dispute should contact the GMCS liaison for individuals experiencing homelessness as soon as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. If the person initiating the dispute does not contact the GMCS liaison directly, GMCS shall be responsible for contacting the GMCS liaison regarding the dispute as soon as possible and referring the family or youth involved to the liaison.

c. GMCS liaison shall ensure that the homeless child or youth is immediately enrolled, explain the dispute resolution process to families and help them to use it.

d. GMCS shall issue a written disposition of the dispute within 20 business days after GMCS liaison is notified of the dispute. The disposition shall be provided to the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth and shall explain the basis for the decision and advise the parent, guardian, or youth of the right to appeal.

e. NOTE: GMCS will use and maintain copies of PDE's "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" form which ensures that GMCS will (i) inform families of the basis of their decision regarding enrollment or school selection; (ii)notify families of their right to remain in their school of choice pending resolution of the dispute and (iii)explain the procedures for challenging the decision of GMCS.

2. Level 2 – A complaint may be filed with a McKinney-Vento Coordinator

If the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth is dissatisfied with GMCS's disposition of a dispute or would like to raise any issue of McKinney-Vento Act noncompliance, they may file a complaint or appeal with a McKinney-Vento site or regional coordinator or with the state coordinator.

H. Title I

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (reauthorized December 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act) mandates that funds be reserved to serve homeless children.

GMCS shall reserve such funds as are necessary to provide services comparable to those provided to children in schools funded under Title I to serve homeless children who do not attend participating schools, including providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where children may live.

The Business Manager will ensure that sufficient funds are reserved as are necessary to comply with the mandates of Title I.

Pre-Adoptive and Adoptive Students: The Federal Adoption Assistance Program, among other things, provides for adoption assistance payments to encourage the placement of certain hard-to place children with adoptive parents. Pennsylvania has adopted companion legislation, known as the Adoption Opportunities Act. Children living with pre-adoptive parents, who are receiving adoption assistance subsidies, pre-adoptive foster payments, or other payments such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Transitional Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), are entitled to attend school in the school district in which the pre-adoptive parents reside. Notwithstanding receipt of any of the above payments, children living in pre-adoptive situations are considered residents of the school district in which their pre-adoptive parents reside. Children living with adoptive parents are entitled to all free school privileges accorded to resident school children of the respective school district.

School-Age Children of Military Personnel: When Pennsylvania residents who are military personnel are deployed and their school age children are living with relatives or family friends in a school district for that period, the students are entitled to attend school in the school district in which they are residing.

Other Issues Related to Enrollment:

1. Address Confidentiality Program (ACP): Some families may enroll a student using an ACP card, which lists a post office box as their address. This is their legal address, and the school will not require additional information about their residence. School records from the student's former school will be forwarded through the ACP.
2. Age: Children are considered school age from the time they are admitted to the public charter school's educational program until graduation from high school or the age of 21 if identified pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. The age of admission for GMCS is age five (5) years, which age must be obtained before September 1st of the requested school year. The school will not refuse admission to a child who meets the age requirement.
3. Children and Families with Limited English Proficiency: Children and families with limited English proficiency will be provided translation and interpretation services to the extent needed to help the family understand the enrollment process and enroll the student in school promptly per applicable federal law.
4. Twins and Multiple Siblings: While the Public School Code provision governing twins and multiple siblings is not applicable to charter schools pursuant to the Pennsylvania Charter School Law, the school will use the Public School Code provision for guidance in such situations in conjunction with consultation with the school's legal counsel.
5. Submitting Enrollment Complaints to the Department of Education: When a dispute arises regarding enrollment of a student, the person attempting to enroll the child, or the school may bring the dispute to the attention of the Department's School Services Unit. A complaint may be filed by mail, email, or by phone with written follow up. After receipt of a complaint, a department representative will contact the school, family, or other involved parties to ascertain the facts, determine whether the child is entitled to enrollment at the school, and attempt to resolve the problem. These contacts, whenever possible, will occur within five (5)

days of receipt of the complaint. If the complaint is not amicably resolved, a written determination will be made and sent to the school and the individual who filed the complaint. If the school does not enroll the student within five (5) school days after receiving the written determination and space exists pursuant to the school's

Admissions/Lottery Policy, the Department will issue a letter to the school requesting its position on the matter. The school will have five (5) school days to respond to the request. If the school refuses to enroll the student or does not respond, the matter will be forwarded to the Department's Office of Chief Counsel (OCC). The OCC and the Deputy Secretary for Elementary/Secondary Education will determine if the school's response is valid to deny enrollment. If not, the Deputy Secretary will determine what additional measures may be necessary to assure enrollment.

6. Written Policies: The school's written policy on student admission is a public record and will be posted to the school's website.

Volunteer Background Checks and Clearances Policy

The Board recognizes that the lifeblood of any school is the volunteers who dedicate their time and resources to assisting in the betterment of the educational process. Charter schools in Pennsylvania have long recognized – since the charter school law's enactment in 1998 – that clearances and background checks for such volunteers are a vital component for students' safety. The charter school is committed to ensuring the safety of the students in its care by continuing to allow only those individuals who have demonstrated compliance with the Pennsylvania School Code and the Child Protection statutes to act as volunteers for the Charter School.

All charter school adult volunteers – including new volunteers and those volunteers with expired clearances who have direct contact and care for children must obtain three clearances, which are then valid for 5 years. Direct contact with children is defined as the care, supervision, guidance or control of children or routine interaction with children. A volunteer is responsible for the welfare of a child if the volunteer is acting in lieu of or on behalf of a parent. The common meaning of these terms is to be used, with child safety serving as the paramount consideration. The required background checks include:

1. Criminal History Record Information obtained from the Pennsylvania State Police.
2. Child Abuse Clearance obtained through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services certifying the applicant is not named in the statewide database "as the alleged perpetrator in a pending child abuse investigation or as the perpetrator of a founded report or indicated report" of child abuse."
3. Federal Criminal History Record Information obtained by submitting a full set of fingerprints to Cogent Systems for submission to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Volunteers are not required to complete the federal criminal history check if they have lived continuously in Pennsylvania over the previous 10 years and are working an unpaid position. However, each volunteer must swear or affirm in writing that they are not barred from volunteering due to a conviction or offense under the Child Protective Services Act.

All volunteers are required to obtain clearances every 5 years. Timelines for renewed clearances are based upon the date of each individual clearance. Volunteers are required to obtain updated clearances as follows:

- Within 5 years of the date of the most recent clearance;
- By July 1, 2016, if the clearance is older than 5 years; or
- By July 1, 2016, if they were approved as a volunteer before July 1, 2015, and had not received a clearance because they previously were not required to obtain clearances.

The volunteer is responsible for paying the cost of the required clearances. Upon demonstrated evidence of financial hardship, the Board may consider paying for individual clearances for the approved volunteers.

The school is required to bear the cost of the clearance when there is reasonable belief that the volunteer was arrested or convicted of an offense that would deny participation or named as a perpetrator in an indicated or founded report. Upon this belief, the school will immediately require the volunteer to obtain their clearances.

If a volunteer is arrested for or convicted of an offense that would constitute grounds for denying participation in a program, activity, or service, or is named as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report, the volunteer must provide the CEO/Principal or designee with written notice not later than 72 hours after the arrest, conviction, or notification that he/she has been listed as a perpetrator in the statewide database.

A volunteer who willfully fails to disclose information as required above commits a misdemeanor of the third degree and shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination or denial of a volunteer position. An administrator, supervisor, or other person responsible for selection of volunteers that intentionally fails to require an applicant to submit the required clearance before the applicant's service commits a misdemeanor of the third degree.

School Visitors

The CEO/Principal has the right to refuse admission to the school for any excessive number of visitors or to any who disregard the following:

1. Those wishing to visit the school shall make arrangements in advance with the school office by stating the reason, date, and time of the proposed visit. In all cases where permission is not obtained in advance it must be obtained promptly upon entering the school. No visitor may remain in the school without the permission of the CEO/Principal.
2. Prior to approval of the request, the CEO/Principal shall discuss the request with the staff member involved. Should there be disagreement, the CEO/Principal's decision shall prevail but the basis for that decision shall first be discussed with the staff member.
3. Upon arrival at the school, the visitor must report directly to the school office and sign the Visitor's Register. The visitor will be given instructions as well as a Visitor's Pass or identification badge and, if necessary, provided with an escort.

4. The staff member being visited shall require that the visitor present the Visitor's or identification badge as evidence that the visitor has registered in the school office.
5. Upon completion of the visit, the visitor shall report back to the school office to return materials and enter the departure time in the Visitor's Register.
6. The CEO/Principal shall have the right to adapt or waive these procedures in the event of special activities such as assembly programs, athletic events, or musical performances.
7. No visitor shall be permitted to interrupt a staff member in the performance of duties whether that interruption be for conversation or observation.
8. To minimize interruption to the instructional program and to ensure safety, no visitor may confer with a teacher or student without the approval of the CEO/Principal.
9. No visitor shall go directly to a classroom to deliver or "pick-up" students or speak to teachers unless the CEO/Principal has previously approved such visits. Approval for taking a student from school shall be granted only to a parent/guardian having custody unless that parent/guardian gives explicit permission in writing to release the student to a designated family member or adult.
10. Should an emergency require that a student be called to the school office to meet a visitor, the CEO/ Principal shall be present throughout the meeting.
11. The CEO/ Principal has the authority to exclude any visitor who is considered disruptive or will cause disruption to the educational program, disruptive to students or staff, or intent on committing an illegal act. In such cases the CEO/ Principal shall specifically indicate the circumstances under which a parent may return.
12. School staff who observe visitors without proper identification are to report that information immediately to the school office.
13. The photographic reproduction of school programs, students or physical plant by non-school personnel is generally prohibited. Exceptions may be made for:
    a. The news media with approval of the CEO/Principal
    b. Educational purposes with the approval of the CEO/ Principal
    c. Commercial purposes only with the approval of the parents/guardians of any students to be involved, the CEO or Principal and the Board
    d. Other purposes not listed above only with the approval of the CEO/ Principal and the Board.

All approvals are to be directly verified by the CEO/ Principal. The CEO/ Principal shall place appropriate portions of this procedure in the Student-Parent Handbook.

Policy Regarding Access and Storage of Criminal Justice Information

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for Gettysburg Montessori Charter School ("Charter

School") administration and staff regarding the physical and electronic protection of Criminal Justice Information (CJI). These rules are in place to protect sensitive and classified information regarding employees and volunteers of the Charter School.

Policy

Media Storage and Access: Controls shall be in place to protect electronic and physical media containing CJI while at rest, stored, or actively being accessed. "Electronic media" includes memory devices in laptops and computers (hard drives) and any removable, transportable digital memory media, such as magnetic tape or disk, backup medium, optical disk, flash drives, external hard drives, or digital memory card. "Physical media" includes printed documents and imagery that contain CJI. All CJI shall be stored in a physically secure location with both the physical and personnel security controls sufficient to protect the FBI CJI and associated information.

The Chief Executive Officer ("CEO") the Head Administrative Assistant and Executive Administrative Assistant to the CEO shall be the only three (3)) authorized users with permission to access CJI information for the Charter School. Only these authorized users may remove printed form or digital media from the CJI. The authorized individuals shall properly protect and not share any computer account passwords granting access to the PASafeCheck (website https://pasafecheck.identogo.com). CJI shall not be left in plain public view; authorized users must log off the CJI portal when not in use and attended by the authorized user. In addition, the authorized users shall only access CJI information from secure Charter School computers in the offices of the CEO. The CJI information may never be accessed from a publicly accessible computer.

All paper copies of CJI shall be stored in a locked filing cabinet within the office of the CEO. Printouts shall not be stored in any other location. The authorized users shall be the only three (3)individuals with keys to access paper copies of the CJI at any time. Precautions shall be taken to obscure CJI from public view, such as storing hard copy printouts in an opaque file folder or envelope within the locked filing cabinet. Authorized users shall protect and not share any individually issued keys to the filing cabinet. If an authorized user loses a key, the filing cabinet must be rekeyed or replaced within 24-hours of the loss.

Enforcement

Any employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Technology

The Board believes that all children must become proficient in the use of technology to succeed, and that technology can be used to support and enhance classroom instruction. Further, the Board believes that educators should have the same technological tools used by other professionals. Such tools are essential to minimize the amount of time teachers spend on non-instructional tasks and ensure maximum efficiency in the use of school resources. In addition to electronic mail and the Internet, staff will be able to use the school's computer network for administrative purposes.

The Board recognizes that the Internet is an electronic highway connecting thousands of computers all over the world and millions of individual subscribers. Access to the Internet provides students with the opportunity to reach out to many other people and to share and exchange information with Internet users throughout the world. The Board's goal in providing this resource to students is to promote educational excellence and to prepare students for life.

Students and staff of GMCS will have access to the School's computer resources for instructional purposes. Use of the computer network is solely for the purpose of facilitating the exchange of information in furtherance of education and research. Student usage of any kind, including under a teacher's username, is only permitted after student and parent/guardian sign-off on the Computer Resources--Acceptable Use Policy adopted by the school. All staff members must sign a similar Computer Resources--Acceptable Use Form before being granted access to these resources. In addition to electronic mail and the Internet, staff will be able to use the school's computer network for administrative purposes.

Respect for Privacy

Everyone using the school's computing resources will respect the privacy rights of others by accessing and/or using information belonging to another only after obtaining the permission of the owner(s) of the information.

Respect for Property

No individual using the school's computing resources will make changes to or delete computer programs, files, or information that belongs to another unless permission to do so has been granted by the owner(s) of the program, file, or information.

Respect for Intellectual Labor and Creativity

Everyone using the school's computing resources will respect the rights of all authors and publishers to determine the form, manner, and terms of publication and distribution of their work, and to get properly compensated for their labor when required. This includes the work of student authors produced while completing assignments.

Respect for Ownership

Students and staff may use software owned by the school on the school's computers but may not make copies for personal use. If a staff member wishes to use a shareware program, payment must be made to the developer or publisher of the shareware. Backup copies of computer programs will be used only if the original program is damaged. Copies of computer files will be made only by the owner of the files unless permission to do so has been granted by the owner.

Respect for Others and the Law

Each student and staff member will only use computers, software, and related technologies for purposes that are beneficial to others, which are not harmful (emotionally, financially, or otherwise) to others or to the property of others, and that are within the law. The use of the school's network is intended to extend learning and teaching. Network users are encouraged to develop uses which meet their individual learning and teaching needs and to take advantage of the network's many useful functions

including World Wide Web, electronic mail, and bulletin boards. The inappropriate use of electronic information resources can be a violation of local, state, and federal laws. Violations may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action. Violations can also lead to prosecution.

The use of the school's network is intended to extend learning and teaching. Network users are encouraged to develop uses which meet their individual learning and teaching needs and to take advantage of the network's many useful functions, including World Wide Web, electronic mail, and bulletin board resources. The following uses of the network and associated activities are unacceptable and may result in suspension or revocation of network privileges:

1. Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
2. Using obscene or inflammatory language
3. Sending harassing or insulting messages
4. Damaging computers, computer system, or computer networks
5. Violating copyright laws
6. Using another's password
7. Trespassing in another's folder, work, or files
8. Intentionally wasting limited resources
9. Employing the network for commercial purposes or financial gain
10. Employing the network to provide addresses or other personal information that may be used inappropriately by someone else
11. Employing the network for unethical or illegal solicitation
12. Placing a computer virus on the network
13. Employing the network to send/receive messages that are inconsistent with the School's code of conduct
14. Downloading unauthorized material from the Internet
15. Accessing chat rooms

The inappropriate use of electronic information resources can be a violation of local, state, and federal laws. Violations may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action. Violations can also lead to prosecution.

Copyright Material

The Board recognizes that the United States Code makes it illegal for anyone to duplicate copyrighted materials without permission. The Board further realizes that severe penalties are provided for unauthorized copying of audio, visual or printed materials unless the copying falls within the bounds of the "fair use" doctrine.

Under the "fair use" doctrine, unauthorized copying of copyrighted materials is permissible for such purposes as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research. If duplicating or changing a product is to fall within the bounds of the fair use, these four standards must be met for any of the foregoing purposes:

1. *The Purpose and Character of Use:* The use must be for such purposes as teaching or scholarship and must be nonprofit.
2. *The Nature of the Copyrighted Work:* Staff may make single copies of book chapters for use in research, instruction, or preparation for teaching; articles from periodicals or newspapers; short stories, essays, or poems; and charts, graphs, diagrams, drawings, cartoons or pictures from books, periodicals, or newspapers in accordance with these guidelines.
3. *The Amount and Substantiality of the Portion Used:* Copying the whole of a work cannot be considered fair use; copying a small portion may be if the guidelines are followed.
4. *The Effect of the Use Upon the Potential Market for or Value of the Copyrighted Work:* If resulting economic loss to the copyright holder can be shown, even making a single copy of certain materials may be an infringement, and making multiple copies presents the danger of greater penalties.

Staff members who fail to follow this policy may be held personally liable for copyright infringement.

This policy does not apply to those products purchased with the permission and intent to copy.

Artificial Intelligence Use Policy - Student

Policy Statement
GMCS maintains separate expectations for students and staff because their roles regarding artificial intelligence are fundamentally different. Student use of AI is prohibited. Staff use is limited to professional productivity and efficiency and must never replace teaching, professional judgment, student effort, individualized decision-making, or accountability for the final work product.

Student Artificial Intelligence Use & Academic Honesty
GMCS expects students to develop foundational academic skills, independent thinking, creativity, problem solving, research skills, and responsible digital citizenship through their own effort and teacher-approved resources.
STUDENT USE OF AI IS PROHIBITED. Students may not access, prompt, interact with, or use AI or generative AI for schoolwork, assignments, projects, assessments, research, writing, presentations, images, problem solving, translation, summarizing, revision, brainstorming, or any other school-related activity, whether using a school or personal device.

Pennsylvania Standards Clarification
Pennsylvania elementary Technology & Engineering standards address understanding, describing, and evaluating technology, including its helpful and harmful effects and selecting appropriate technologies for a task. They do not require elementary students to use generative AI. GMCS may teach AI concepts, digital citizenship, academic integrity, privacy, and the benefits and risks of technology without permitting students to use AI. No employee may state or imply that student use of generative AI is required by a Pennsylvania academic standard. **Academic Honesty & Student Expectations**
• Students are expected to create work on their own or give appropriate credit to the person or source that created the work.
• Students will not share personal information, school information, images, recordings, or information about other students, staff, or families with AI systems. • Responsible citizenship includes reviewing one's work for accuracy and using reliable additional resources to confirm information.

• AI-generated or AI-assisted content may not be claimed as a student's own work. • Credit must be given to authors and sources when using their information or ideas. Failure to properly cite a source is plagiarism and a form of cheating. • Cheating, copying another student's work, presenting someone else's work as one's own, plagiarizing, or using unauthorized aids, including AI, is strictly prohibited.
Gettysburg Montessori Charter School | Artificial Intelligence Use Policy
• Students may not use AI to impersonate others, create false or misleading content, bully, harass, bypass technology controls, or violate any GMCS policy.

Student Violations
Violations may be addressed under applicable GMCS academic integrity, technology use, student conduct, and disciplinary policies. Because AI-detection tools may be unreliable, an AI-detection result will not be used as the sole basis for a finding of academic dishonesty.

Statements of Financial Interest Policy

The Board issues this directive to establish policy and procedures for filing financial interest statements by members of the Board and the administration of the school, public officials, and public employees, as required by the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act, 65 Pa. C. S. Sections 1101-1113.

Objectives

1. To provide a uniform system of identifying and assisting public officials and public employees who are to file financial interest statements as required by the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act ("Ethics Act"), 65 Pa. C. S. Sections 1101- 1113.
2. To provide a uniform system of filing, maintaining, accessing, and releasing financial interest statements.

Policy

Those meeting the definition of public official or public employee, as set forth in this policy are required to complete and file financial interest statements every year by no later than May 1. The financial information to be disclosed is for the preceding calendar year. The form must be filed by May 1 each year the position is held and the year following termination of employment. Persons serving in multiple public positions must satisfy the filing requirements for all such positions.

Responsibilities

1. The CEO/Principal is responsible for identifying and notifying members of the Board to make financial disclosures under the Ethics Act.
2. The CEO/Principal will ensure that the policy and procedures for financial disclosure are implemented in accordance with this directive.

New board members and new administrators (if applicable) are to be notified during their orientation process of the requirement to file each year the position is held and the year following termination of service. The school shall also provide a financial interest statement with the accompanying instructions on how to complete the form.

The CEO/Principal will formally notify each board member and administrator, if applicable, provide employees with financial interest statement forms, and indicate due date and submission filing procedures. The CEO/Principal will also complete the financial interest statement form every year by May 1st.

The CEO/Principal will maintain completed financial interest statements in a separate alphabetical file and provide for appropriate access and will review submitted financial interest statements for conflicts of interest, refer questionable forms to the Solicitor, and ensure investigation when there is a possible conflict of interest.

In addition to those officials and employees in specifically identified classes, employees may choose to file voluntarily.

When financial interest statement forms are completed, they are to be filed in the following manner:

1. Public Official - original to the charter school.
2. Public Employee - original to the charter school.

Failure to File

1. If no Statement of Financial Interests form is received by the established due date, the CEO/Principal will formally contact the employee or the official and again advise of the requirement to file and provide a 15-calendar-day due date for submission of the financial interest statement.
2. If, at the end of the 15-day period, the employee or the official has not complied, the CEO/Principal will notify the Board Chair of the name and mailing address of all employees and officials who have not filed. Notification must be submitted to the school no later than June 1 of each year. The school will formally notify the employee or official that failure to comply will result in possible adverse action and referral to the State Ethics Commission. The school will further notify the employee or official that failure to file proper forms in a timely manner is a criminal offense subject to a fine or imprisonment or both. Each board member who fails to file will be advised that such failure is cause for removal from the Board.

3. If the employee or official has not filed within fifteen (15) days, the failure to file will result in termination or removal. The employee or official shall not be permitted to continue upon his/her duties unless he/she has filed a Statement of Financial Interests form as required.

Review and Maintenance of Financial Interest Statements

1. Financial interest statements submitted by public officials and employees will be maintained by the CEO/Principal and will be available for public access and copying.
2. Financial interest statements submitted by public employees are to be maintained in a separate alphabetical file by each employee file and are to be available for public access and copying.
3. Completed financial interest statements are to be maintained for five years from date of receipt.

Academics

Adoption of Curriculum, Instructional Materials and Textbooks

The Board shall approve and adopt the courses of study, textbooks, and materials necessary to implement the Montessori curriculum and comply with Pennsylvania Core Standards and Academic Standards. The CEO/Principal of the school shall have the responsibility of recommending curriculum, instructional materials, and textbooks to the Board for approval. Once approved by the Board, the CEO/Principal shall have overall responsibility for purchasing the necessary textbooks and instructional materials. All community concerns expressed regarding Board approved textbooks and instructional materials will be reviewed by an appropriate Board Committee appointed by the Board Chair.

Student Assessment

It is the responsibility of the CEO/Principal to ensure that all students have been tested for placement in reading, language and mathematics and have been placed into the appropriate classroom. Placement testing should be completed during the first month of school. Once students have settled into their classrooms, the teacher should begin testing for comprehension of material in the areas of reading, language, and mathematics. All students should have a pre-test for each subject at the beginning of the year. Pre- and post-tests should be administered for each subject area during the year so that progress can be adequately measured. A post-test should be administered at the end of the year to measure progress for the year. For special education students, the student's level of proficiency may be determined by the level of work on his/her IEP goals as required by law.

Marking and Reporting Student Progress and Achievement

The Board recognizes that a system of marking, and reporting student progress and achievement can help the student, teachers, and parents/guardians to better assess the student's progress toward educational goals. The Board further believes that cooperation between the school and a child's home is a vital ingredient in the growth and education of the whole child. The Board recognizes its responsibility to keep parents/guardians informed of students' welfare and progress in school.

The Board directs the establishment of a program of marking and reporting student progress that shall include generated reports, parent conferences with teachers, and shall require appropriate staff members to comply with such a program as part of their responsibilities. In addition, the Board directs the instructional program of the school to include a system of marking for all students, which is consistent with the educational goals of the school. The program of marking shall evaluate and record student progress and achievement in a manner that enables the students, parents/guardians, and teachers to learn the student's strengths and weaknesses; plan an educational and vocational future for the student in the areas of the greatest potential for success; and determine where remedial work is required. The CEO/Principal shall establish and implement the program and develop procedures that provide:

1. Each student, at the outset of any course of study, with the expected achievement for that course.
2. Information on a continual basis to each student regarding his/her progress and achievement during the course of study.
3. Teachers with marking procedures appropriate to the course of study and the maturity of the students.
4. Encouragement of students to evaluate their progress and achievement.
5. Periodic review and, if necessary, revision of all marking procedures. To the greatest extent possible, this review shall include students, staff, and parents.
6. Consistency of marking procedures and format in all grades.

The CEO/Principal shall also develop procedures for reporting student progress and achievement to parents/guardians which:

1. Use various methods of reporting appropriate to grade level and curriculum content.
2. Ensure that both students and parents/guardians receive ample warning of a pending mark of "failure" or of a condition that would adversely affect the student's status.
3. Enable the scheduling of parent-teacher conferences at such times and places as will ensure the greatest degree of participation by parents/guardians.
4. Report cards and other appropriate literature for parents shall be provided, wherever possible, in the appropriate foreign language for students who do not speak English.

Standardized Testing

GMCS is a public charter school, and as such, it is held to the grade specific Core Standards and Academic Standards determined by the State of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSAs) are standardized tests administered to all public schools in Pennsylvania and are given in grades 3-6 according to the Pennsylvania Department of Education schedule. Makeup testing will occur during the window provided and according to the procedures required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. As a public charter school, GMCS follows the guidelines and requirements set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education regarding the PSSAs. Additional information can be found on their web site at: http://www.education.pa.gov/Pages/PSSA-Information.aspx#.Vh0o_rQ-DVp

Promotion and Retention

The Board recognizes that the educational growth of students will vary and that students should be placed in the educational setting appropriate to their needs at the various stages of their development.

It is the policy of the Board that each student shall be moved forward in a continuous pattern of educational growth that corresponds with his/her own development; the system of grade levels and academic standards established for each grade; and in accordance with the goals and objectives of a student's IEP or Section 504 Plan, if applicable. A student shall be promoted when s/he has successfully:

- Completed the course requirements at the presently assigned grade/level.
- Achieved the academic standards established for the present grade/level, based on the professional judgment of his/her teachers and the results of assessments.
- Demonstrated proficiency to move ahead to the educational program of the next level/grade.
- Demonstrated the degree of social, emotional, and physical maturation necessary for a successful learning experience at the next learning level/grade.

The CEO/Principal shall develop procedures for promotion and retention of students which assure that every effort will be made to remediate the student's difficulties before s/he is retained. The procedures shall be published at the school and made known to students and parents.

The recommendation of the classroom teacher/teachers and CEO/Principal shall be considered for promotion or retention of a student. Parents shall be informed reasonably in advance of the possibility of retention of a student within a grade.

The CEO/Principal shall be assigned the final responsibility for determining the promotion or retention of each student and will make that determination after consultation with the student's teacher(s) and relevant members of any IEP and/or multidisciplinary team, where applicable.

Criteria for Promotion and Non-promotion

"Retention in grade level" and "failure" causing retention in grade level are not synonymous in concept. Retention in grade level implies that a pupil is receiving instruction appropriate to his "ability" to learn and "perform," although the instructional level may be significantly below the expected "average" norm.

For example, a fifth grader at the end of the school year may be receiving instruction in reading at a pre-primer level and performing satisfactorily. However, that pupil may be a candidate for retention in

grade level because he or she has not completed enough of the fifth-grade program to conjecture success in sixth grade. The pupil's second year in the same grade would continue at the point in which instruction terminated in the first year.

"Failure" connotes completing a program unsatisfactorily. School employees shall exercise all available options not to place a pupil in a setting where failure is predictable. As a pupil matures and likewise demands more independence, he/she may choose not to comply with minimal standards of

mandated program, although he/she has evidenced that his/her performance could be satisfactory. All effort shall be directed toward changing the "attitudes" that have led to failure.

- **Promotion**: Standard policy of the school shall be to promote a pupil to the next grade level if, in the judgment of the teacher(s) and CEO/Principal, the pupil's achievement and performance have been satisfactory at the expected level of learning and if the higher grade level is more easily able to accommodate the pupil at the appropriate level of instruction.

- **Non-Promotion**: A pupil is retained in the present grade level, if in the judgment of the student's teacher(s), CEO/Principal and in consultation with the appropriate members of the professional staff, it is believed that the pupil can *benefit* by the retention, and if that present grade level can appropriately accommodate the pupil at the appropriate level of instruction. Factors that may be considered in retention/failure of pupils include at the discretion of the CEO/Principal the following:

    1. Academic potential
    2. Achievement/Performance on school-based, State and/or local assessments
    3. Attitude/Interest
    4. Chronological age
    5. Development - physical, emotional, social
    6. Previous retention
    7. Excessive unexcused absenteeism
    8. Completion of curriculum/content
    9. Completion of alternative methods of instruction (tutoring, summer school, etc.)

Schedule for Reporting Promotions/Non-Promotions

The following schedule is intended to outline the planning, evaluation and study that precedes the final recommendation for promotion or non-promotion of pupils:

1. First marking period
    a. Report card
    b. Parent Conference
2. Mid-Year
    a. If, at the midpoint of the school year, the above reports have indicated unsatisfactory progress, a special study of these pupils with the intent of making an all-out effort to aid the pupil in qualifying for promotion will be implemented.
    b. A Parent-Teacher conference shall be held for each pupil reported.
    c. When necessary, reports on pupil enrolling during the second semester are to be made as soon as possible.

3. Third marking period

    a. Decisions on promotions and non-promotions will be made during grade-level meetings and/or in conjunction with input from the Instructional Support Team to ensure greater uniformity of decisions on promotions and non-promotions.

    b. Parent-Teacher conference is to be held for the purpose of official notification of non-promotion.

    c. Conference is to be held with child prior to report cards.

    d. The pupil's promotion and non-promotion is to be indicated on the report card and cumulative folder.

No student will be allowed to take the next sequential course without successfully completing the prerequisite unless specifically allowed by the CEO/Principal. Students failing a required course must repeat the course in the regular school program or through the CEO/Principal -approved make-up alternative as determined appropriate by the CEO/Principal (such as Summer school program). The CEO/Principal will grant exceptions when it is determined to be in the best interest of the student or school.

The Student's IEP or Section 504 Plan will guide the promotion and retention of a special education student in accordance with Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code, as well as in accordance with the principles set forth above to the extent consistent with applicable state and federal regulations.

Special Education and Students with Disabilities

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) Policy

GMCS must ensure that FAPE is available to any individual child with a disability who needs special education and related services, even though the child has not failed or been retained in a course or grade and is advancing from grade to grade. The determination that a child described above is eligible, must be made on an individual basis by the group responsible within the Charter School for making eligibility determinations.

Student Find and Screening Policy

The CEO/Principal, or his/her designee, shall ensure that students with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated and a practical method is developed and implemented to determine which students with disabilities are currently receiving needed special education and related services.

Public Awareness

The CEO/Principal, or his/her designee shall ensure that the following public awareness activities occur concerning programs and services for students with disabilities who attend the school. GMCS shall annually publish a written notice of the following, in means accessible to the school families, including but not limited to in the School's newsletter, on the School's web site and at the school's main office:

1. A description of student identification activities,
2. A description of the School's special education services and programs,
3. Procedures for requesting services and programs, and
4. Procedures followed by the school to ensure the confidentiality of student information pertaining to students with disabilities pursuant to state and federal law.

Outreach Activities

The CEO/Principal or his or her designee shall ensure that the following outreach activities occur concerning programs and services for students with disabilities who attend GMCS:

- Offer parents and family information regarding training activities and publicize the availability of such activities to all parents;
- Provide to interested health and mental health professionals, daycare providers, county agency personnel and other interested professionals, information concerning the types of special education programs and services available in and through the School and information regarding the way parents can access those services; and
- Provide or obtain periodic training for the School's regular education staff and special education staff concerning the identification and evaluation of, and provision of special education programs and services to students with disabilities.

Screening

The CEO/Principal or his or her designee shall establish a system of screening to:

- Identify and provide screening for students prior to referral for an initial special education multidisciplinary team evaluation;
- Provide peer support for teachers and other staff members to assist them in working effectively with students in the general education curriculum;
- Conduct hearing and vision screening in accordance with the Public School Code of 1949 for the purpose of identifying students with hearing or vision difficulty so that they can be referred for assistance or recommended for evaluation for special education if necessary; and
- Identify students who may need special education services and programs.

Pre-Evaluation Screening

A pre-evaluation screening shall be performed for students who are identified as potentially needing special education services in accordance with the above subparagraph, relating to screening. The pre-evaluation screening process shall include:

- For students with academic concerns, an assessment of the student's functioning in the curriculum including curriculum-based or performance-based assessments;
- For students with behavioral concerns, a systematic observation of the student's behavior in the classroom or area in which the student is displaying difficulty;
- An intervention based on the results of the assessments conducted;
- An assessment of the student's response to the intervention;
- A determination of whether the assessed difficulties of the student are the result of a lack of instruction or limited English proficiency;
- A determination of whether the student's needs exceed the functional capacity of the regular education program, without special education programs and services, to maintain the student at an instructional level appropriate to the level and pace of instruction provided in that program;
- Activities designed to gain the participation of parents; and
- Controls to ensure that if screening activities have produced little or no improvement within the specified timeframe after initiation, the student shall be referred for a multidisciplinary team evaluation.

The screening activities shall not serve as a bar to the right of a parent to request a multidisciplinary team evaluation at any time. When the completion of screening activities prior to referral for a multidisciplinary team evaluation will result in serious mental or physical harm, or significant educational regression, to the student or others, GMCS may initiate a multidisciplinary team reevaluation without completion of the screening process. Whenever an evaluation is conducted without a pre-evaluation screening, the activities described shall be completed as part of that evaluation whenever possible.

Evaluations, Reevaluations, and Independent Evaluations Policy

In accordance with applicable state and federal regulations, the Board recognizes that to properly identify a student as eligible for special education services, the school must have a process and procedures

for evaluations and reevaluations that are necessary to identify specific learning disabilities in accordance with its application for charter. The CEO/Principal or his/her designee is directed to implement all procedures in accordance with this policy. To determine that a child has a specific learning disability, the school shall address whether the child achieves adequately for the child's age or meets state-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas when provided with learning experiences and scientifically based instruction appropriate for the child's age or state-approved grade-level standards:

1. Oral expression
2. Listening comprehension
3. Written expression
4. Basic reading skill

5. Reading fluency skills
6. Reading comprehension
7. Mathematics calculation
8. Mathematics problem solving

In addition to the above, one of the following procedures shall be followed:

1. A process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention, which includes documentation that:
    a. The student received high-quality instruction in the general education setting.
    b. Research-based interventions were provided to the student.
    c. Student progress was regularly monitored.

2. A process that examines whether a child exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses, relative to intellectual ability as defined by a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement, or relative to age or grade.

3. A process that determines that its findings under this section are not primarily the result of:
    a. A visual, hearing, or orthopedic disability
    b. Intellectual disability
    c. Emotional disturbance
    d. Cultural factors
    e. Environmental or economic disadvantage
    f. Limited English proficiency
4. A process that ensures that underachievement in a child suspected of having a specific learning disability is not due to lack of appropriate instruction in reading or mathematics by considering documentation that:
    a. Prior to, or as a part of, the referral process, the child was provided scientifically based instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel, as indicated by observations of routine classroom instruction.
    b. Repeated assessments of achievement were conducted at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction, which was provided to the child's parents.

All evaluations (whether an initial evaluation or a re-evaluation) needed to determine a child's eligibility for special education services must be provided by the school at no charge to the parents. If a child needs special education, the special programs, and related services as determined by the IEP Team will be provided by the school at no charge to the parents.

Requests for evaluation under the Special Education Program must be made in writing to the school administration. Parents may request an evaluation at any time. The school shall make the Permission to Evaluate – Evaluation Request form readily available for that purpose. If a request is made orally to any professional employee or administrator of the school, that individual shall provide a copy of the Permission to Evaluate – Evaluation Request form to the parents within ten (10) calendar days of the oral request.

The evaluation is conducted by an Individual Education Plan (IEP) Team, which consists of a group of qualified professionals and the student's parents. The IEP team shall include a certified school psychologist when evaluating a child for autism, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, other health impairments, specific learning disability, or a traumatic brain injury. Other professionals may include hearing or visual specialists, a medical doctor, and occupational, physical, or speech therapists. The evaluation must include information from the child's teacher(s), such as the results of informal tests and narrative statements describing the student's strengths and needs, as well as verbal and/or written input from the parent(s) as to the student's medical, social, and academic history and observations from the home. Once the evaluation is completed, the IEP team reviews the evaluation materials to determine whether the child has a learning disability.

The initial evaluation shall be completed, and a copy of the evaluation report presented to the parents no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the school receives written parental consent for evaluation. Calendar days beginning with the day after the last day of school in the spring, up to and including the day before the first day of school in the fall will not be counted in tabulating the 60-calendar day deadline for providing the initial evaluation report. The evaluator shall prepare and sign the full report of the evaluation containing information such as: a clear explanation of the testing and assessment results; a complete summary of all test scores, including, for all standardized testing administered, all applicable full scale or battery scores, domain or composite scores, and subtest scores reported in standard, scaled, or T-score format; a complete summary of all information obtained or reviewed from sources other than testing conducted by the evaluator; and specified recommendations for educational programming and/or placement, if necessary. Copies of the Evaluation Report shall be disseminated to the parents at least ten (10) school days prior to the meeting of the IEP Team unless this requirement is waived by a parent in writing.

Reevaluations

Once the child has been identified as being eligible for special education, the child must be re-evaluated periodically to determine whether the child's needs have changed. A re-evaluation must be conducted every three years, except for students who have been determined to have intellectual disability. Students who have been determined to have intellectual disability must be re-evaluated every two years.

The re-evaluation process begins with a review of existing evaluation data by the IEP Team. The information that the IEP Team must review includes, but is not limited to, existing evaluation data; evaluations and information provided by the parents; current classroom-based assessments and observations; observations by teachers and services providers; and whether any additions or modifications to the special education and related services are needed to enable the child to meet the measurable annual goals in the IEP and to participate as appropriate in the general curriculum.

At the end of the review, the IEP Team concludes either that no additional data is needed to determine continued eligibility for special education and related services, or that there is a need for additional data. When additional data is needed to complete a re-evaluation to determine whether the child continues to be a child with a learning disability and is still in need of special education, school officials must also obtain written permission through a formal Permission to Re-Evaluate form. However, if the school has made "reasonable attempts" to get permission and has failed to get a response, it may proceed with the re-evaluation without the form.

Reasonable attempts to obtain parental permission must consist of:

- Documented telephone calls
- Registered (return receipt required) and First-Class mail letters to the parents
- Visits to the home or parents' place of business

Re-evaluations shall be completed, and a copy of the evaluation report presented to the parents no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the school receives written parental consent for evaluation. Calendar days beginning with the day after the last day of school in the spring, up to and including the day before the first day of school in the fall will not be counted in tabulating the 60-calendar day deadline for providing the revaluation evaluation report. Copies of the re-evaluation report shall be disseminated to the parents at least ten (10) school days prior to the meeting of the IEP team, unless this requirement is waived by a parent in writing.

(Revised August 29, 2019)

Assistive Technology

The Board recognizes that assistive technology devices and/or services may be essential factors in meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities. Both federal and state special education laws explicitly include assistive technology devices and/or services among those services that local school districts must provide for a student with a disability, at no cost to parents, if determined by the IEP team to be necessary for the student to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

As defined in federal and state law, an assistive technology device is any item, piece of equipment, or product system--whether acquired commercially, "off-the-shelf," modified, or customized--that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of students with disabilities. Assistive technology devices range from a simple switch for a student with physical limitations to a sophisticated vocal output augmentative communication device for a student with a severe speech impairment.

Assistive technology service is any service that directly assists a student with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. By virtue of these expansive definitions, an exhaustive yet specific list of what constitutes assistive technology devices and/or services is impossible to create. Such services may be required as part of special education, related services, or supplementary aids and services required to enable a student to be educated in the least restrictive environment.

The Board further recognizes that, as with every special education service, the IEP team is responsible for determining if an assistive technology device or service is necessary for a student with a disability to receive a FAPE. Assistive technology devices and services are not ends in and of themselves. Rather, the IEP team should focus on whether assistive technology devices and services are necessary for the eligible student to meet educational demands and therefore receive a FAPE. Therefore, to the extent that assistive technology devices and services may be required as part of special education, related services, or supplementary aids or services, a student's IEP must include a statement describing the full extent of needed devices (e.g., no-, low-, and high-technology and back-up strategies) and service(s) as well as the amount of such service(s). The provision of assistive technology devices and services may not be conditional on subsequent approval by entities outside the IEP process (i.e., PennTech, IU, etc.).

All procedural safeguards and timelines set forth in federal and state laws for completing multidisciplinary evaluations and reevaluations and for developing and implementing IEPs are fully applicable to assistive technology devices and or services when they are necessary to ensure eligible students receive a FAPE.

It is the school's responsibility to provide assistive technology devices and services when they are included as part of a student's IEP. The school is responsible for the maintenance and repair of assistive technology devices used to implement a student's IEP. Assistive technology devices should be secured on loan or leased if manufacturer delay is anticipated.

Administration should seek assistance from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regarding the purchase and payment for assistive technology and should inform the family not to assume the device will be billed to Medical Assistance (MA), even if a student's MA number is provided on an equipment acquisition form. If the device is billed to MA, GMCS administration will notify the parents by sending a transfer of ownership letter. When the parents are in receipt of the transfer of ownership letter, the billing process has begun. If the billing is ultimately rejected by MA, the parents will be informed by a letter. Administration may not delay or deny a student's receipt of assistive technology while it attempts to secure MA funding.

Independent Evaluations Policy

The Board recognizes that in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, including Chapter 711 of

Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code, a parent has the right to obtain an Independent Educational Evaluation ("IEE") of the school, to the extent permitted by law, including the right of the school to file a due process complaint to show that its evaluation is appropriate and to contest the need for an IEE. An IEE is defined under applicable requirements as an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school.

A parent has the right to an IEE of his or her child if the parent disagrees with an evaluation of the child for special education eligibility performed by the school. If a parent requests an IEE, the CEO/ Principal or his/her designee is directed to provide the parent with information about where the parent

may obtain an IEE and about the school's criteria that apply to IEEs. As this policy contains information about the school's criteria, this policy should be provided to parents upon request.

The IEE may be conducted at the public expense. Public expense is defined as follows: the school either pays for the full cost of the evaluation or ensures that the evaluation is otherwise provided at no cost to the parent, consistent with the provisions of Part B of IDEA 2004. If a parent requests an IEE at public expense, the school must, without unnecessary delay, either:

1. File a due process complaint to request a hearing to show that its evaluation of the child is appropriate; or
2. Provide an IEE at public expense, unless the school demonstrates in a hearing that the evaluation obtained did not meet the school's criteria.

Pursuant to the policy, the CEO/Principal or his/her designee is directed to perform the following:

1. Provide the IEE at public expense or initiate due process without unreasonable delay.
2. Ensure that the IEP team considers a valid IEE.
3. Maintain a list of qualified independent evaluators in each of the various disciplines commonly relied upon to provide education-related evaluations and assessments and shall make that list reasonably available to any parent who requests it.
4. Notify parents when declining the parent's request for an IEE at public expense and the reason for denial of the IEE.

If an independent evaluation is conducted at public expense, the criteria under which the evaluation is obtained, including the location of the evaluation and qualifications of the examiner, must be the same as the criteria that the school uses when it initiates an evaluation to the extent that those criteria are consistent with the parents' right to an independent evaluation. These criteria must be made known to the parent. The school may not impose conditions or timelines related to obtaining an evaluation at public expense.

If the school initiates a hearing and the final decision is that the school's evaluation is appropriate, the parent still reserves the right to request an independent evaluation obtained at the parents' expense. If a parent requests an evaluation at his/her expense, the school shall request, in writing, for the parent to provide the reason he/she objects to the public evaluation. The school shall state in the letter that the requested explanation is not required, and the school may not unreasonably delay either providing the independent evaluation at private expense or initiating a hearing to defend its evaluation.

If a parent obtains an independent evaluation at private expense, the results of the evaluation must be considered by the school, if it meets the school's criteria, in any decision made with respect to the provision of a FAPE to the child and may be presented as evidence at a hearing relating to the child.

All evaluations performed must take into account the child's English language skills and ethnicity to ensure that the testing and evaluation will not be unfair or discriminatory. Tests must be given in the child's native language or mode of communication (such as Braille or sign language) unless it is clearly

not feasible to do so. Evaluations must also take into account the child's disability to be sure the test measures what it is supposed to measure.

The specific tests used in the evaluation process depend upon the problems the child is experiencing. In most cases, the child will be given several tests to help find strengths and needs. Teacher and IEP team member input must be considered. Information that parents provide must also be included in the evaluation. Evaluators must be properly certified and qualified to administer the tests, assessments and evaluation techniques used. Such certification and qualification requirements must meet those mandated in Pennsylvania. Evaluation techniques must be consistent with the most up to date techniques commonly practiced in the evaluator's field. Evaluations must not be racially, culturally, or otherwise biased or discriminatory. Recommendations must be based upon the child and must not be generalized.

A complete copy of the independent evaluation report must be made available to the IEP team. Parents are to be given a release of records so that information from the school (including records, observations and other information gathered regarding the child) about the child may be disclosed to the independent evaluator.

The school will comply with and monitor changes in all state and federal timelines, procedures, and due process requirements throughout the entire IEE process. If there are changes in state or federal law regarding any part of this policy, the school will comply with state and federal law.

Alternate Assessment of Students Policy

The CEO/Principal or his/her designee shall ensure that all children with disabilities are included in all general state and district-wide assessment programs, including the PSSA, with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary and as indicated in their respective IEPs.

Alternate assessments such as the PASA must be aligned with the state's academic content standards and student academic achievement standards or if the state has adopted alternate academic achievement standards, measure the achievement of children with disabilities against those standards.

GMCS must maintain information regarding the number of children who participate in regular assessments; were provided accommodations to participate in those assessments; and participate in alternate assessments.

The CEO/Principal or his/her designee is directed as follows:

1. Develop procedures to ensure that students with disabilities participate in the PSSA or PASA to the extent consistent with applicable law.
2. Monitor student participation in statewide assessment to foster participation.
3. Provide training opportunities to personnel regarding statewide assessment participation and PSSA and PASA requirements.
4. Make Pennsylvania's guidelines regarding statewide assessments available to personnel.
5. Develop procedures to prepare students in test-taking techniques prior to test administration.

6. Review assessment data and use data to drive any needed program changes, and report or make recommendations to the Board regarding the needed changes.
7. Maintain information regarding the performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments.

IEPs must include a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives for children who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards.

IEPs must include a statement of any accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on statewide and district-wide assessments consistent with law.

IEPs must, if the IEP team determines that the child shall take an alternate assessment on a particular statewide or school-wide assessment of student achievement, provide a statement of why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment, and why the alternate assessment selected is appropriate for the child.

Instruction Conducted in the Home and Homebound Instruction Policy

"Instruction conducted in the home," which is listed in the continuum of special education alternative placements in federal regulations, should not be confused with "homebound instruction," which describes the instruction a school may provide when a student has been excused from compulsory attendance under 22 Pa. Code §11.25 due to temporary mental or physical illness or other urgent reasons.

Instruction Conducted in the Home

Instruction conducted in the home is recognized as a placement option on the continuum of alternative placements for students with disabilities. The use of instruction conducted in the home is restricted to students whose needs require full-time special education services and programs outside the school setting for the entire day. Ordinarily, these are students who, because of a severe medical condition or mobility impairment, are unable to leave home to attend school.

Instruction conducted in the home is not an appropriate option in other situations, such as when a school is experiencing difficulty in arranging the program or placement that a student requires. In such cases, the school should continue to serve the student in accordance with his/her IEP, while taking steps to promptly arrange for the services that the student requires. These steps may include seeking assistance from the PDE or from other child-serving agencies involved with the student.

Although instruction conducted in the home is not ordinarily permitted when the student has no condition preventing him or her from leaving the home, there are occasional, exceptional cases in which the parents and school agree to instruction conducted in the home as a short-term option. In these cases, the school must immediately file a report with the PDE the school is also responsible for informing the PDE when the short-term placement has concluded.

Although a student placed by his/her IEP team on instruction conducted in the home does not receive his or her program in the school setting, he/she remains entitled to a FAPE equal to his/her

non-disabled peers, unless this amount of instruction would jeopardize the child's health or welfare. In such cases, the IEP team can agree on fewer hours of instruction. provided the student still receives a FAPE. In all circumstances involving the placement of a student on instruction conducted in the home, the school must file the form attached to the PDE's Basic Education Circular, 22 Pa. Code §342.42(c), issued September 1, 1997, or any form promulgated after the adoption of this policy, with the PDE within 5 days of the placement. The form is also located at http://www.pattan.k12.pa.us. The school must supply the PDE with information about the student, his or her disability, the anticipated duration of and reason for the placement. In addition, the school must provide information regarding the person in the school whom the PDE can contact to discuss the placement if necessary.

(Revised and approved June 27, 2024)

Homebound Instruction

The Board shall provide individual instruction to students confined to home or hospital for physical disability, illness, or injury, administrative or disciplinary reasons or when such confinement is recommended for psychological or psychiatric reasons. Although homebound instruction is not a special education placement option for students with disabilities, there are occasions when a student with a disability may receive homebound instruction due to a temporary excusal from compulsory attendance in the same manner as the student's non-disabled peers. Schools must also file the report with the PDE for students with disabilities for whom homebound instruction is approved and must also file a follow up report when the temporary placement has concluded, and the student has returned to school. In addition, schools must keep on file the physician's recommendation for homebound instruction. If homebound instruction is provided and there is a need to extend the duration of that instruction for a particular student beyond a three-month period, the extension requires the approval of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). PDE will not act on any request for an extension until the initial three months has expired. When an extension is requested, PDE requires that a licensed practitioner submit to the school district an updated examination and extension request within two weeks of the impending extension.

If an extension is not granted by either the school district or PDE, the student must return to school.

If the temporary condition that precipitated the excusal from attendance for a student with disabilities results in a change in the student's need for specially designed instruction, the school may need to re-evaluate the student. The school may also need to reconvene the student's IEP team to determine whether it is necessary to revise the IEP and change the student's placement to instruction conducted in the home.

Application for individual instruction shall certify the nature of the illness or disability, state the probable duration of the confinement, and must be submitted to the CEO/Principal who will forward such recommendation to the Board for approval.

The Board will provide individual instruction only for those confinements expected to last at least four (4) weeks, but such exceptions may be made as the CEO/Principal deems advisable and so recommends. Once approved by the Board, homebound instruction will be provided up to a maximum of ten (10) hours each week.

Full-time:

Homebound instruction shall be structured based on an hour of weekly instruction as equivalent to a day of school attendance. Therefore, five hours of weekly instruction are equivalent of five days of school attendance. For every hour less than the total of five hours of homebound instruction provided (or 2.5 hours for half-day attendees), the student is marked as absent- one day for each hour missed. Hours are counted on a weekly basis; a student cannot be counted as present by combining hours from consecutive weeks. For example, three hours of homebound instruction one week and seven hours the next week cannot count as full time for the two weeks.

Part-time;

Homebound instruction may also be structured such that the student attends school part-time, as his or her condition allows; homebound instruction requests need not be restricted to students who are unable to attend school at all. If a student attends school for partial days, then homebound instruction would be prorated. For example, if a student attends school half-days, only 2.5 hours of homebound instruction is required for the equivalent of five days of instruction.

PSSA:

A homebound student is required to participate in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). If the student is incapable of participating at the school, the individual who is providing the homebound instruction should be trained to administer the assessment and then administer the test to the student in his/her home.

The program of individual instruction given to each student shall be in accordance with the standards established by the Secretary of Education. The CEO/Principal reserves the right to withhold individual instruction when any of the following circumstances apply:

1. The instructor's presence in the place of a student's confinement presents a hazard to the health and /or well-being of the teacher;
2. A parent or other adult in authority is not at home with the student during the hours of instruction; or
3. The condition of the student is such as to preclude his/her benefit from such instruction.

(Revised and approved August 29, 2019)
(Revised and approved June 27, 2024)

Intensive Interagency Policy

School administration shall ensure that GMCS identifies, reports, and provides a FAPE for all students with disabilities including those students needing intensive interagency approaches.

The school must identify any students reported as Coredero class members, students currently on instruction in the home and students with disabilities on homebound instruction.

School administration shall have procedures to ensure that services are located for difficult-to-place students. School administration shall also utilize the Regional Interagency Coordinators to assist in interagency planning and to mitigate and/ or eliminate barriers to placement. School administration shall ensure that training is provided regarding interagency approaches.

Where appropriate, other child-serving systems, such as mental health, intellectual disability, child protective services, juvenile probation, and drug-alcohol treatment services are used for difficult to place students.

Least Restrictive Environment

School administration shall ensure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are non-disabled and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular education environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Records Management, Acquisition, and Confidentiality

See *Records Management, Acquisition and Confidentiality* in the *Students' Rights and Responsibilities Section* of this manual.

Dispute Resolution and Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy (Special Education)

It is the policy of GMCS to ensure that disputes between parents and the school regarding the identification, evaluation, programming, and services available to eligible students are addressed effectively and in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Every effort should be made to address and resolve disputes at the IEP team-level if possible. The CEO/Principal or his/her designee is directed to be aware of alternative dispute resolution procedures and programs, including facilitated IEP team meetings and mediation, and utilize those programs when deemed appropriate. The CEO/Principal or his/her designee is responsible for ensuring that any agreements entered because of a mediation session are implemented in accordance with the state regulations and is directed to maintain evidence of implementation.

When alternative dispute resolution is not practical or otherwise appropriate, or when a due process complaint is filed, the CEO/Principal or his/her designee is directed to follow applicable state procedures regarding the filing and answering of a due process complaint, including requirements relating to dissemination of procedural safeguards. The CEO/Principal or his/her designee is responsible for ensuring that due process decisions are implemented in accordance with the state regulations and is directed to maintain evidence of implementation.

Section 504 Policy

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C.A. § 794) states, "No otherwise qualified individual in the United States, as defined in section 705(20) of this title, shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to

discrimination under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency or by the United States Postal Service."

Under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, some school age students with disabilities who do not meet the eligibility criteria outlined above might nevertheless be eligible for special protections and for adaptations and accommodations in instruction, facilities, and activities. Students are entitled to such protections, adaptations, and accommodations if they have a mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

It is the intent of the Board to ensure that students who are handicapped within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are provided with appropriate services. Students may be handicapped under this policy even though they do not require services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004).

Rights of handicapped students and their parents under Section 504 will be enforced. The school will make every attempt to resolve alleged Section 504 grievances informally. A parent or guardian who believes that his or her student has been denied educational services by the school may request a hearing and should advise the CEO/Principal in writing. If parents, students, or any adult on behalf of students feel discrimination has occurred based upon physical or mental disability, but is not directly related to identification, evaluation, and/ or accommodations for a student, they may file a discrimination complaint with the U.S. Office for Civil Rights at the following address:

Office for Civil Rights U.S.
Department of Education 400
Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202.

Access to Instructional Materials Policy

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education adopted the National Instructional Materials Accessibility

Standard (NIMAS) as defined in the Education of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 ("IDEA"), for the purpose of providing print instructional materials in alternate accessible formats or specialized formats to blind persons or other persons with print disabilities in a timely manner. Pursuant to the state regulations which incorporate the IDEA, the school will adopt NIMAS to ensure the timely provision of high quality, accessible instructional materials to children who are blind or other persons with print disabilities. The NIMAS refers to a standard for source files of print instructional materials created by publishers that may be converted into accessible instructional materials.

The school shall, in a timely manner, provide print instructional materials in specialized, accessible formats (that is, Braille, audio, digital, large-print, and the like) to children who are blind or other persons with print disabilities, as defined in 2 U.S.C.A. § 135a (regarding books and

sound-reproduction records for blind and other physically handicapped residents; annual appropriations; and purchases).

The school shall, in a timely manner, provide instructional materials under 2 U.S.C.A. § 135a if they take steps to ensure that children who are blind or other persons with print disabilities have access to their accessible format instructional materials at the same time that students without disabilities have access to instructional materials. The school will not withhold instructional materials from other students until instructional materials in accessible formats are available.

Receipt of a portion of the instructional materials in alternate accessible or specialized format will be considered receipt in a timely manner if the material received covers the chapters that are currently being taught in the student's class.

If a child who is blind or other person with a print disability enrolls in the school after the start of the school year, the school shall take steps to ensure that the student has access to accessible format instructional materials within ten (10) school days from the time it is determined that the child requires printed instructional materials in an alternate accessible or specialized format.

The school may coordinate with the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) to facilitate the production of and delivery of accessible materials to children who are blind or other persons with print disabilities. The NIMAC refers to the central repository, established under section 674(e) of the

Education of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which is responsible for processing, storing, and distributing NIMAS files of textbooks and core instructional materials.

Schools coordinating with NIMAC shall require textbook publishers to deliver the contents of print instructional materials to the NIMAC in NIMAS format files on or before delivery of the print instructional materials to the School. Schools that choose not to coordinate with NIMAC may require that publishers deliver the contents of print instructional materials to the NIMAC in NIMAS format files on or before delivery of the print instructional materials to the School.

Extended School Year Services ("ESY") Policy

The Board directs that the school comply with the requirements incorporated by reference in 34 CFR §300.106 (relating to extended school year services). The CEO/Principal or his/her designee is directed to develop procedures consistent with this policy and applicable laws.

The CEO/Principal or his/her designee is directed to ensure that the school uses the following standards for determining whether a student with disabilities requires ESY as part of the student's program:

1. At each IEP meeting for a student with disabilities, the school shall determine whether the student is eligible for ESY services, and if so, shall make subsequent determinations about the services to be provided.

2. In considering whether a student is eligible for ESY services, the IEP team shall consider the following factors, however, no single factor will be considered determinative: Whether the student reverts to a lower level of functioning, as evidenced by a measurable decrease in skills or behaviors that occurs because of an interruption in educational programming (Regression).
    a. Whether the student has the capacity to recover the skills or behavior patterns in which regression occurred to a level demonstrated prior to the interruption of educational programming (Recoupment).
    b. Whether the student's difficulties with regression and recoupment make it unlikely that the student will maintain the skills and behaviors relevant to IEP goals and objectives.
    c. The extent to which the student has mastered and consolidated an important skill or behavior at the point when educational programming would be interrupted.
    d. The extent to which a skill or behavior is particularly crucial for the student to meet the IEP goals of self-sufficiency and independence from caretakers.
    e. The extent to which successive interruptions in educational programming result in a student's withdrawal from the learning process.
    f. Whether the student's disability is severe, such as autism/pervasive developmental disorder, serious emotional disturbance, severe intellectual disability, degenerative impairments with mental involvement and severe multiple disabilities.

Reliable sources of information regarding a student's educational needs, propensity to progress, recoupment potential and year to year progress may include the following:

1. Progress on goals in consecutive IEPs.
2. Progress reports maintained by educators, therapists and others having direct contact with the student before and after interruptions in the education program.
3. Reports by parents of negative changes in adaptive behaviors or in other skill areas.
4. Medical or other agency reports indicating degenerative-type difficulties, which become exacerbated during breaks in educational services.
5. Observations and opinions by educators, parents, and others.
6. Results of tests, including criterion-referenced tests, curriculum-based assessments, ecological life skills assessments and other equivalent measures.

The need for ESY services will not be based on any of the following:

1. The desire or need for daycare or respite care services.
2. The desire or need for a summer recreation program.
3. The desire or need for other programs or services that while may provide educational benefit, are not required to ensure the provision of a FAPE.

Students with severe disabilities such as autism/pervasive developmental disorder, serious emotional disturbance; severe intellectual disability; degenerative impairments with mental involvement; and severe multiple disabilities require expeditious determinations of eligibility for ESY services to be provided as follows:

1. Parents of students with severe disabilities shall be notified by the school of the annual review meeting to ensure their participation.
2. An IEP review meeting must occur no later than **February 28** of each school year for students with severe disabilities.
3. The notice of recommended educational placement (NOREP) shall be issued to the parent no later than **March 31** of the school year for students with severe disabilities.
4. If a student with a severe disability transfers into the school after the dates in paragraphs (2) and (3), and the ESY eligibility decision has not been made, the eligibility and program content must be determined at the IEP meeting.

The eligibility for ESY services of all students with disabilities shall be considered at the IEP meeting. ESY determinations for students other than those having severe disabilities shall be made in a timely manner but are not subject to the timelines for students with the severe disabilities described above. In cases where ESY is denied, evidence to support the denial is to be made part of the student's file.

If the parents disagree with the school's recommendation on ESY, the parents will be afforded an expedited due process hearing in accordance with applicable laws. Parents are to be provided with the required procedural safeguards notice.

ESY programs are to be individualized regarding the number of services and individually appropriate goals and related services.

Timelines contained in this policy may be changed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the school must follow.

Related Services

The Board recognizes that charter schools must comply with Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code regarding the provision of related services.

Pursuant to 34 CFR § 300.34, related services, provided at no cost to family, are transportation and those developmental, corrective, and other supportive services that are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. Such services may include the following, depending upon the child's need and applicable state regulations:

1. Speech-language pathology and audiology services.
2. Interpreting services.

3. Psychological services.
4. Physical and occupational therapy.Recreation, including therapeutic recreation.
5. Early identification and assessment of disabilities in children.
6. Counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling.
7. Orientation and mobility services.
8. Medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes.
9. School health services and school nurse services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training.

Related services do not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, the optimization of that device's functioning (e.g., mapping), maintenance of that device, or the replacement of that device. However, nothing shall limit the right of a child with a surgically implanted device (e.g., cochlear implant) to receive related services that are determined by the IEP Team to be necessary for the child to receive FAPE. Nothing shall limit the responsibility to appropriately monitor and maintain medical devices that are needed to maintain the health and safety of the child, including breathing, nutrition, or operation of other bodily functions, while the child is transported to and from school or is at school. Nothing shall prevent the routine checking of an external component of a surgically implanted device to make sure it is functioning properly, as required in 34 CFR 300.113(b).

It is the intent of the Board to ensure that all students with disabilities have a FAPE available to them that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and to prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. The school will provide related services to include those services which the IEP team determines are necessary for a student after a comprehensive evaluation and the development of an IEP. The types of services provided by the school include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Audiology services including:
    a. Identification of children with hearing loss;
    b. Determination of the range, nature, and degree of hearing loss, including referral for medical or other professional attention for the habilitation of hearing;
    c. Provision of habilitative activities, such as language habilitation, auditory training, speech reading (lip-reading), hearing evaluation, and speech conservation;
    d. Creation and administration of programs for prevention of hearing loss;
    e. Counseling and guidance of children, parents, and teachers regarding hearing loss; and
    f. Determination of children's needs for group and individual amplification, selecting and fitting an appropriate aid, and evaluating the effectiveness of amplification.
2. Counseling services provided by qualified social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors, or other qualified personnel.

3. Early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, meaning the implementation of a formal plan for identifying a disability as early as possible in a child's life.
4. Interpreting services, including:
    a. The following, when used with respect to children who are deaf or hard of hearing: Oral transliteration services, cued language transliteration services, sign language transliteration and interpreting services, and transcription services, such as communication access real-time translation (CART), C-Print, and TypeWell; and
    b. Special interpreting services for children who are deaf-blind.
5. Medical services provided by a licensed physician to determine a child's medically related disability that results in the child's need for special education and related services.
6. Occupational therapy provided by a qualified occupational therapist, which includes the following:
    a. Improving, developing, or restoring functions impaired or lost through illness, injury, or deprivation;
    b. Improving ability to perform tasks for independent functioning if functions are impaired or lost; and
    c. Preventing, through early intervention, initial or further impairment or loss of function.
7. Orientation and mobility services provided to blind or visually impaired children by qualified personnel to enable those students to attain systematic orientation to and safe movement within their environments in school, home, and community that includes teaching children the following, as appropriate:
    a. Spatial and environmental concepts and use of information received by the senses (such as sound, temperature, and vibrations) to establish, maintain, or regain orientation and line of travel (e.g., using sound at a traffic light to cross the street);
    b. Use of the long cane or a service animal to supplement visual travel skills or as a tool for safely negotiating the environment for children with no available travel vision;
    c. To understand and use remaining vision and distance low vision aids; and
    d. Other concepts, techniques, and tools.
8. Parent counseling and training that assists parents in understanding the special needs of their child; provides parents with information about child development; and helps parents to acquire the necessary skills that will allow them to support the implementation of their child's IEP or IFSP.
9. Physical therapy services provided by a qualified physical therapist.
10. Psychological services, including:
    a. Administering psychological and educational tests, and other assessment procedures;
    b. Interpreting assessment results;

c. Obtaining, integrating, and interpreting information about child behavior and conditions relating to learning;

d. Consulting with other staff members in planning school programs to meet the special educational needs of children as indicated by psychological tests, interviews, direct observation, and behavioral evaluations;

e. Planning and managing a program of psychological services, including psychological counseling for children and parents; and

f. Assisting in developing positive behavioral intervention strategies.

11. Recreation, including:

    a. Assessment of leisure function;

    b. Therapeutic recreation services;

    c. Recreation programs in schools and community agencies; and

    d. Leisure education.

12. Rehabilitation counseling services provided by qualified personnel in individual or group sessions that focus specifically on career development, employment preparation, achieving independence, and integration in the workplace and community of a student with a disability. Rehabilitation services also include vocational rehabilitation services provided to a student with a disability by vocational rehabilitation programs funded under the Rehabilitation Act.

13. School health services and school nurse services that are designed to enable a child with a disability to receive a FAPE as described in the child's IEP. School nurse services are services provided by a qualified school nurse. School health services are services that may be provided by either a qualified school nurse or other qualified person.

14. Social work services, including:

    a. Preparing a social or developmental history on a child with a disability;

    b. Group and individual counseling with the child and family;

    c. Working in partnership with parents and others on those problems in a child's living situation (home, school, and community) that affect the child's adjustment in school;

    d. Mobilizing school and community resources to enable the child to learn as effectively as possible in his or her educational program; and

    e. Assisting in developing positive behavioral intervention strategies.

15. Speech-language pathology services, including:

    a. Identification of children with speech or language impairments;

    b. Diagnosis and appraisal of specific speech or language impairments;

    c. Referral for medical or other professional attention necessary for the habilitation of speech or language impairments;

d. Provision of speech and language services for the habilitation or prevention of communicative impairments; and

e. Counseling and guidance of parents, children, and teachers regarding speech and language impairments.

16. Transportation, including:

a. Travel to and from school and between schools;

b. Travel in and around school buildings; and

c. Specialized equipment (such as special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps), if required to provide special transportation for a child with a disability.

The school may provide related services in the home to students who require related services in the home as part of the IEP. When related services are not provided in the school, the school arranges transportation to and from the location of related services in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations.

Related services are provided to students during normal school hours and the school's regular school year as dictated by the student's IEP or during times and hours as otherwise agreed upon by the student's IEP team. Related services are provided during the extended school year to the extent extended school year services are applicable for a particular student pursuant to state regulations and the student's IEP. (Revised and approved October 21, 2019)

Non-Academic Services and Settings Policy

In accordance with applicable state and federal regulations regarding students with disabilities, the Board recognizes and directs as follows:

1. The school must take steps, including the provision of supplementary aids and services determined appropriate and necessary by the child's IEP and/or Section 504 Team, to provide nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities in the manner necessary to afford children with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in those services and activities as their nondisabled peers. Children with disabilities shall participate with nondisabled children in those services and activities to the extent appropriate under applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities may include counseling services, athletics, transportation, health services, recreational activities, special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the school.

2. The school must ensure that each child with a disability has the supplementary aids and services determined by the child's IEP Team to be appropriate and necessary for the child to participate in nonacademic settings when same are required to afford a student with equal opportunity or are otherwise required under IDEA 2004 and/or Section 504.

Health, Safety, and Substance Abuse

Student Wellness Policy

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School is committed to the optimal development of every student. Our school believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

This policy outlines our school's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in our school have access to healthy foods throughout the school in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards.
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors.
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school.
- Our school engages in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness.
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school.
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of our school in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits
- Our school maintains oversight, communication, and monitoring of this policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students and staff in our school. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

Our school has a wellness committee that meets at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this wellness policy.

Leadership

The CEO/Principal will facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and ensure our school complies with the policy. The designated official for oversight is: Dr. Faye Pleso CEO/Principal

Title/Relationship to our school	Role on Committee

PE/Health Teacher	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Nurse	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Board Member	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Parent	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Food Service Coordinator	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Assistant Principal	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation

Implementation Plan

Our school will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of the wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines specific to our school, and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

The Wellness policy can be found at:
https://www.gettysburgmontessoricharter.org/student-parent-info/

Recordkeeping

Our school will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy in the CEO's office. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy.
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public.
- Documentation of efforts to review and update our schools wellness policy.
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements.
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy. ● Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of our schools wellness policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

Our school will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. Our school will make this information available via the district website and/or district-wide communications. Our school will provide as much information as possible about our school nutrition environment. This will include a summary of our schools events

or activities related to the wellness policy implementation. Annually, our school will publicize the name and contact information on how the public can get involved in the wellness committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, our school will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which our school is in compliance with the wellness policy.
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of our schools wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is CEO/Principal, 717-334-1120.

The CEO/Principal will monitor our school's compliance with this wellness policy.

Our school will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communication

GMCS is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. Our school will actively communicate ways in which representatives of DWC and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that school.

GMCS will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in school nutrition standards.

GMCSl will use electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy.

GMCS will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community and accomplished through means similar to other ways that our school is communicating important school information with parents.

GMCS will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. Our school will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

Nutrition

School Meals

Our school is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams trans-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. Our school programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

Our school participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). Our school is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students
- Are appealing and attractive to children
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (Our school offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards.) ● Promote healthy food and beverage choices using as many of the following Smarter Lunchroom Techniques:
- - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.
- - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal. ● Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated (meets Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria).
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school. ● Our school will implement the following Farm to School activities (meets Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria:

- Grade bands will host field trips to local farms.
- Agriculture and nutrition are incorporated into the learning environment through letters to farmers, nutrition education, and Ag Lab days.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day. Our school will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

- Water cups/jugs will be available in the cafeteria if a drinking fountain is not present. ● All water sources will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, and other methods for delivering drinking water.
- Students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards Website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs.

Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students, and the community.

Our school will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. The promotion will occur through at least:

- Ensuring food and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.
- Implementing evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal program by using the PDE School Nutrition Programs resources found on PEARS.

Nutrition Education Goals

Our school will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. We will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health.
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social studies, and elective subjects.
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods.
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise).

- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, farm to school programs, and other foods and nutrition-related community services.
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.
- Includes lessons and activities that are age-appropriate and will provide all students with the knowledge and skills needed to make healthy choices.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

Our school is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on our school's campus *during the school day* support healthy eating.

The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., "competitive" foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum.

Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus *during the school day* will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores and snack or food carts.

Celebrations, Events, and Classroom Food

GMCS is committed to providing a safe and healthy school environment for all students, including students with food allergies and other dietary needs. Foods and beverages provided by the school will meet applicable USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Birthdays and Classroom Celebrations
GMCS classrooms are food-free for student birthdays. Parents/guardians may not bring or send food, drinks, candy, cupcakes, treats, or other edible items to be distributed to students for birthdays or classroom celebrations.
Students are welcome to celebrate their birthday at school with a non-food item or activity. Some ideas include:
- **Supply a craft:** Bring a simple craft activity with enough supplies for the class.
- **Pass out non-food goodies:** Stickers, pencils, pencil toppers, bookmarks, crayons, erasers, bouncy balls, or similar small items.
- **Show and tell:** The birthday student may bring a special item from home to share with the class.
- **Have a bubbly recess:** Bring small bottles of bubbles for classmates to use during recess.
- **Share a favorite book:** Bring the student's favorite book for the student or teacher to read to the class.
- **Sign a birthday shirt:** Bring a solid-color or special birthday T-shirt for classmates to sign.

Participation in birthday celebrations is optional, and families are not expected to provide anything.

Holidays and Special School Events
Food and beverages may be provided during designated school holidays, celebrations, and special events. **When food is served as part of a school celebration or event, the food will be purchased and provided by GMCS.**

Parents/guardians may not bring or send food from outside the school for distribution to students during birthdays, classroom parties, holidays, or other school celebrations.
Food and beverages will never be withheld from a student as a form of punishment or reward.

Curriculum-Based Activities
Exceptions may be made for *pre-approved educational activities in which food is directly connected to the curriculum*, such as Upper Elementary Market Day or another teacher-planned instructional experience.
Curriculum-based activities involving food must be approved in advance by school administration and coordinated with the classroom teacher. Appropriate health, safety, allergy, and dietary considerations must be addressed before the activity takes place.

Classroom Snacks
Regular individual classroom snacks are separate from birthday and celebration foods. Families should follow classroom and school guidelines regarding student snacks. When applicable, GMCS will provide families with information about snacks that meet USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.
Students may not bring food to school for the purpose of sharing or distributing it to classmates unless it is part of a school-approved curriculum activity.

Food Allergies and Dietary Needs
GMCS will take reasonable precautions to protect students with known food allergies and dietary needs. When the school plans to provide food during a holiday, celebration, or special event, families of students with known food allergies will be notified as appropriate so that a safe alternative can be arranged.

Physical Activity

Our school will provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day for all students. Our school will provide students with at least 60 minutes of age-appropriate physical

activity on all or most days of the week that is designed to achieve optimal health, wellness, fitness, and performance benefits. Our school will also provide physical activity opportunities that meet the needs and interests of all students.

Physical activity during the school day (including by not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) will not be withheld as punishment for any reason.

To the extent practicable, our school will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. Our school will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Physical Education

Our school will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. Our school will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

Elementary students in each grade will receive physical education for at least 60 minutes per week throughout the school year.

Our school's physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments.

- Students will be moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education class sessions.
- All physical education teachers will be required to participate in at least once a year professional development in education.
- Students will be observed throughout physical education classes for assessment purposes. ● All physical education classes are taught by licensed teachers who are certified.

Health Education

Health education will be required in all grades and will be implemented into the physical education class that follows the Pennsylvania Health and Safety Standards.

Recess (Elementary)

Our school will offer at least 20 minutes of recess on all days during the school year (This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days). If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing

time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built into the recess transition period/time frame before students enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. Students will be allowed outside for recess except when outdoor temperature is above 95F or below 25F inclusive of wind chill factors, or during storms with lightning or thunder, or at the discretion of the building administrator based on his/her best judgment of safety conditions.

In the event that the school or district must conduct indoor recess, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

Indoor recess guidelines: Must be at least 20 minutes and involve some sort of physical activity.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Classroom Physical Activity Goal

Our school recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered periodic opportunities to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. Our school recommends teachers provide a short (3-5 minute) physical activity break to students during and between classroom time at least three days per week. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

Our school provides resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for classroom physical activity breaks.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into "core" subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies, and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

Our school will support classroom teachers by incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

GMCS will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities.

Our school will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the DWC/SWC.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community Partnerships

Our school will develop relationships with community partners in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement Goal

Our school will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

Our school will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email or displaying notices on our schools Facebook page), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g, newsletters, presentations to parents or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

Our school will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Once a month, our school will email all staff about tips on how they can be physically active and eat healthy.

Professional Learning

When feasible, our school will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help school staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing school reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

(Wellness Policy Revised and approved April 25, 2024)

Sun Safety

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School is working towards being a sun safe school and recognizes that the sun's ultraviolet (uv) radiation can cause skin cancer. To help prevent the development of skin cancer, students will receive instruction, encouragement, and environmental support to avoid overexposure to the sun when they are outdoors. As a soon to be sun certified school, we are working towards implementing a sun safe program that addresses the following elements…

Hats and Protective Clothing

Students are encouraged year-round to wear articles of sun-protective clothing that includes hats when outdoors.

Sunscreen and lip Balm

Students are allowed year round to use sunscreen or sun-protective lip balm. *Please see the sunscreen parent consent form in the enrollment packet.*

Sunglasses

When students are outside they are permitted year-round, to wear sunglasses that protect their eyes from harmful UV rays.

Shade Options

The sun's UV rays are the strongest between 10 am and 4 pm. Our school will provide shade options for students and personnel when outside. This will include break time under a shade structure or under shaded trees as needed.

Parent/Guardian Communication

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School will inform parents and guardians about the importance of, and strategies for, preventing skin cancer. The communication should include, but not be limited to, details of the school policy relating to hats, sun-protective clothing, sunscreen usage, and sunglasses. Our school will also encourage families to reinforce sun-safe behavior outside the school and support our school's sun safety program.

Personnel

All personnel should be educated on the importance of sun safety including skin cancer impact/prevention and sun protection methods. All personnel are strongly encouraged to protect themselves from the sun's UV rays and model sun-safe behavior for students.

Evaluation

Our school will evaluate and revise our sun safety program as needed.

(Approved April 25, 2024)

Student Health Services

Health Services

Pennsylvania law requires school-age children to receive minimum health services at specified ages and grade levels. These services include physical examinations, dental screenings or examinations, immunization review, vision, hearing, growth, scoliosis, and other screenings required by law. GMCS provides student health services to support student safety, attendance, and participation in school. Services may include assessment of illness or injury, first aid and emergency care, medication administration, maintenance of health records, support for chronic health conditions, communicable disease response, required health screenings, and health education or consultation. The certified school nurse, other qualified nursing personnel, and appropriately trained or designated staff may provide health services within their legal authority, professional scope of practice, training, and GMCS procedures. The School Nurse may consult with the CEO/Principal or designee when a health issue affects student safety or the school environment.

Individual Health Needs

Students with chronic medical conditions, severe allergies, disabilities, or other significant health needs may require an Individual Health Plan, Emergency Care Plan, or other school health plan. The School Nurse may coordinate the plan with the student's parent or guardian, health care provider, and appropriate school personnel. Staff will receive information or training needed to support the student's safe participation in school.

Health Records and Confidentiality

GMCS will maintain required student health records, including immunization documentation, examination and screening results, health history, medication administration records, individualized plans, and relevant information supplied by health care providers. Health information will be protected in accordance with FERPA, HIPAA where applicable, and Pennsylvania law, and may be shared with personnel who have a legitimate educational or health-and-safety need to know.

Dental Screening Program

Pennsylvania requires dental screening upon a student's original entry into school and while the student is in third grade. Seventh-grade screening requirements also apply if GMCS serves that grade in the future. New students without a record of the required screening must also be addressed in accordance with state requirements.

GMCS will provide advance notice of the date of the school dental screening. The required screening provided by GMCS will be free of charge for students in the mandated screening groups. The school will confirm that any mobile dentist, dentist, or public health dental hygiene practitioner used to satisfy the mandate is appropriately licensed in Pennsylvania.

For each scheduled Family First Mobile Dentists visit, all students are scheduled to receive a basic dental screening unless a parent or guardian opts out. No registration is required for the basic screening. A parent or guardian who does not want the student to participate must complete and return the event specific Dental Screening Opt-Out Form to GMCS by the deadline stated in the annual notice. The basic dental screening is separate from the optional Mobile Dental Program. Families who want the full program—which may include dental exams, cleanings, and x-rays—must register using the provider's registration process. Visit dates will be announced by the school.

For students subject to Pennsylvania's mandated dental-screening requirements, GMCS will separately track completion through the school screening, an accepted private dentist report, or a written religious objection, as applicable. Dental records and objection documents should be submitted through a method that permits receipt to be confirmed and should not be sent to school with a student. Parents or guardians will be notified when screening results indicate that follow-up evaluation or treatment is recommended.

Student Illness and Communicable Disease

Maintaining health and reducing the spread of illness is a responsibility shared by families and GMCS staff.

A student may be excluded from school when symptoms may spread communicable disease, significantly interfere with participation, require care that cannot safely be provided at school, or create a health or safety concern. Symptoms may include a temperature greater than 100.4°F, vomiting, diarrhea, a rash with fever or behavioral changes, signs of contagious illness, severe pain or distress, unusual lethargy, or symptoms of a potentially serious condition.

When GMCS determines that a student must leave school because of illness, the parent, guardian, or designated emergency contact must arrange pickup within one hour. The student will be supervised in an appropriate location while awaiting pickup.

Return to School

A student may generally return when symptoms have improved enough for safe participation, the student has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, and vomiting or diarrhea has resolved for at least 24 hours without medication used to suppress those symptoms. Required treatment must be initiated when applicable. GMCS may require health care provider clearance when reasonably necessary for the safety of the student or school community. GMCS will follow current guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other applicable public-health authorities. Current guidance may replace examples or timeframes previously listed in the handbook when recommendations change.

Communicable Disease Control

GMCS may use reasonable measures such as temporary exclusion, additional sanitation or hygiene practices, medical evaluation recommendations, exposure notifications consistent with confidentiality requirements, and cooperation with public-health authorities. GMCS will complete required communicable-disease reporting and may implement additional procedures during an outbreak, epidemic, or public-health emergency.

Head lice will be managed based on current health guidance. GMCS does not maintain a no-nit policy. A student may generally return after appropriate treatment has begun, even if nits remain, subject to review by the School Nurse.

Allergies and Anaphylaxis

Parents or guardians must provide GMCS with current written information about all known food, medication, insect, and environmental allergies. Information should include the allergen, known symptoms, prescribed emergency medication, emergency contacts, and any action plan provided by the student's health care provider.

Students with severe allergies may have an individualized allergy or anaphylaxis action plan. Relevant school personnel may be informed of the allergen, symptoms, emergency procedures, and required medication when needed for student safety. GMCS will take reasonable steps to reduce exposure to known allergens through staff awareness, monitoring of food sharing, classroom practices, and coordination with families. GMCS cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment. Students may not share food, beverages, or eating utensils unless permitted by staff.

Possible signs of anaphylaxis include hives; swelling of the face, lips, or throat; difficulty breathing or wheezing; coughing or throat tightness; vomiting or abdominal pain; dizziness; or loss of consciousness. Suspected anaphylaxis is a medical emergency. Staff should notify the School Nurse or designated responder, administer authorized epinephrine when available and appropriate, call 911, notify the parent or guardian, and remain with the student until emergency personnel assume care.

Medication Administration and Management

Medication required during the school day must be delivered by an adult in the original pharmacy labeled container or original manufacturer's package. Students may not carry prescription or nonprescription medication, including cough drops, unless self-carry is specifically authorized under applicable law and GMCS procedures.

Before medication may be administered, GMCS must receive a written order from a licensed health care provider stating the student's name, medication, dosage, schedule, duration, and applicable instructions or precautions, along with written parent or guardian consent.

Medication will be stored securely in the nurse's office or another designated location and accessed only by authorized personnel. Controlled medications may require additional documentation and security. The School Nurse will maintain medication-administration records.

When permitted by law, trained and authorized personnel may administer medication when the School Nurse is unavailable or during an emergency. A student may self-carry or self-administer an authorized rescue inhaler, epinephrine auto-injector, diabetes medication, or other legally permitted medication when the required provider and parent authorizations are in place and the student demonstrates the ability to do so safely.

The School Nurse will plan for necessary medication during field trips and school-sponsored activities. If no trained person is available for a medication that cannot lawfully be delegated, a parent or guardian may be required to administer it or another lawful plan must be arranged.

Medication errors, missed doses, and adverse reactions will be addressed with appropriate care, parent or guardian notification, provider consultation when appropriate, emergency services when necessary, and documentation. Unused or expired medication should be retrieved by the parent or guardian. Medication not retrieved by the stated deadline may be disposed of using safe procedures. GMCS may maintain emergency medications as permitted by Pennsylvania law. Parents or guardians may request the legally available exemption from use of the school's stock epinephrine by completing GMCS's required opt-out process with the School Nurse.

Medical Emergencies and First Aid

Minor injuries will receive appropriate first aid and will be documented in accordance with GMCS procedures. Parents or guardians will be notified based on the nature of the injury. Serious illness or injury will be addressed immediately. When a medical emergency occurs, staff will assess the situation, contact the School Nurse or designated responder, call 911 when emergency care is required, provide authorized first aid or emergency medication, notify administration, contact the parent or guardian as soon as reasonably possible, remain with the student until care is transferred, and document the incident. Students with conditions that may require emergency care may have asthma, allergy, seizure, diabetes, or other emergency plans developed by the School Nurse in consultation with the family, health care provider, and appropriate staff. GMCS may train designated staff in first aid, emergency procedures, recognition of common medical emergencies, and use of authorized emergency medication. Emergency care will not be delayed while GMCS attempts to reach a parent or guardian. A student may be transported by emergency medical services to an appropriate medical facility when necessary.

Parent and Guardian Responsibilities

Parents and guardians are responsible for providing complete and current health information; submitting required immunization, examination, screening, medication, and health-plan records by established deadlines; supplying prescribed medication and equipment; maintaining reachable emergency contacts; promptly reporting health changes; and arranging timely pickup when a student must leave school.

Failure to provide necessary information or documentation may limit GMCS's ability to provide appropriate support and may result in exclusion when required by law or policy.

Administrative Procedure for Mobile Dental Screening

1. Identify students due for a mandated dental screening based on original entry, third grade, and any new student without an acceptable record.
2. Confirm that the school dental provider or mobile provider meets Pennsylvania licensing and program requirements and that the mandated screening is free of charge.
3. Send advance written notice that clearly distinguishes the basic dental screening from the optional full Mobile Dental Program and states the visit date, opt-out deadline, registration method, and services offered.
4. Maintain separate tracking for the basic-screening roster, timely opt-out forms, optional-program registrations, private dentist reports, and written religious objections.
5. Record online-form submissions, faxes, secure email submissions, and directly delivered documents in a tracking log. Do not accept health records transported by students.
6. Remove students with timely, event-specific opt-out forms from the basic-screening roster. Do not carry an opt-out forward automatically to a later screening event.
7. For students subject to a mandated screening who opt out of the school screening, follow up regarding an accepted private dentist report or written religious objection, as applicable. 8. Keep registration and consent for the optional full Mobile Dental Program separate from the basic screening opt-out process.
9. Provide reminders before the deadline and retain copies of notices and confirmation records. 10. After the screening, enter results into the student health record, notify families of referrals, and complete required state reporting.

Continuity When the School Nurse Is Unavailable

If GMCS does not have a full-time School Nurse or the School Nurse is on extended leave during the planning or delivery of the screening, the CEO/Principal will designate an administrator or qualified staff member to manage parent notices, submission tracking, provider scheduling, space, student movement, and record routing. Clinical screening, interpretation, and other nursing or dental functions must remain with appropriately licensed personnel. The designated administrator will coordinate secure transfer of records to the School Nurse or health-record custodian.

Dear GMCS Families,

Family First Mobile Dentists will visit GMCS on dates announced by the school. Optional Mobile Dental Program Families have the option to register their child for the Mobile Dental Program. This program provides:

- Dental exams
- Cleanings
- X-rays

This is an optional opportunity for students to receive dental care during the school day. If you would like your child to participate in the full Mobile Dental Program for the current school year, please register using the method provided by the school.

The schedule for Mobile Dental Program visits will be announced by the school. Dental Screening
In addition to the optional Mobile Dental Program described above, all students are scheduled to receive a basic dental screening unless a parent/guardian opts out.
You do not need to register your child for the basic dental screening.
If you do not want your child to participate in the scheduled dental screening, please complete and return the opt-out form below to GMCS by the deadline stated in the annual notice.
Thank you,
Gettysburg Montessori
DENTAL SCREENING OPT-OUT FORM
I do not give permission for my child to participate in the scheduled Family First Mobile Dentists dental screening at GMCS.
Student Name: _____
Grade: _____
Parent/Guardian Name: _____
Parent/Guardian Signature: _____
Date: _____

Delegation and Reporting (28 Pa. Code Chapter 23, Section 23.34)

The School Nurse shall report to the CEO/Principal and the Board regarding the operation of health services and compliance to this policy, related policies and established guidelines or administrative regulations. The School Nurse functions within the professional scope and standards of the PA Nurse Practice Act, PA Public School Code and Federal accommodation laws. The School Nurse will assist in health services policy and procedure formation. The School Nurse shall be responsible to provide direct care, maintain student health records, develop plans of care, participate in teams (such as IEP or disaster planning), and communicate with parents. The School Nurse is responsible to coordinate and monitor school health services, clinic operation and ensure compliance with state and federal legislation.

Guidelines

The School Nurse is charged with developing a school health services guide. This guide will provide details of procedures and protocols to meet PA Public School Code and GMCS Board policy goals. The following topics and issues are components addressed in the guide.

Immunization

To safeguard the school community from the spread of certain communicable diseases, and in recognition that prevention is a means of combating the spread of disease, the Board requires all students to be immunized against certain diseases in accordance with applicable state and municipal statutes.

No student shall be admitted for the first time to GMCS who has not been immunized against and provide requisite proof of compliance to such diseases as are enumerated by the Pennsylvania Advisory Health Board and in the manner directed by the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health and duly constituted state and municipal health authorities. A student's parent/guardian may object in writing to such immunizations. The signed objection must indicate Exemption rationale: (1) Religious Belief, (2) Philosophical/strong moral or ethical Conviction, or (3) Medical Reason which also requires a Health Care Provider statement/certification. This document is placed permanently in the student's health record.

The implementation of this policy shall be the responsibility of the CEO/Principal, who shall be subject to the sanctions of the law for violation of the state statute for immunization of students. The CEO/Principal shall annually or whenever necessary:

- Review the existing standards for immunization of students and direct the responsible school personnel accordingly;
- Inform parents/guardians of students prior to their entry to school for the first time of the requirements of immunization, the requisite proof of immunization, the exemptions available and how such exemptions may be claimed; and
- Investigate and recommend to the Board such programs of immunization as may from time to time be warranted by circumstances and the health of the school community.

Medication Management and Administration

GMCS Board acknowledges that the health needs of individual students may necessitate the administration of medication during school hours. The service guide will detail procedures related to the management and administration of prescription and over-the-counter medication at school. Medication management includes safe handling, storage, training, and documentation. Medication Administration procedures will follow current Federal and Pennsylvania Law, professional guidelines, and regulations.

To ensure the safety of all students, all medications, including over the counter drugs, are to be taken and stored in the nurse's office. PA law requires a nurse to administer medications at school.

Medication Administration Law requires (1) A PA Licensed Care Provider's prescription order with the name of the medicine, the dosage, the time intervals, duration of treatment, and any other pertinent information [or valid pharmacy label] and (2) Parent/guardian consent are required for all medication administered at school. The health guide will identify three criteria for medication administration:

1. Routine administration by the school nurse or designee
2. Emergency administration by CEO/Principal or designated school staff
3. Student self-administration

GMCS Board recognizes that life threatening conditions require swift action and intervention. The Board permits designated school staff and students to give specifically identified Emergency Medications such as epinephrine auto-injectors, rescue inhalers, insulin, and glucagon. The School Nurse will provide annual training, assess staff and student learning by return demonstration, and obtain signed provider and parent/guardian consents.

Health Records

PA code requires schools to maintain a comprehensive health record of each school age child. The record shall include "results or measurements of mandated screens and examinations, special exams as required, immunizations, and student health history questionnaires completed by parents or guardians."

The confidentiality of school health records is safeguarded by compliance with HIPAA (Health Insurance

Portability and Accountability Act of 1996), FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and PA code. GMCS Board acknowledges that the health and safety of students may require sharing limited personal health information with administrators, teachers, and staff. Emergency contact information, allergy, medication, and certain health condition information are "…divulged only when necessary for the health of the child."

Signed consents are required for the release or transferring of school health records to parents or guardians, health care providers, and to requesting school districts [student transfer].

Exclusion from School, Illness and Communicable Diseases

The Board authorizes that the school nurse or the CEO/Principal shall have the authority to exclude students who are suspected or are symptomatic of having an infectious or communicable disease. Exclusion and Readmission recommendations for some infectious conditions/ symptoms, communicable diseases, or pests are listed below:

DISEASE	SIGNS/SYMPTOMS	EXCLUSION/READMISSION
Fever / Suspected Undiagnosed Illness	Fever greater than 100.4 degrees F, change of behavior: "not feeling good," "not acting like themselves," tiredness	Exclude until the child has untreated normal temperature for 24 hours. e.g., NO "fever reducers" acetaminophen / ibuprofen given.
Diagnosed Illness Antibiotic Therapy	Earache, headache, fever, etc. Health care provider orders antibiotic treatment	Exclude until 24 hours after 1st dose of antibiotic given, child is symptom free, OR Dr. note stating when child may return to school [re: not contagious/infectious].
"Stomach Flu" Norovirus	Watery diarrhea (2 or more episodes), stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, headache, muscle aches, and fatigue	Exclude 24 hours after the last episode of diarrhea or vomiting. Best practice is 72 hours-to help prevent spread of disease.

Strep Throat or Scarlet Fever	Fever, exudative tonsillitis or pharyngitis and tender cervical nodes. Scarlet Fever has a fine-red rash.	Exclude 24 hours after antibiotic started or symptom free, or per Dr. note
Respiratory Infections	Fever greater than 100 degrees F, headache, tiredness, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches.	Exclude for 24 hours after antibiotic started, or fever free without fever reducing medication, or per Dr. note
Pink Eye Conjunctivitis	Redness of eye involves tearing, irritation, swelling, and white/yellow discharge, goopy or matted shut eyes after sleeping.	Exclude from End of day/parent notification. Recommended Health Provider examination. Return 24 hours after treatment has begun and parent/Dr. note.
Fifth Disease	Facial "slapped-cheek" rash with "lacy" rash on trunk and limbs. Note: Once the Rash appears, the child is no longer contagious.	No Exclusion unless the child has a fever. Return 24 hours fever free without fever reducing medication.
Pediculosis Lice	Main symptom is itching of the scalp. Lice (or eggs) can be identified by close examination of the scalp.	Exclude from End of day/parent notification. Return after lice treatment; provide OTC or RX label, and Nurse Inspection. RN Recheck scalp 7-10 days post treatment.
Ringworm	Itchy small red bump or papule that spreads outward, taking on the appearance of a red scaly outer ring with a clear center.	Exclusion from End of day if suspected area can be covered Return after treatment starts and 'weeping' lesions are covered.
Scabies	Itching and blister-like sores in the burrows of the skin	Exclude 24 hours after treatment started

Head Lice Policy

There are millions of cases of head lice every year. Anyone, adult or child, can get head lice. Lice do not care about family income, race, religion or cleanliness. Lice are not considered a public health issue and do not spread disease. Lice are not easily spread. Generally head-to-head contact is required. Nits (eggs) cannot live, once removed from the hair shaft, on another human host. Lice need warmth and blood to live and will not live off a human host for more than 24 to 48 hours. Lice cannot crawl on a smooth surface. A viable louse will not willingly leave a warm blood source.

Head lice do not originate in the school and the school cannot prevent the spread. Because schools bring large numbers of children into close contact daily, the potential for transmission of head lice exists.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, National Association of School Nurses, and the Centers for Disease Control do not support exclusion from school for lice or nits. School nurses remain the best screeners of lice infestation. The following guidelines are based on evidence-based practices and research from these sources.

A student who may be suspected of having lice/nits during school should be sent to the nurse. The nurse shall be called and alerted to the student's visit and the reason why.

Procedures:

1. Upon receiving a complaint of lice or upon suspecting an infestation, the school nurse/health room assistant will closely examine the scalp of the child. This exam will be done in as confidential a manner as possible.
    a. It is not necessary to wear gloves. The nurse/health room assistant may use pediculosis sticks to help separate the hair.
    b. It may be necessary to remove hair clips and bands to examine hair.
    c. The nape of the neck and behind the ears will be given special attention and the scalp will be checked for signs of irritation.
    d. The examiner will look closely for active/moving lice and nymphs (immature lice), along with nits that are no further than ¼" away from the scalp, showing active infestation.
2. If an active infestation is found, the parent/guardian will be notified. The parent/guardian will be given instructions, both oral and written on the control of pediculosis.
3. The child may return to the classroom and participate in classroom activities until the parent arrives (for those parents who want to take child home early) and/or dismissal at which time the student will follow their usual dismissal routine.
4. Parents will be encouraged to tell close contact such as friends and relatives and to check the entire family for active infestation. It is not necessary or advisable to screen the class or the entire school. A first time lice infestation usually is at least 3 to 4 weeks old when first diagnosed as it takes that long for itching and other symptoms to occur. Itching occurs when the mature lice bites into the host and injects saliva into the wound.
5. Students found with active lice will be screened following treatment upon returning to school as follows:
    a. It is required that students present to the school nurse a box top from the pediculicide used, or confirmation (sales receipt, empty bottle) that an alternative product was used.
    b. If there is no confirmation, the student may return to class, and the parent/guardian is called to explain.
    c. On the second day after lice are found, if there is no confirmation that lice treatment has been started, the child is sent to class, and the parent/guardian is called. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the Home School Visitor is to be utilized for contact. At this time a medical referral is issued with the understanding that the health provider will advise the parent/guardian how to treat the lice.
    d. If there are subsequent days from the initial examination, or if there are many infestations, the nurse will involve the Office of Children and Youth.

(April 2023)

Blood Borne Pathogens and Bodily Substances

It is the policy of the Gettysburg Montessori Charter School ("GMCS") for employees to treat all human fluids that they may by chance encounter, handle, store, use, process or dispose of any type of human body fluid as potentially infected by means of the wearing of nonporous protective items such as latex gloves and eye and face protection. As contact can lead to serious disease, all efforts must be made to identify and control this exposure. These procedures are known as Universal Precautions and include the following:

Wearing protective equipment such as gloves, barrier mask, etc. when handling contaminated or potentially infectious materials or administering emergency care.

Regular hand washing after handling any materials contaminated with human fluids or other potentially infectious materials.

Bloodborne Pathogens are organisms transferred through body fluids and *Other Potentially Infectious Materials* ("OPIM") that can cause disease in people. Examples of these diseases are HIV and Hepatitis B and C. Universal precautions should be practiced in any environment where workers are exposed to bodily fluids, such as:

Typical Bodily Fluids	***Other Potentially Infectious Materials***
Blood	Amniotic fluid
Perspiration	Peritoneal fluid
Nasal secretions	Synovial fluid
Saliva/ Vomit	Cerebrospinal fluid
Urine	Pericardial fluid
Feces	Sputum
Semen	Pleural fluid
Vaginal secretions	

Infected blood can enter your system through any sort of damaged or broken skin and should be protected from exposure.

I. APPLICABILITY

At-Risk Job Tasks:

There are job tasks within our workplace where employees are at risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens and OPIM. These jobs include but are not limited to:

1. Teachers

a. Physical contact with students with open wounds, burns, abrasions etc.;
b. Cleaning up of blood, vomit, or other bodily fluids; and,
c. Handling items contaminated with saliva, perspiration, nasal secretions, and other bodily fluids.

2. Nurse/Nurses' Aides
    a. Wounds, burns, abrasions, cleansing and preparation;
    b. Examination and procedures involving the eyes;
    c. Handling specimen bottles for urine analysis and drug screening;
    d. Handling and disposing of sharps;
    e. Starting IV or taking any blood samples; and,
    f. Cleaning up blood or body fluids.

3. Cafeteria workers
    a. Using knives, meat slicers and other sharp tools or equipment;
    b. Cleaning tables or removing trash with potentially contaminated bodily fluids.
4. Custodial Personnel
    a. Cleaning the restroom.
    b. Cleaning up blood or body fluids.
    c. Emptying trash containers.

5. Maintenance Personnel
    a. Repairing or performing maintenance on equipment with sharp edges.

6. Designated Emergency Personnel

Anyone with the potential to encounter contact with infected blood, body fluids or OPIM there is a slight potential for transmission.

In an emergency involving blood or potentially infectious materials, you should always use Universal Precautions and try to minimize your exposure by wearing gloves, splash goggles, pocket mouth-to-mouth resuscitation masks, and other barrier devices.

II. PROCEDURES:

ANY type of human body fluid should be handled and treated as potentially infected.

Immediately go to the nearest hospital emergency room if you have damaged or broken skin and were exposed to human bodily fluids without protection.

Do not attempt to handle, dispose, or clean up any bodily fluid such as blood, vomit, urine or OPIM if you have not been properly trained to do so.

If trained, once an incident has presented itself that involves the handling or potential contact with blood, bodily fluids or OPIM, immediately don the appropriate personal protective apparel (i.e., gloves, resuscitation mask, face shields, apron, etc.)

If blood is splashed in the eye or mucous membrane, flush the affected area with running water for at least 5-10 minutes.

Report the exposure to your supervisor promptly. The supervisor should complete an Employee Accident Report.

Minimize the need for emergency mouth to mouth resuscitation by using other ventilation devices to perform the operation where necessary.

Clean-up is a top priority and should begin as soon as possible after the incident.

Universal Precautions must be followed at all times to prevent contact with blood and bodily fluids.

Always use protective gloves and other personal protective equipment.

Do not pick up any broken glass or sharp objects by hand. Use a dustpan and brush, tongs, etc.

Do not use a mop and bucket to clean bodily fluids unless specifically directed to do so.

This can spread the contamination.

Use absorbent material to clean up fluids.

Use a scoop to pick up any contaminated absorbent material.

Disinfect the area using a fresh mixture of an appropriate germicidal cleaner.

Place soiled disposable towels and disposable contaminated equipment in a closed bag.

Sanitize hands each time gloves are removed by washing the exposed area thoroughly with antibacterial non-abrasive soap if possible and running water. Scrub exposed skin thoroughly.

Change soiled clothing before returning to work.

Contaminated instruments that are not thrown away must be disinfected and washed with soap and water and a germicidal cleaner such as bleach.

Sharps materials considered for waste should be placed in red biohazard bags or puncture resistant containers.

Place contaminated laundry in bags and mark as biohazard. Do not presoak or wash laundry by hand.

III. Responsibility: Supervisors

Review BBP procedures with all employees.

Identify job duties with high risk of contact with bodily fluid or potentially infectious materials

Complete an Employee Accident Report.

Arrange for the exposed individual to have his/her blood be tested for HBV and HIV immediately at one of the designated physicians on the panel list.

Place contaminated laundry in bags and mark as biohazard. Do not presoak or wash laundry by hand.

Employees

Treat all fluids as potentially infectious and don the appropriate protective equipment.

Do not attempt to handle unless trained to do so.

Notify appropriate personnel of the incident immediately.

IV. **Training***:*

Departments should identify the existence of at-risk job tasks within their areas, and conduct blood borne pathogen training for each affected employee. Training must review universal precautions, protective equipment, and cleaning procedures during new hire orientation and annually for existing staff.

**More information can be located on the Center for Disease Control's website at:* www.cdc.gov

GMCS has adopted the State of Pennsylvania's guidelines for handling blood borne pathogens in the public sector and are hereby incorporated by reference into this manual. Any changes published after the adoption of this manual shall be automatically incorporated herein. The purpose of the policy is to provide protection to public employees who have been exposed to blood borne pathogens because of their job duties.

The full guidelines are available at:
http://www.health.state.pa.us/pdf/hpa/epi/bloodpathweb.pdf?healthPNav=%7C.

AIDS/HIV Infection – Students and Employees

AIDS is an acronym for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. As used in this policy, AIDS includes all levels of infection, from asymptomatic AIDS Related Complex (ARC) to full blown or "classic" AIDS, caused by the AIDS virus. This virus has been designated by scientists and medical authorities as the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

The Board is committed to the provision of a healthful environment for its students and employees in fulfillment of that commitment, the Board has and shall continue to seek guidance from appropriate medical, educational, legal and government authorities. This policy statement is the result of such guidance. The CEO/Principal shall develop appropriate administrative guidelines to implement this policy. The guidelines of the United States Center for Disease Control shall be the major reference. The school nurse shall periodically report to the CEO/Principal regarding the effectiveness of this policy and make recommendations for revision in response to developments in medical research and treatment.

This policy shall apply to all students and employees in all programs conducted by GMCS. School management for this disease shall be the responsibility of the CEO/Principal. Each case shall be considered on an individual basis consistent with the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control.

A student or employee with AIDS shall be admitted to the classroom or his/her place of employment provided such admission has been approved by a screening committee consisting of the school nurse who shall serve as chairperson, and a physician named by the Commissioner of Health of the City of Gettysburg. The Committee shall consult with the attending physician, the child's parent or guardian, the employee, and, if necessary, with educational personnel in the proposed placement. Decisions shall be based both on the student's /employee's susceptibility to other diseases and the student's/employee's likelihood of presenting risk of infection to others. First consideration should be given to returning the student/employee to the regular assignment. Any decision for an alternative placement must be supported by specific data.

The Screening Committee may make limited waiver of the physician-patient privilege a condition of admission to the extent necessary to protect the patient and others. Periodically, the Screening committee shall review each case to determine status and make the identity of student's/employees with AIDS shall be kept under strict security. All files that include listing of names and other confidential information of those with AIDS shall be kept under strict security.

Students diagnosed as having AIDS and unable to attend school as determined by medical examination shall be considered for homebound instruction. A student with AIDS may be excused from school attendance if the parent/guardian seeks such excuse based upon medical or psychological advice of those treating the student, or by the Board upon satisfying evidence of urgent reasons that prevent the student from attending school or application to study. Such an excuse must be approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education prior to the exclusion.

Act 110 of 2020: Students Convicted or Adjudicated Delinquent of Sexual Assault

Act 110 of 2020 was added to the School Code Section 1318.1, 24 P.S. § 13-1318.1, titled "Students Convicted or Adjudicated Delinquent of Sexual Assault." The CEO/Principal must, for any student enrolled in the school who is convicted or adjudicated delinquent of committing a sexual assault upon another student enrolled in the school (1) expel the convicted or adjudicated student; (2) transfer the convicted or adjudicated student to an alternative education program; or (3) reassign the convicted or adjudicated student to another school or educational program within the school.

The CEO/Principal may take action under Section 1318.1 for sexual assaults that occur outside of the school setting if the assault (1) was against another student enrolled in the same public school entity; (2) has the effect of (a) substantially interfering with the victim's education; (b) creating or threating a hostile educational environment; or (c) substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

The CEO/Principal shall ensure the convicted or adjudicated student is not educated in the same school building, transported on the same school vehicle, or allowed to participate in the same school-sponsored activities at the same time as the victim. The CEO/Principal shall take all steps necessary to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

A student expelled, transferred, or reassigned pursuant to Section 1318.1 may return to school only if (1) the victim ceases to be enrolled at the school; or (2) the conviction or delinquency adjudication the expulsion, transfer, or reassignment was based is reversed and no appeal is pending.

The CEO/Principal may not take action under Section 1318.1 if: (1) the convicted or adjudicated delinquent student was already expelled, transferred, or reassigned for the same sexual assault; or (2) the convicted or adjudicated student does not attend the same school as the victim.

Any student convicted of sexual assault upon another student enrolled in the school must notify the CEO/Principal of the conviction within 72 hours of such conviction. Prior to admission to the school, the parent or guardian of a student must provide a sworn statement or affirmation stating whether the student was previously, or is currently, expelled, transferred, or reassigned pursuant to Section 1318.1.

(Revised/Approved August 26, 2021)

Child Abuse Prevention

This policy, "Child Abuse Prevention," establishes guidelines for the prevention of child abuse in the school setting. The Board recognizes that successful school achievement depends on both the quality of instruction and the physical and emotional well-being of the learner. This policy reflects concern regarding child abuse and accepts the role of the school in:

1. Providing all possible assistance to students who suffer abuse;
2. Requiring the reporting of suspected child abuse in accordance with the law;
3. Cooperating with appropriate community agencies;
4. Mandating staff development to fulfill the purpose of this policy; and

5. Evaluating the school environment continually for the purpose of timely identification and reporting of suspected child abuse.

Child abuse shall be defined in accordance with the provisions of the Child Protective Services Law, the regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and the decisions of the courts of this state. This definition shall be implemented in the directives of the school. The CEO/Principal shall provide training and protocol for compliance with the statutory requirements that require instances of child abuse to be reported. Such regulations shall include:

1. Informing all staff members having contact with students of their responsibility to report all cases of abuse, abandonment, cruelty, or neglect resulting in physical or mental injury by other than accidental means;
2. The staff member having direct knowledge of a suspected instance of child abuse shall directly report the suspected instance(s) of child abuse to Childline at 1-800-932-0313;
3. Requiring prompt attention to injuries which result from abuse as to protect the health of the child; and
4. Providing for release of information to the appropriate county child welfare agency, including the name and age of the child; the name and address of the parent(s)/guardian(s); and information regarding the nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse, or maltreatment; and such information which, in the opinion of the CEO/Principal, has a bearing on the suspected child abuse.

The Board's concern regarding child abuse and its efforts to prevent such abuse are reflected in its policies titled, "Early Detection of Missing and Abused Children" and "Child Abuse – Definition/Reporting," which address the school's responsibility in providing assistance to students who suffer abuse outside the school setting and its role in providing an early warning to appropriate authorities when a child appears to be abused or missing.

These guidelines have been established to prevent child abuse of any kind, and the following types of behavior are prohibited:

1. The use of any form of physical, verbal, humiliating, or frightening punishment of any kind;
2. The use of corporal punishment and/or the use of excessive physical restraint under circumstances which do not indicate that the child's behavior is harmful to himself/herself, others, or school property;
3. Any act of sexual abuse against a child including any visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
    a. submission to the conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a condition of the child's education;
    b. submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting the harassed child; or

c. the harassment has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the child's academic performance or creating an educational environment which is intimidating, hostile or offensive.

4. Any other kind of abuse, cruelty or neglect resulting in physical or mental injury by other than accidental means.

Any individual found guilty of any of these types of behaviors will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and may result in criminal charges. Staff members are legally required to notify the Principal/CEO and/or the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) if child abuse is suspected. Reporting procedures are outlined in the "Child Abuse – Definition/Reporting" policy. Annually the CEO/Principal or designee shall conduct in-service training for staff members to address their rights and responsibilities in preventing, identifying, and reporting suspected cases of child abuse.

Child Abuse – Definition/Reporting

"Abused child" means a child under the age of eighteen (18) years whose parents, guardians, or other person having his/her custody and control:

1. Inflicts, or allows to be inflicted upon such child, physical injury by other than accidental means, which causes or creates a substantial risk of death, serious or protracted disfigurement, protracted impairment of physical or emotional health, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ;
2. Creates or allows to be created a substantial or ongoing risk of physical injury to such child by other than accidental means, which would be likely to cause death, serious or protracted disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ;
3. Commits or allows to be committed an act of sexual abuse against the child.

The term also includes a child whose physical, mental, or emotional condition has been impaired, or is in imminent danger of becoming impaired, as the result of the failure of his/her parent or guardian, or such other person having his/her custody and control, to exercise a minimum degree of care in supplying the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, medical or surgical care, though financially able to do so or offered financial or other reasonable means to do so; or in providing the child with proper supervision or guardianship; by unreasonably inflicting or allowing to be inflicted harm, or substantial risk thereof, including the infliction of excessive corporal punishment or using excessive physical restraint under circumstances which do not indicate that the child's behavior is harmful to himself/herself, others or property; or by any other act of a similar serious nature requiring the aid of the court; or a child that has been willfully abandoned by his/her parent, guardian, or such other person having his/her custody and control.

"Institutional Child Abuse" – abuse and neglect suspected of taking place in school or other institutional setting.

"Non-institutional Child Abuse" – abuse and neglect suspected of taking place in the home or community by a parent, guardian or any other person having custody or control of the child.

Child Abuse Reporting and Referrals

Pennsylvania law requires that any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or acts of child abuse shall report it immediately to the Department of Human Services (DHS). Anyone acting pursuant to the Child Protective Services Law in the making of a report under this act shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Any such person shall have the same immunity with respect to testimony given in any judicial proceeding resulting from such a report.

Any person knowingly violating the provisions of this act including the failure to report an act of child abuse having reasonable cause to believe that an act of child abuse has been committed, is a disorderly person. A person convicted of a disorderly offense is subject to a $1,000 fine and up to six (6) months in jail.

All school employees shall immediately report child abuse directly to Childline at 1-800-932-0313. The employee shall also notify the CEO/Principal on the same day of the incident. However, consistent with DHS regulations, notice to the CEO/Principal need not be given where the referrer believes that such notice would be likely to endanger the safety of the referrer or child, or where such disclosure would be likely to result in retaliation against the child or in discrimination against the referrer with respect to his/her employment.

DHS accepts all reports of suspected abuse or neglect by telephone, in writing and in person from all sources, including identified sources, news media, and anonymous sources, sources that have incomplete information, the child involved and/or his parent. An immediate call to DHS sets in motion the investigative process, which includes steps to be taken to protect the child or children involved.

To prevent and intervene in instances of child abuse and neglect, the school shall cooperate with DHS, in early identification, reporting and investigation of suspected child abuse cases, whether corroborative evidence is available. When referring cases to DHS, the school referrer should provide as much pertinent information as possible, including:

1. Name of child;
2. Age and grade of child;
3. Name and address of child's parent, guardian or other person having custody or control;
4. Description of child's condition, including any reports available from the school social worker, nurse, CEO/Principal, or designee concerning current or previous injuries, abuse, or maltreatment;
5. Nature and possible extent of the child's injuries, abuse, or mistreatment;
6. An indication of the seriousness of the situation and whether the child appears to be in imminent danger; and
7. Any other information that the referrer believes may be helpful with respect to the child abuse and identity of the alleged perpetrator.

DHS Child Abuse Investigation – Responsibilities of the School

For Non-institutional/Institutional Abuse Investigations, the responsibilities of the school are as follows:

1. Permit DHS to interview the child in the presence of the CEO/Principal/designee. However, if this is contra-indicated by the case situation, such as when the child is intimidated by a school representative's presence, the child can name a staff member who he/she feels will be a supportive presence to accompany the child during the interview. The school representative will be informed by the DHS worker conducting the interview that the discussion and investigation are confidential. There may be circumstances, however, where the school official may have to be excused from the interview by the DHS worker;
2. Permit DHS to photograph the child for the child's protection if he/she has visible injuries;
3. Cooperate with DHS in scheduling interviews with any school personnel who may have information relevant to the investigation;
4. Release to DHS under direction of the CEO/Principal/designee all records past and present pertaining to the child or children under investigation that are deemed by DHS to be relevant to the assessment or treatment; and
5. Provide a secure cabinet for filing and maintaining confidential information about child abuse cases.

Removal of the Children From the School by DHS

It may be necessary for DHS to remove children from school during the school day to protect the child or take the child to a service provider. At such times, the DHS district office shall provide to the appropriate school authority, either in advance or at the time removal is sought, one of the following authorizations:

1. A letter from DHS indicating agency authority;
2. Parental consent either from the parent's direct communication to the school or through the presentation of written authorization to DHS from the parent;
3. A document invoking statutory authorization which is a pre-court document authorizing DHS to act to protect the child;
4. A court order establishing that DHS has been granted care and custody of the child; or
5. A guardianship order from the court establishing that DHS is the legal guardian of the child.

Release of Student From School

The school shall, at no time, release a child to any person claiming to be a representative of DHS unless one of the above conditions is met and the official DHS staff photo identification has been shown. If there is any question regarding the worker's identity or credentials, the CEO/Principal/ designee should call the DHS district office that the worker represents.

Transfer of Children Between Schools

DHS may remove some children from their homes for their proper care and protection.

This may require the transfer of the child to a school other than the one in which he/she is enrolled. The sending school will transfer the records of the child to the receiving school.

Confidentiality

DHS may release information to an agency authorized to care for, treat or supervise a child who is the subject of a child abuse report, or a parent, guardian or other person who is responsible for the child's welfare, or both, when the information is needed in connection with the provision of care, treatment or supervision to such child or such parent, guardian, or other person. As a recipient of the DHS records and reports, school personnel shall keep them confidential. Any person who willfully permits or encourages the release of the contents of any record or report in contravention of this act shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine of not more than $1,000 or to imprisonment for not more than three (3) years, or both.

School Liaison

The CEO/Principal shall be the liaison to DHS and ensure that every effort is made for the school to cooperate with DHS in identifying, reporting, and investigating child abuse or neglect for effectively protecting children.

Early Detection of Missing and Abused Children

The Board recognizes the prevalence and consequences of child abuse. The removal of students from school constitutes a deprivation in itself and may be an indicator of even more grievous abuses. The school can and should provide an early warning to the appropriate authorities when a child appears to be abused or missing from school.

The CEO/Principal shall report information about missing and abused children to the Board as follows:

1. When a student is absent from school for five (5) consecutive school days and cannot be located;
2. When a student's parents/guardians withdraw the student from school during the school term and the school does not receive an official request for the student's records from another school within fifteen (15) school days;
3. When a parent/guardian withdraws a student at the end of a school term and records are not requested by another school within sixty (60) calendar days; and
4. When a school staff member in any way suspects that a student is missing or abused.

Following the Board's notification of a missing or abused child as described above, the CEO/Principal will report the missing or abused child to the local police department and/or the Department of Human Services. Cases of missing children will be reported to the police department and cases of abused children will be reported to DHS.

When a school staff member suspects child abuse and neglect, he/she will follow the Board policies on "Child Abuse – Definition and Reporting" and "Child Abuse Prevention" in reporting such cases to the CEO/Principal and/or DHS.

Trauma Informed Approaches

GMCS will provide school employees and the board of trustees, training on trauma informed approaches. The evidence-based training shall address but shall not be limited to the following:

1. Recognition of the signs of trauma in students.
2. Best practices for schools and classrooms regarding trauma informed approaches and using multi-tiered systems of support.
3. Recognition of the signs of the impact of secondary trauma.
4. Services available to connect students.

(Revised/Approved January 30, 2020)

Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response

GMCS is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community.

This policy supports federal, state, and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; establish methods of prevention, intervention, and response to suicide or suicide attempt; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources.

In compliance with state law and regulations, and in support of the school's suicide prevention measures, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents/guardians, the CEO/Principal or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or any other person is deemed to be at risk.

GMCS shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which integrates school and community-based supports. The school shall notify its employees, students and parents/guardians of this policy and shall post the policy on the school's website.

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Education

Protocols for Administration of Student Education

Students shall receive age-appropriate education on the importance of safe and healthy choices, coping strategies, how to recognize risk factors and warning signs, as well as help-seeking strategies for self or others including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help.

Lessons shall contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotional, behavioral, and social skills development.

Protocols for Administration of Employee Education

All employees, including but not limited to aides, secretaries, coaches, custodians, and cafeteria workers, shall receive information regarding risk factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals, and resources regarding youth suicide prevention. As part of the school's professional development plan, professional educators serving students in grade six (6) shall participate in four (4) hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training every five (5) years. Additional professional development in risk assessment and crisis intervention shall be provided to school counselors, prevention specialists, psychologists, and school nurses.

Resources for Parents/Guardians

The school may provide parents/guardians with resources including, but not limited to, health promotion and suicide risk, including characteristics and warning signs; and information about local behavioral/mental health resources.

Methods of Prevention

The methods of prevention utilized by the school include, but are not limited to, early identification and support for students at risk; education for students, staff, and parents/guardians; and delegation of responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts.

Suicide Prevention Coordinators

The school shall designate a school suicide prevention coordinator to act as a point of contact in each school for issues relating to suicide prevention and policy implementation.

Early Identification Procedures

Early identification of individuals with one (1) or more suicidal risk factors or of individuals exhibiting warning signs, is crucial to the charter school's suicide prevention efforts. To promote awareness, employees, students, and parents/guardians should be educated about suicidal risk factors and warning signs.

Risk factors refer to personal or environmental characteristics that are associated with suicide including, but not limited to:

- Behavioral Health Issues/Disorders:
    - Depression. o Substance abuse or dependence. o Previous suicide attempts. o Self-injury.
- Personal Characteristics:
    - Hopelessness/Low self-esteem. o Loneliness/Social alienation/isolation/lack

of belonging. o Poor problem-solving or coping skills.

- o Impulsivity/Risk-taking/recklessness.

- Adverse/Stressful Life Circumstances:
  - o Interpersonal difficulties or losses. o Disciplinary or legal problems. o Bullying (victim or perpetrator). o School or work issues.
  - o Physical, sexual, or psychological abuse. o Exposure to peer suicide.

- Family Characteristics:
  - o Family history of suicide or suicidal behavior. o Family mental health problems. o Divorce/Death of parent/guardian. o Parental-Child relationship.

Warning signs are indications that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the near future. Warning signs include, but are not limited to:

- Expressions such as hopelessness, rage, anger, seeking revenge, feeling trapped, anxiety, agitation, no reason to live or sense of purpose.
- Recklessness or risky behavior.
- Increased alcohol or drug use.
- Withdrawal from friends, family, or society.
- Dramatic mood changes.

Referral Procedures

Any employee who has identified a student with one (1) or more risk factors or who has an indication that a student may be contemplating suicide, shall refer the student to the school suicide prevention coordinator for further assessment and intervention.

Documentation

The school shall document the reasons for referral, including specific warning signs and risk factors identified as indications that the student may be at risk.

Methods of Intervention

The methods of intervention utilized by the school include, but are not limited to, responding to suicide threats, suicide attempts in school, suicide attempts outside of school, and completed suicide. Suicide intervention procedures shall address the development of an emotional or mental health safety plan for students identified as being at increased risk of suicide.

Procedures for Students at Risk

A suicide assessment instrument may be used by the suicide prevention coordinator, school counselors, and psychologists. Parents/Guardians of a student identified as being at risk of suicide shall be notified by the school. If the school suspects that the student's risk status is the result of abuse or neglect, school staff shall immediately notify Children and Youth Services. The school shall identify mental health service providers to whom students can be referred for further assessment and assistance.

Mental health service providers – may include, but not be limited to, hospital emergency departments, psychiatric hospitals, community mental health centers, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and primary care providers.

The school shall create an emotional or mental health safety plan to support a student and the student's family if the student has been identified as being at increased risk of suicide.

Students With Disabilities

For students with disabilities who are identified as being at risk for suicide or who attempt suicide, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Board policy.

If a student is identified as being at risk for suicide or attempts suicide and the student may require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Board policy.

Documentation

The school shall document observations, recommendations and actions conducted throughout the intervention and assessment process including verbal and written communications with students, parents/guardians, and mental health service providers. The CEO/Principal or designee shall develop administrative regulations providing recommended guidelines for responding to a suicide threat.

Methods Of Response To Suicide Or Suicide Attempt

The methods of response to a suicide or a suicide attempt utilized by the school include, but are not limited to:

1. Identifying and training the school crisis response/crisis intervention team.

2. Determining the roles and responsibilities of each crisis response team member.
3. Notifying students, employees, and parents/guardians.
4. Working with families.
5. Responding appropriately to the media.
6. Collaborating with community providers.

The CEO/Principal or designee shall develop an administrative plan with recommended guidelines for responding to a suicidal act or attempt on school grounds or during a school-sponsored event.

Re-Entry Procedures

A student's excusal from school attendance after a mental health crisis and the student's return to school shall be consistent with state and federal laws and regulations. The suicide prevention coordinator shall, if appropriate, meet or talk with the parents/guardians of a student returning to school after a mental health crisis, and, if appropriate, meet with the student to discuss re-entry and applicable next steps to ensure the student's readiness to return to school. When authorized by the student's parent/guardian, the designated school employee shall coordinate with the appropriate outside mental health care providers. The designated school employee will periodically check in, as needed, with the student to facilitate the transition back into the school community and address any concerns.

Report Procedures

Effective documentation assists in preserving the safety of the student and ensuring communication among school staff, parents/guardians, and mental health service providers. When an employee takes notes on any conversations or situations involving or relating to an at-risk student, the notes should contain only factual or directly observed information, not opinions or hearsay.

As stated in this policy, employees shall be responsible for effective documentation of incidents involving suicide prevention, intervention, and response. The suicide prevention coordinator shall, if requested, provide the CEO/Principal with a copy of all reports and documentation regarding the at-risk student. Information and reports shall be provided, as appropriate, to guidance counselors, charter school mental health professionals and school nurses.

Suicide Prevention Resources

Please note that the resources listed here are free of charge. There are many more excellent resources for minimal cost.

General Information (many with webinar sessions):

- PA Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative Mission http://www.payspi.org. The Pennsylvania Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative is a multi-system collaboration to reduce youth suicide. Youth suicide prevention will be embraced and incorporated into the fabric of every community in Pennsylvania to address the social and emotional needs of youth at risk and survivors of suicide.

- Suicide Prevention Resource Center http://www.sprc.org/. SPRC is the nation's only federally supported resource center devoted to advancing the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. They provide technical assistance, training, and materials to increase the knowledge and expertise of suicide prevention practitioners and other professionals serving people at risk for suicide. They also promote collaboration among a variety of organizations that play a role in developing the field of suicide prevention.
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention http://www.afsp.org. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has been at the forefront of a wide range of suicide prevention initiatives – each designed to reduce loss of life from suicide. They are investing in groundbreaking research, new educational campaigns, innovative demonstration projects and critical policy work. And they are expanding their assistance to people, whose lives have been affected by suicide, reaching out to offer support and offering opportunities to become involved in prevention.
- American Association of Suicidology http://www.suicidology.org/home. AAS is a membership organization for all those involved in suicide prevention and intervention or touched by suicide. AAS is a leader in the advancement of scientific and programmatic efforts in suicide prevention through research, education and training, the development of standards and resources, and survivor support services.
- Services for Teens At Risk (STAR Center) http://www.starcenter.pitt.edu/. Services for Teens At Risk (STAR-Center) is a comprehensive research, treatment, and training center. Funded by the State of Pennsylvania's General Assembly in 1986 to address adolescent suicide and depression, the program provides individual assessment and treatment to teens that are experiencing

  depression and suicidality. They also provide community education services about depression and suicidality to schools, social service agencies, churches and other organizations that request them.
- The Trevor Project http://www.thetrevorproject.org. The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth.
- Comprehensive School Guide Youth Suicide Prevention School-Based Guide http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/. The Youth Suicide Prevention School-Based Guide is designed to provide accurate, user-friendly information. The Guide is not a program but a tool that provides a framework for schools to assess their existing or proposed suicide prevention efforts (thought a series of checklists) and provides resources and information that school administrators can use to enhance or add to their existing program. First, checklists can be completed to help evaluate the adequacy of the schools' suicide prevention programs. Second, information is offered in a series of issue briefs corresponding to a specific checklist. Each brief offers a rationale for the importance of the specific topic together with a brief overview of the key points. The briefs also offer specific strategies that have proven to work in reducing the incidence of suicide, with references that schools may then explore in greater detail. A resource section with helpful links is also included. The Guide provides information to schools to assist them in the development of a framework to work in partnership with community resources and families.
- Training for School Staff Society for Prevention of Teen Suicide http://www.sptsusa.org. The mission of the Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide is to reduce the number of youth suicides and attempted suicides by encouraging overall public awareness through the

development and promotion of educational training programs for teens, parents, and educators. The free, interactive series Making Educators Partners in Suicide Prevention is designed to be completed at the viewer's own pace. Pennsylvania school staff requiring Act 48 hours may submit the certificate of completion to c-paschool@pa.gov or fax it to 717-783-4790, along with your Dept. of Education Professional ID number, to have these hours submitted.

- More Than Sad Program
  http://www.afsp.org/preventing-suicide/our-educationand-prevention-programs/programs-for-prof
  essionals/more-than-sad-suicide-prevention-education-forteachers-and-other-school-personnel. The More Than Sad Program of the American Foundation for Suicide prevention provides education about factors that put youth at risk for suicide, in particular depression and other mental disorders. Instructional materials accompany the More Than Sad Program, including a power point presentation.
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (http://www.afsp.org/). PA AFSP chapters will make the "More Than Sad" DVD available free to all high and middle schools in PA that request one. Contact Pat Gainey to receive your copy. Patricia Gainey, Regional Director, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Greater Philadelphia Regional Office, 3535 Market Street, Suite 4047, Philadelphia, PA 19104; Office: (215)746-7256.
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center – Best Practice Registry http://www.sprc.org/bpr. The purpose of the Best Practices Registry (BPR) is to identify, review, and disseminate information about best practices that address specific objective of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. The BPR is a collaborative project of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). It is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Many of the best practice resources listed must be purchased.

Suicide Crisis Response Guidelines

Suicide Threat

Suicide Threat - a verbal or nonverbal communication that the individual intends to harm him/herself with the intention to die but has not acted on the behavior.

When responding to a suicide threat, the school recommends that the staff use the following guidelines if the circumstances warrant such action:

1. The staff member who learns of the threat should contact the suicide prevention coordinator, administrator, school nurse or school counselor immediately.
2. The suicide prevention coordinator should involve any appropriate staff; school counselor, nurse and/or building administrator if warranted.
3. The suicide prevention coordinator or appropriate staff should determine risk and intervention needed by interviewing the student and gathering appropriate supportive documentation from teachers or others who witnessed the threat.

The suicide prevention coordinator should:

1. Contact the parent/guardian, apprise him/her of the situation and make recommendations.
2. Put all recommendations in writing to the parent/guardian.
3. Maintain a file copy of the recommendations as presented to the parent / guardian and all follow up documentation.

If the student is known to be in counseling, the suicide prevention coordinator or appropriate staff should attempt to inform his/her treatment provider of what occurred, and the actions taken. If the parent/guardian refuses to cooperate and there is any doubt regarding the child's safety, the school employee should call the county mental health crisis center to consult regarding the threat.

Involve the School Counselor and Student Assistance Program (SAP) team for follow-up and support.

Note: If a threat is made during an after-school program and no school personnel are available, call

TrueNorth Wellness Services Emergency Crisis Support Services – 1-866-325-0339 or (717) 637-7633 or

1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-273-TALK for help. Inform the suicide prevention coordinator or administrator of the incident and actions taken.

Suicidal Act or Attempt on School Grounds or During a School-Sponsored Activity

Suicidal Act (also referred to as Suicide Attempt) - a potentially self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person probably intended to kill him/herself; a suicidal act may result in death, injuries, or no injuries.

When responding to a suicidal act or attempt on school grounds or during a school-sponsored activity, the school recommends that the staff use the following guidelines if the circumstances warrant such action:

The first employee on the scene should call for help from another staff member, locate the individual and follow charter school emergency medical procedures, such as calling the school nurse or 911.

In addition:

1. A staff member should notify the suicide prevention coordinator, administrator, school counselor, and/or school nurse.
2. Staff members should move all other students out of the immediate area and arrange appropriate supervision. Students should not be allowed to observe the scene.
3. The suicide prevention coordinator should involve administrative staff to assist as needed.
4. The suicide prevention coordinator should contact the parent/guardian, apprise them of the situation and ask him/her to come to the school or hospital.

5. The suicide prevention coordinator should inform the CEO/Principal.
6. The suicide prevention coordinator should call for assistance from the school crisis management coordinator or TrueNorth Wellness Services Emergency Crisis Support Services – 1-866-325-0339 or (717) 637-7633 or 1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-273-TALK for help, if required.
7. The suicide prevention coordinator will document in writing all actions taken and recommendations.
8. If the student is known to be currently in counseling, the suicide prevention coordinator should attempt to inform his/her treatment provider of what occurred, and the actions taken.
9. The suicide prevention coordinator should involve the school counselor and SAP team for follow up and support.
10. The suicide prevention coordinator should request written documentation from any treating facilities prior to a student's return to school.
11. Administrative staff and/or suicide prevention coordinator should promptly follow up with any students or staff who might have witnessed the attempt and contact their parents/guardians. Supportive counseling should be offered, and all actions taken should be documented.
12. Media representatives should be referred to the appropriate school spokesperson (e.g., CEO/Principal or Communications Coordinator). School staff should make no statements to the media.

Suicide Act or Attempt Not on School Grounds or During a School-Sponsored Activity But Reported to a School Employee

Follow the procedures outlined under Suicide Threat.

Suicide Completion of a Student or Employee on School Grounds or During a School-Sponsored Activity Suspected Suicide (also referred to as Suicide Completion) - death from injury, poisoning, or suffocation where there is initial indication evidence that a self-inflicted act may have led to the person's death.

Schools must adhere to the wishes of the family in this regard and respect their right to privacy and confidentiality. When a sudden unexplained death of a student or staff member occurs, the suicide prevention coordinator should confer with the CEP/Principal and promptly implement crisis response procedures outlined in the charter school's Crisis Management Plan.

The suicide prevention coordinator and/or school administrator should:

1. Immediately notify, regardless of the day or time, the CEO/Principal's office as well as the Board Chair. Verify and obtain as much information as possible via police, the parent/guardian, or others who may have the facts depending on circumstances.

2. Assemble the school response team; use the procedures outlined in the Crisis Management Plan if in the evening or over the weekend to ensure that everyone is informed of what occurred in a timely manner.
3. Do not describe the death as a suicide with the public, parents/guardians, staff, or students unless you have confirmation from the immediate family, coroner, or medical examiner.
4. Inform the faculty that a sudden death has occurred using written communication if school has already begun, followed by a staff meeting at the conclusion of the day. If the death occurred in the evening, convene a staff meeting prior to the start of school the next day.
5. Designate space for all postvention activities.
6. Once obtained, provide funeral arrangements and related details to students, staff via main office, and parents/guardians via written communication.
7. Refer staff to the school's EAP (Employee Assistance Program) for additional support.
8. Prepare and email and/or send parental information to school families.
9. Prioritize classrooms and students who should need immediate attention and connect them with the response team or other appropriate resources.
10. Refer media requests to the charter school's spokesperson.
11. Do not disclose any information or details to the media.
12. Meet with the response team at the end of the day or days during crisis management activities to ensure the exchange of important information, as well as to ensure communication and further planning of activities.
13. Check in periodically with the family, staff, and students to ensure that everyone is supported as much as feasible within the context of the school setting.

Smoking

The Board recognizes that smoking presents a health hazard that can have serious consequences for both the smoker and the nonsmoker. Therefore, GMCS and its grounds are Non-Smoking areas.

For purposes of this policy, "smoking" shall mean all uses of tobacco, including cigar, cigarette, pipe, and smokeless tobacco (chewing tobacco, "snuff," "dip," etc.), vaping, and all controlled substances. School jurisdiction shall include use of property owned or operated by the school; or contracted transportation to and from school; and extracurricular activities.

To protect students and staff from the safety hazards of smoking and from an environment noxious to nonsmokers, and because the Board cannot, even by indirection condone the use of tobacco by students or staff, the Board prohibits smoking by students or staff in school buildings, on school grounds, and in school vehicles. Whenever such property shall be used as a public place or public meeting, the school employee in charge shall prohibit smoking in all areas of the school.

The CEO/Principal shall inform all students and staff members of the no smoking policy of GMCS.

Instruction on the potential hazards of the use of tobacco shall be incorporated into the health curriculum.

Substance Abuse

The Board recognizes that substance abuse and the misuse of alcohol are serious social problems that have far-reaching implications for both the user and the entire community. The Board is committed to the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse and accepts the responsibility for instructing students in these substances.

For the purpose of this policy, "substance" shall mean alcoholic beverages, anabolic steroids, controlled dangerous substances as defined in Section 2 of P.L. 1970, c. 266 (C. 24:21-2) or any chemical or chemical compound which releases vapors or fumes causing a condition of intoxication, inebriation, excitement, stupefaction or dulling of the brain or nervous system including, but not limited to, glue containing a solvent having the property of releasing toxic vapors or fumes as defined in Section 1 of P.L. 1965, c. 41 (C. 2A:170- 25:9), and any prescription drugs, except those for which permission for use in school has been granted. Please refer to the subsection of this manual relating to administration of medication.

The use, possession, sale or distribution, or possession with intent to sell or distribute any substance, as defined above, (a) on school property, (b) at any place where an interscholastic athletic contest is taking place, (c) during the course of any field trip, (d) during the course of any trip or activity sponsored by the Board or under the supervision of the Board or its authorized agents, or (e) upon school transportation vehicles at any time is prohibited, as well as (f) the use of any substances prior to participation in the activities listed above in (a)-(e), is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from the academic program. Use, by the student, in proper amounts, of a drug authorized by a medical prescription for the student from a licensed physician shall not be considered a violation of this rule.

For the purpose of this policy, "school property" shall include (1) any school building or any school premises and any school-owned vehicles or any other school approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities, (2) off-school property during any school sponsored or school approved activity, event or function such as a field trip or athletic event, where students are under the jurisdiction of the school, and (3) any location where an activity such as a banquet, sponsored and organized by a parent group is held and at which students are in attendance.

Likewise, no student shall aid, abet, assist, or conceal the possession, consumption, purchase, or distribution of any substance by any other student or students (a) on school property, (b) at any place where an interscholastic athletic contest is taking place, (c) during any field trip, (d) during any trip or activity

sponsored by the Board under the supervision of the Board or its authorized agents, or (e) upon school transportation vehicles at any time.

All staff members shall be alert to signs of substance use by students and shall respond to those signs in accordance with procedures established by the CEO/Principal. In all instances confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible. A student found engaging in any of the foregoing prohibited

activities will be subject to suspension or expulsion from school pursuant to existing administrative policies and procedures for the discipline of school students and any other applicable provisions of the law. The following action will be taken for cases involving controlled substances:

- Any offense – a suspension of at least five (5) days; plus, a hearing to determine whether circumstances warrant additional days of suspension; a recommendation for placement in an alternative program; or a recommendation to the Board for expulsion.

The Board may require participation in any drug counseling, rehabilitation, testing, or other programs as a condition of reinstatement to GMCS.

The Board will enforce the laws of Pennsylvania requiring a program of drug and alcohol education and provide a comprehensive curriculum for instruction in grades K -6. Drug and alcohol education shall be integrated with the health curriculum. Additionally, appropriate programs for the enforcement, intervention, and prevention of substance abuse shall be provided within the school setting.

Substance abuse educational programs for parents/guardians will be offered at times and places convenient to parents/guardians on school premises or other facilities.

An annual review of this policy and related procedures of the Board shall be conducted.

Substance abuse policies and procedures for discipline, evaluation, intervention, and referral shall be made available annually to all school staff, students, and parents/guardians.

Employee Drug, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Testing

GMCS is committed to a safe, healthy, and productive workplace for all employees. Abuse of alcohol and controlled substances in the workplace is a danger to the safety, health, and welfare of employees and students of GMCS. An alcohol and drug-free workplace enhances the safety of all employees and ensures their fitness to fulfill their assigned job responsibilities.

As one means of maintaining a drug and alcohol-free workplace, GMCS shall implement an employee drug, alcohol, and substance abuse testing program pursuant to this policy. The objective of the program shall be to ensure:

1. GMCS employees (hereafter called employees) are drug and alcohol free during their employment with GMCS.
2. Prospective applicants for employment (herein called applicants) are drug and alcohol free when they are hired.
3. GMCS employees do not present a threat to the safety, health, and welfare of those with whom they will come into contact.

In its effort to empower people to reach their fullest potential, GMCS shall encourage employees with addiction to, dependence upon, or abuse of alcohol or drugs to seek professional assistance.

GMCS is authorized to conduct pre-employment drug testing as a condition of employment. The scope of the policy shall include as a condition of employment post-offer, pre-employment screening for the use of illegal drugs.

GMCS is authorized to conduct drug and alcohol testing based upon reasonable suspicion of violation of GMCS policy and a random drug-testing method to protect the health and welfare of GMCS employees and students.

The following terms have the meanings listed below, unless the context clearly indicates to the contrary:

The term **alcohol** means ethyl alcohol of any degree of proof, whether rectified or diluted, and any beverage containing the same, including but not limited to liquor, wine, spirits, fermented beverages, and malt or brewed beverages.

The term **drug** or **controlled substance** means a controlled substance listed in Schedules I through V of the Controlled Substances Act, listed in the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, a look-alike drug, or a designer drug.

The term **look-alike drug** means any substance not listed in Schedules I through V of the Controlled Substances Act and Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act that: (i) has a stimulant or depressant effect on humans, other than a prescription drug, which, or the label or container of which, substantially resembles a specific controlled substance; or (ii) is or has been represented to be a controlled substance, stimulant, or depressant.

The term **designer drug** means a substance not listed in Schedules I through V of the Controlled Substances Act and Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act that has a chemical structure like that of a controlled substance that produces an effect substantially similar to that of a controlled substance.

The term **workplace** shall be defined as the site for the performance of work. This term includes off-school sites where a GMCS activity is occurring, as well as a vehicle being used for GMCS transportation and activities.

Drug And Alcohol Treatment

Any employee who feels that s/he is addicted to, dependent on, or has a problem with alcohol or drugs shall be encouraged to seek professional assistance.

1. Any employee who engages in treatment shall be entitled to benefits under GMCS's group medical/hospital insurance plans, within the constraints of the business agreements with the medical insurance providers, on the same basis and with the same restrictions and limits as for other illnesses/disabilities. Any employee who engages in such treatment through an insurance plan or an Employee Assistance Program provider shall have all such treatment and related expenses covered by applicable GMCS benefit coverage, again within the constraints of the providers' business agreements with the Charter School.

2. If the nature of the treatment allows, and at the sole discretion of the CEO, an employee shall be permitted to continue to work during such treatment.

3. GMCS shall grant sick, disability, unpaid or Family and Medical Leave for drug and alcohol treatment on the same basis that medical leaves are granted for other disabilities.

   All such requests for medical leave shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Requests may be made directly to the CEO or designee, and such requests for leave shall not be unreasonably denied.

   Upon receiving a request for leave, the CEO or designee shall encode the request by assigning said employee a number (other than his/her own Social Security Number) and shall delete all references to the employee's name on all future documents/communications related to said leave and course of treatment. This number shall be used to maintain the confidential nature of the process.

   A form letter shall be provided to the employee by GMCS, to be used for purposes of billing by the treating organization.

4. GMCS shall facilitate all applications for disability benefits in the event an employee is eligible for such benefits during his/her treatment.

5. Employees who engage in illegal activities during treatment shall not be immune from discipline. Requests made by employees to obtain help in such a treatment program, however, shall not be cause for discipline.

6. Following successful and satisfactory completion of a drug and alcohol treatment program, an employee shall be reintegrated into the workforce on the same basis as other employees without regard to his/her treatment or disability.

7. All information obtained during assistance, counseling, rehabilitation, or treatment of employees with alcohol, drug, or controlled substance abuse problems shall be protected as confidential and shall be kept separate from the employee's official personnel file. The importance of this confidentiality to GMCS and its employees is of the highest importance to the Board of Trustees ("Board").

Drug Testing

1. Reasonable Suspicion:

   Any employee giving reasonable suspicion to believe that s/he is in violation of GMCS policy Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace shall be subjected to GMCS-paid testing immediately upon observation of such reasonable suspicion. Reasonable suspicion shall be limited to behavior or conduct observed upon GMCS property or observed during the employee's performance of employment-related duties. Only the CEO or designee can authorize testing.

2. Random:

   At the direction of the Board, GMCS will implement a random drug testing program which shall include GMCS-paid tests of affected employees on a random basis and shall be conducted without any advance notice. The Board shall determine the testing frequency and shall be by a valid testing method so that all employees shall have an equal chance of being

selected. The random drug testing program shall set forth the time in which the employee must undergo testing after having been randomly selected. Alcohol is not included in the random drug testing.

Testing Procedure

In general:

1. GMCS will utilize a third-party collection agency to administer the testing. At the discretion of the CEO, testing shall be performed either on GMCS property or at the third-party collection agency's testing center. A list of the approved testing centers will be maintained in the office of the CEO.
2. All specimens shall be submitted by the third-party collection agency directly to a third-party testing agency. GMCS will utilize the third-party testing agency to test the specimens. The third-party agency will communicate the results exclusively to GMCS through a Medical Review Officer (MRO) of the third-party testing agency.
3. All drug and alcohol testing will be conducted in a medical testing laboratory approved by GMCS and certified by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration.
4. Federal standards, as enumerated in the federal Department of Health and Human Services Department guidelines in effect at the time of testing, shall control with respect to all phases of the testing procedures, including but not limited to the certification of the testing facility, the level of particular substances in the urine, blood or hair, the reading and reporting of the test results by a qualified medical review officer, the use of proper chain-of-custody procedures and sample storage, and the use of appropriate confirmatory test procedures.
5. Applicants or employees to be tested pursuant to this policy shall be notified of such testing in writing setting forth the date of notice, the time limit by which the employee or applicant must submit to the test, and the list of approved testing centers, if testing is not to be conducted on GMCS property.
6. Any refusal or failure by the employee/applicant to submit to any test required by this policy shall be deemed to be a positive result. Refusal to submit to a test under this policy shall include any act or omission which prevents, thwarts, or frustrates the objectives of this policy, including without limitation the following:

    a. Refusal or failure by the employee or applicant to complete, sign or initial the required testing forms.
    b. Refusal or failure without good cause to provide any sample or provide an adequate sample for testing.
    c. Failure or refusal to cooperate with the testing process in a way which prevents the completion of any required test.

7. Alcohol Testing:

a. Alcohol testing shall be conducted using state-approved breathalyzer or by a medically recognized blood, hair, or urine test.

b. Any employee receiving a test result of greater than 0.02 but less than 0.04 blood alcohol level shall be removed from duties for twenty-four (24) hours.

c. Any test result of 0.04 blood alcohol level or greater shall be considered a positive test.

d. Employees being tested for alcohol based upon reasonable suspicion shall not drive their personal vehicles to the testing site for an alcohol test.

e. Any employee/applicant testing positive for alcohol will have the opportunity to request a split sample of the same specimen to be retested, at the employee's expense. Split-sample requests must be made within five (5) working days of the employee's/applicant's receipt of written notice of a positive result. Split specimen samples shall be retained for each test performed until final disposition is made and until the testing facility is notified by both GMCS and the affected employee/applicant that the samples may be discarded.

8. Drug Testing:

a. Any test result showing the presence of illegal drugs shall be reviewed by the third-party testing agency's Medical Review Officer (MRO). The MRO shall issue a final determination as to whether the test results indicate a positive result.

b. Employees being tested for drugs based upon reasonable suspicion shall not drive their personal vehicles to the testing site for a drug test.

c. Any employee/applicant testing positive for illegal drugs will have the opportunity to request a split sample of the same specimen to be retested, at the employee's/applicant's expense. Split-sample requests must be within five (5) working days of the employee's/applicant's receipt of written notice of a positive result. Split specimen samples shall be retained for each test performed until final disposition is made and until the testing facility is notified by both GMCS and the affected employee/applicant that the samples may be discarded.

d. An employee/applicant who receives a "negative but dilute" test result will be subject to an immediate retest upon receipt of the "negative but dilute" test result if the creatinine concentration of the dilute specimen is greater than 5 mg/dL.

8. Transportation Arrangements:

GMCS shall provide or arrange transportation to and/or from the testing site, job site or GMCS's facilities, as appropriate or as determined by the CEO or his/her designee, under the following circumstances:

a. All reasonable suspicion tests.

b. Upon GMCS receipt of notification of a positive drug/alcohol test.

9. Recordkeeping:

GMCS shall retain in the employee's/applicant's personnel file all information pertaining to any test administered hereunder and the results of any test. All GMCS files, documents, and records related to the application of this policy shall be deemed and kept confidential by GMCS. GMCS shall not release any such information to any person without first obtaining written authorization from the employee/applicant unless otherwise authorized by law.

Positive Test Results

Employee Testing:

a. Employees shall be notified of any positive drug or alcohol test result orally and in writing.

b. Positive drug or alcohol test results shall subject the employee to the disciplinary provisions of GMCS policy.

Reasonable Suspicion Testing

A decision by GMCS to test requires that the employee be advised in writing of the reasons for the decision and for what s/he will be tested. Any employee so required shall be afforded full opportunity to explain his/her behavior and the causes for the same, but GMCS shall not have any obligation to change its testing decision based on the employee's explanation.

A designated supervisor shall transport the employee to a collection facility designated by GMCS to be tested along with a member of the Charter School's administrative staff. Two (2) persons will always transport the employee.

Employee Responsibility for Student Welfare

The Board believes that the major focus of an educational institution is to protect and advance the welfare of its students. Each employee has the moral and legal responsibility to assist in making the learning environment free of risk to the well-being of the learner.

The Board establishes the following guidelines as a means of accomplishing this important responsibility:

1. The CEO/Principal shall develop a program of student welfare in accordance with the guidelines of this policy.
2. Commensurate with assigned duties and responsibilities, each employee must maintain a standard of concern for the physical, emotional, and moral protection of the student.
3. Instructional staff shall provide content and activities on general welfare as presented in assigned curricular courses and/or guides.
4. Employees are responsible for the safety of students assigned to their charge. This provision always includes the presence of the teacher or a responsible designee, the use of only that equipment which has been approved by the school, the reporting of unsafe equipment or

conditions to the immediate supervisor and/or the CEO/Principal, including the presence of dangerous weapons, drug abuse and any persons who are acting in a suspicious manner.

Students may not be transported in an employee's personal vehicle except where specifically permitted by Board policy.

Student Public Performances

The Board recognizes the value to students of sharing their talents and skills with the community through student participation and performances in public events. The Board endorses such performances when:

1. They constitute a learning experience which contributes to the educational program; and
2. The circumstances of the event do not pose a threat to the health, safety and well-being of the students who will be involved.

All requests for public performances by student groups shall require the approval of the CEO/Principal. Parent permission shall be sought and received before students may participate. No student, group of students or employees of this Board may receive compensation for the public performance of students organized as a school representative.

All posters, flyers, and other means of advertising a student performance must first be approved by the CEO/Principal or his/her designee.

Student organizations may participate with community patriotic and civic groups.

Student organizations may not be used for political rallies. Student organizations may be used to honor visiting dignitaries.

In all instances, the interests of students shall be protected and guarded against exploitation.

Firearms, Weapons and Dangerous Instruments

Students who use or possess firearms, weapons or other instruments which can be used as weapons, endanger the health, safety and welfare of students and staff, and interfere with the proper learning environment. The Board prohibits the possession and/or use of firearms, weapons, deadly weapons, or dangerous instruments on school property, in school vehicles, at any school function, or while on-route to or from school or any school function in a school owned vehicle.

For the purpose of this policy, "school property" shall include (1) any school building or any school premises and any school-owned vehicles or any other school approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities, (2) off-school property during any school sponsored or school approved activity, event or function such as a field trip or athletic event, where students are under the jurisdiction of the school, and (3) any location where an activity such as a banquet, sponsored and organized by a parent group is held and at which students are in attendance.

Firearms include but are not limited to any handgun, rifle, shotgun, machine gun, automatic or semiautomatic rifle, or any BB, pellet, air gun, zip gun or any other similar type of instrument. Firearms also include any weapon (including a starter gun) which will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or any destructive device. A destructive device is defined as including but not limited to any explosive, incendiary, or poison, gas bomb or grenade.

Weapons and deadly weapons include, but are not limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, metal knuckles, nunchaku, slingshots, stun guns, firearm, shotgun, rifle, any device which projects or emits gas or other substances intended to produce discomfort or injury, or any other tool, instrument, or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily harm.

The CEO/Principal shall make the final determination that a particular object is a dangerous instrument in any case where there is a question.

A student found or observed on school property, on a school vehicle or at a school-sponsored event in possession of a firearm, weapon, deadly weapon, or dangerous instrument shall be reported to the CEO/Principal/designee immediately. The CEO/Principal/designee shall immediately inform the appropriate law enforcement officials. The school administrator reporting the incident to the police shall provide the law enforcement officials with all known information concerning the matter, including the identity of the student involved and notice that a violation of the Criminal Code may have occurred. The CEO/Principal/designee shall, where safely possible, take possession of the firearm, weapon, deadly weapon, or dangerous instrument, which shall be turned over to the law enforcement officials.

Disciplinary action described below, shall be taken against students who possess, handle, transmit or use firearms, weapons, deadly weapons, or dangerous instruments. As in all disciplinary matters, due process will be provided.

- *Firearms:* A student will be suspended for a period of not less than one calendar year or expelled if the student is convicted or adjudicated as a juvenile delinquent for possession of a firearm or the commission of a crime while armed with a firearm, or knowingly possessing a firearm on any school property, on a school vehicle, or at a school-sponsored function. The CEO/Principal may recommend modification of such expulsion requirements for a student on a case by case basis. (24 PS 13-1317.2 c)

- *Assault with a weapon:* A student will be suspended or expelled if the student commits an assault, against a teacher, administrator, board member or other employee or student, with a weapon, other than a firearm, on any school property, on a school vehicle or at a school-sponsored function. In the case of a suspension the CEO/Principal shall make the determination as to when the suspension shall end.

- *Assault without a weapon:* A student may be suspended or expelled if the student commits an assault against another student, a teacher, administrator, board member or other employee who is acting within his/her duties and in a situation where his/her authority to act is apparent, or because of his/her relationship with the school. The student shall be immediately suspended pending suspension or expulsion proceedings in a hearing before the Board, which shall be held

no later than thirty (30) days from the day the student is suspended, with all due process rights provided. The decision of the board shall be rendered within five (5) days after the close of the hearing. An appeal of an adverse decision may be made to the Secretary of Education within 90 days. Student rights shall be construed in a manner consistent with 20 U.S.C. Section 1400 et seq. Reference 24 PS 13-1317.2

In all such cases, the student shall be immediately removed from the regular classroom program and provided with home instruction or other suitable facilities or program until placement is available, or placed in an alternative educational program, if available, and required to submit to a Child Study Team evaluation and a board hearing. The board hearing shall take place no longer than thirty (30) days from the day the student is removed from the regular classroom program, with all due process rights provided. The Board will render a decision within five (5) days after the close of the hearing. An appeal of an adverse decision may be made to the Secretary of Pennsylvania's Department of Education within ninety (90) days. Students' rights shall be construed in a manner consistent with 20 U.S.C. Section 1400 et seq.

If the board determines that the student has not committed the offense as charged, the student shall be immediately returned to his/her regular educational program.

Hazardous Materials – Workers' Right To Know

The Board has the responsibility to inform and train its employees properly regarding the hazardous substances they work with and to design and put in place employee protection programs. Employee training programs provide necessary hazard information to employees so they can participate in and support measures in place at school.

Employees must obtain advance approval from the CEO/Principal to use hazardous materials on school premises. Should employees have any questions as to whether any material is subject to this requirement, they should direct their question to the CEO/Principal.

In compliance with the Workers' Right To Know law, the Board directs the CEO/Principal to develop a notice that informs employees of the Board's responsibility to protect them from hazardous substances in the workplace. This notice shall be included in the Employee Handbook and copies of the notice shall be conspicuously displayed as a means of informing employees of their rights and obligations under the law.

Asbestos Statement: GMCS facility was constructed after 2006 and is therefore asbestos free.

Emergency Evacuation of School

The following guidelines shall apply to emergencies that affect the operation of the school. The school's system of emergency preparedness shall ensure that the health and safety of students and staff are safeguarded, the time necessary for instructional purposes is not unduly diverted, minimum disruption to the educational program occurs, students are helped to learn self-reliance and trained to respond sensibly to emergency situations.

All threats to the safety of the school and its occupants shall be identified by appropriate personnel and responded to promptly in accordance with the plan for emergency preparedness as promulgated by the CEO/Principal. Bomb threats and reports of fire shall normally require the evacuation of the school.

The CEO/Principal is required to develop plans to be used when the school is closed for emergencies during the school day. A copy of each emergency plan is to be kept on file in the school office.

The CEO/Principal shall develop procedures by **September 30** of each year, with changes made as needed, for the handling of school emergencies which include:

- The prompt and safe evacuation of the school and safe dispersal of students from school property, which shall be practiced at least once each month, as fire drills conducted in accordance with the law,
- Plan for instructional organizations when teachers may not have their regular class during a fire drill,
- Plan for the evacuation of disabled students, such as those confined to a wheelchair or otherwise unable to evacuate the building without assistance,
- Accounting for all students after the building has been evacuated,
- The conduct of bus evacuation drills twice a year in accordance with the law (if students are transported by bus),
- The sequestration of students in a safe place other than the school,
- A communication system to alert the whole school community when necessary and to notify parents of the evacuation of students,
- Instruction in emergency preparedness and survival techniques as a part of the regular curriculum of the school,
- Immediate notification of appropriate administrative personnel whenever any employee becomes aware of an emergency or impending emergency,
- Cooperation with local agencies such as police department, fire department or civil defense,
- Instruction of staff members in the techniques of handling emergencies,
- Continual evaluation of the effectiveness of emergency planning in preparing the school to cope with disaster, and
- Arrangement for an annual inspection by fire/police officials.

On-site Supervision

Students shall not be left alone or unsupervised during emergency situations. Areas of the school to be used during emergency situations shall, to the extent possible, be easily accessible to entrances and to the school office. All staff members (except custodial personnel) must remain in the building until all students are dismissed. If students are still in the building beyond one (1) hour after the official closing

time, the procedures described below are to be followed. All other staff members may leave the building one (1) hour after the official closing time.

The CEO/Principal and other administrative personnel are to remain in the school to supervise students. Additional personnel shall be retained only if there is a need beyond the CEO/Principal and other administrative personnel. The CEO/Principal or his/her designee shall be the last person to leave the school after all students have been dismissed and no other emergencies exist.

Special Situations

Closing school because of problems relating to heating, air conditioning, plumbing, vandalism, etc. will be made as determined necessary.

Fire Drills

Fire drills shall be held not less than once each month throughout the school year. Additional fire drills beyond these requirements are to be held when needed to ensure a high degree of order and control under all school conditions. A record of the date and time of each fire drill shall be maintained in the school office. These drills shall be held at irregular intervals and at different times during the school day. Students and teachers shall be instructed in, and made thoroughly familiar with, the use of fire escapes, appliances for extinguishing fires, and all exits.

Advanced notice of fire drills shall be given to persons in charge of the cafeteria, medical and science areas, administrative offices, and to the custodian. This advance notice shall not be given more than one (1) hour prior to calling the drill. In the absence of any advance notice, it shall be assumed an emergency exists.

Fire drill procedures must be posted conspicuously in each room and in all other areas of the school.

Visitors and all other guests in the school must participate in a scheduled fire drill and may be requested by the CEO/Principal to assist, if necessary.

In the event of a fire near the school, the CEO/Principal or his/her designee shall consult with local fire department officials to determine the action to be taken to ensure the safety of students and school personnel.

All schools using or contracting for school buses for the transportation of students shall conduct two emergency evacuation drills on buses during each school year, the first to be conducted during the first week of school and the second during the month of March, and at such other times as the CEO/Principal deems necessary. Each drill shall include practice and instruction concerning the location, use and operation of emergency exit doors and fire extinguishers and the proper evacuation of buses in the event of fire or accident. Bus operators shall be provided with proper training and instruction to enable them to carry out the provisions of this subsection and may be required to attend classes and drills in connection therewith.

The CEO/Principal and the school nurse should convey clearly and frequently to all staff members the importance of safety, and regularly train staff in how to react in emergency situations. The procedures below identify steps that should be followed as part of the advanced planning that is necessary and important in preparing staff members to respond properly in emergency situations.

Fire Drills

1. Directions for an emergency exit route shall be posted conspicuously in every classroom as well as all other areas of the school (e.g., halls, offices, cafeteria, conference/workrooms, etc.). In determining the emergency exit routes for the entire school, care must be taken to avoid having too many students exit through the same door.
2. Building evacuation times should be recorded. The first fire drill should be held during the first week of school. ?Classroom doors shall be kept unlocked during the school days and building exit doors should be kept unlocked upon commencement and for the duration of the fire drill or emergency. A record of the date and time of each drill should be maintained in the school office.
3. Written permission should be obtained from the occupant(s) of a nearby location (e.g., church, shopping center parking lot, another school, etc.) to which students may be taken in the event of an emergency in the school.
4. A current student roster for each classroom should be readily accessible for teachers to use to take attendance once students have exited the school and have arrived at their designated spot. If any students are unaccounted for, the CEO/Principal/ designee should be notified so that efforts may be made to locate those students.
5. The CEO/Principal should check with the local fire/police departments to see that all regulations are met as part of the school's emergency evacuation plan.
6. A list of emergency telephone numbers (e.g., fire department, police, ambulance, etc.) shall be readily available in the school office.
7. All fire extinguishers must be checked within the time limits set by the manufacturer and the results recorded.
8. Members of the local fire department are to be scheduled to conduct a training session for all staff members in the proper use of fire extinguishers.

Other Emergencies

1. Representatives from the local police and fire departments and the Office of Emergency Planning are to be included in developing an overall emergency response plan for the school.
2. Code words and phrases are to be established to be used in alerting staff members to different emergency situations (e.g., armed person in the school, a hostage situation, bomb threat, etc.). Using such codes will not overly alarm students nor will it alert any unauthorized persons who may be in the building.

3. Emergency contact information must be maintained for each student so that contact may be made with the home or other persons in the event of an emergency.

Students' Responsibilities and Rights

Records Management, Acquisition, and Confidentiality

The CEO/Principal and designated staff person shall be the primary persons responsible for ensuring the confidentiality and management of educational and personnel records for all students, parents or guardians or caregivers, and staff at GMCS.

Records Management – Records Storage and Location

General Education

General education records will be stored in the school's main office in a locked file cabinet. The CEO/Principal and school secretary will have copies of the key and will make sure that files are managed and secured at all times. A complete student file will include, but is not limited to, copies of report cards and teacher comments, standardized test scores, official letters and notes between the school and parents or child, health immunization records, enrollment and withdrawal forms, and notices of disciplinary

actions.

Records of past students (Withdrawn/transferred)

The complete student file, as referenced above, is maintained by the CEO/Principal and school secretary, and are filed in the school office.

Special Education

Special education records will be stored and maintained in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the Special Education Coordinator or other official designee of the CEO/Principal. A child designated as a student in need of special education will have a general education file and a special education file. Stored documents will include all documents pertaining to the legal process of special education, including but not limited to permissions to evaluate/ re-evaluate, evaluation reports, IEPs, NOREPs, IEP progress reports, psychological evaluations, communications between parents and school, copies of disciplinary actions, and other items that may also be part of the general education file.

Access to Records

General Education

General Education records will be secured in file cabinets in the school office. The school secretary and other designees of the CEO/Principal will maintain and update educational records without permission. Teachers will have access to academic records and other information that has an educational impact. They must request permission to review the records from the school secretary. The student's

original records may not leave the office at any time. Parents may request the opportunity to see their child's file. All requests must be made in writing before permission will be granted to view the file. The original file shall not be removed from the office and an official designee will supervise the viewing. Parents will, at that time, also be informed of their rights concerning their child's files.

Special Education

Special education records are highly confidential and have additional restrictions to access. Special education records will be in the office of the Special Education Coordinator. They will be in a locked and secured file cabinet. Contents of a student's special education records will be maintained by the Special Education Coordinator or designated special education teacher. Faculty and providers of related services (speech and language, occupational therapy, counseling, etc.) who wish to view the contents of the file for the purpose of professional application must first obtain permission from the CEO/Principal or the Special Education Coordinator. The file cannot leave the office and must be viewed in the presence and under the supervision of the CEO/Principal or Special Education Coordinator. Teachers and providers of related services must sign off that they have viewed the file.

Acquisition of Special Education Records

Acquisition of special education records shall be the responsibility of the Special Education Coordinator. The Special Education Coordinator may request the special education records of any student that is identified as requiring special education services from the sending school or school district. The following procedure shall be followed to obtain the records of any student that is identified as requiring special education services by the child's sending school or school district, the child or parent, or that is identified through the school CSP Process:

1. A written request for the complete confidential file, on school letterhead, will be sent to the sending school or school district and to the parent.
2. The letter will be followed by a telephone call to the sending school and parent within seven (7) calendar days.
3. If the records are not received within fourteen (14) calendar days, a second letter will be sent, indicating "2nd notice" to the sending school and parent, and a copy of the request will be sent to the Intermediate Unit's Special Education Liaison, when appropriate.
4. The 2nd notice letter will be followed by a telephone call to the sending school and parent within seven (7) calendar days.
5. If the records are not received within fourteen (14) calendar days, a third letter will be sent, indicating "3rd notice" to the sending school and parent, and a copy of the request will be sent to the Intermediate Unit's Special Education Liaison.
6. If the records are not received within a reasonable period, not to exceed 14 calendar days, GMCS may send a designated representative to the sending school to search for and retrieve records.
7. Upon receipt, all records will be date stamped and maintained according to the appropriate school policies.

Transfer of Records

Requests by parents, guardians, and caregivers to have educational records transferred to a new school will be done through the Head Administrative Assistant, CEO/Principal, or School Counselor.

Voluntary Withdrawal

Parents, guardians, or caregivers must complete and sign a withdrawal form to voluntarily withdraw their children from GMCS. The CEO/Principal is immediately notified of all withdrawal requests, the school secretary processes the request for the records transfer by making a copy of the entire file and sending it to the receiving school. A copy of the withdrawal form will be placed in the student's file. The school secretary should update the school computers with the change of placement. The school will send an exit survey to the departing child's parent/guardian. The CEO/Principal will present the results of all exit surveys to the board twice a year.

Special Circumstances

All document transfers and official communication with the authorities will go through the CEO/Principal. The Special Education Coordinator will manage the transfer of Special Education records to the proper authorities.

Uses of Gathered Information

The information gathered by GMCS will be used to help make the community aware of the educational programs and goals of the school. The school may use the information in fulfilling its duties of data gathering to local, state, and federal governmental agencies and in writing of grants for funds and services aimed at improving the educational programs that are provided for its students. Whenever possible, all

efforts will be made to protect the identity of children and their families in the application for grants and the reporting of information to local, state, or federal agencies.

Information may also be used to increase understanding of the school through articles, photographs, possible postings on the school website and newsletters. Parents will have an opportunity, as they complete the annual registration process, to sign permission slips for the release of this type of information. Release forms must be secured by the school prior to using a child's likeness or name in this fashion.

Trainings on Managing and Maintaining Educational Records

The CEO/Principal shall provide or arrange training and informational sessions to new and veteran teachers and staff. When there is a need for additional training the CEO/Principal will rely on outside sources such as PaTTAN, the PA Department of Education and other training agencies to provide required training.

Confidentiality Policy Regular and Special Education Student Records

GMCS protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding its eligible, thought to be eligible, and qualified handicapped students (if not protected by IDEA '04), in accordance

with the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and other applicable federal and state laws, policies and regulations.

"Educational records" are those records that are directly related to the student, including computer media and videotape, which are maintained by an educational agency or by a party acting for the agency.

"Educational agency," for the purposes of this policy, means GMCS.

For all students, GMCS maintains records the following in accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) that include but are not limited to:

- *Personally identifiable information:* confidential information that includes, but is not limited to, the student's name, name of parents and other family members, the address of the student or the student's family, and personal information or personal characteristics that would make the student's identity easily traceable.

- *Directory information:* information contained in an education record or a student record that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy, if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to, the student's name, address and telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in recognized activities, weight and height, dates of attendance, award received and records from the most recent previous educational agency or institution.

The FERPA affords parents and students over eighteen (18) years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. Those rights are as follows:

1. Parents have the right to inspect and review a child's education records. GMCS will comply with the request to inspect and review education records without unnecessary delay and before any meetings regarding an IEP or any due process hearing, but in no case more than 30 (thirty) days after the request has been made. Requests should be made in writing to the CEO/Principal. Parents will receive a response from the school for reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records. Parents may request and receive copies of the records. While the school will not charge a fee to search for or retrieve information, it may charge a copying fee if it does not effectively prevent the parents from exercising their right to inspect and review their child's records. If any education records contain information on more than one child, parents have the right to inspect and to review only the information relating to their child.
2. If parents believe that information in an education record is inaccurate, misleading or violates the privacy rights of their child, they may request an amendment to the record. Requests must be in writing to the CEO/Principal and specify why they feel it is inaccurate or misleading. GMCS will decide whether to amend the record and will notify the parents in writing of its decision. If GMCS refuses to amend a record, it will notify the parents of their right to a hearing to challenge the disputed information. Additional information regarding

the hearing procedures will be provided to parents or eligible students when notified to the right of a hearing.

3. GMCS will inform parents when personally identifiable information is no longer needed to provide educational services to a child. Such information must be destroyed at the request of parents. Parents have a right to receive a copy of the material to be destroyed. However, a permanent record of a student's name, address, and telephone number, his or her grades, attendance record, classes attended, grade level completed, and year completed, may be obtained without time limitation. “Destruction” of records means physical destruction or removal of personal identifiers from information so that the information is no longer personally identifiable.
4. GMCS will provide, upon request, a listing of the types and locations of education records maintained, the officials responsible for these records, and the person authorized to see personally identifiable information. Such personnel will receive training and instruction regarding confidentiality. GMCS keeps a record of parties obtaining access to educational records, including the name of the party, date of access, the name of any organization the party represents, and the purpose for which the party was authorized to use the records.
5. Parents have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. “Consent” refers to 1) the parent(s) having been fully informed regarding the activity requiring consent, in their native language or other mode of communication; 2) parent(s) understand and agree in writing to the activity; and 3) parent(s) understand that consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time. Information may be disclosed with consent to charter officials with legitimate educational interests. A Charter School Official is a person employed by the immediate unit as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); state agency representative, person, or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, or assisting another charter

   official in performing his or her tasks. A charter official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
6. Directory information may be released without parental consent. Parents have the right to refuse to let an agency designate any or all the above information as directory information.
7. Upon written request, the school will disclose educational records without consent to officials, another charter school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
8. Parents have the right to file a complaint to the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by GMCS to comply with the requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be sent to the following address:

   Family Policy Office
   U.S. Department of Education

401 Maryland Avenue, S.W. Washington,
D.C. 20202-4605

The CEO/Principal will notify parents of their FERPA rights each year.

Record Retention and Destruction

This Policy and Procedure pertains to all records and documents, regardless of physical form or characteristics, which have been created or received by the Gettysburg Montessori Charter School ("Charter School") in connection with the transaction of school business. The Charter School CEO shall be responsible for implementing this policy and for ensuring compliance with it. Any questions regarding document retention and/or destruction shall be directed to the CEO.

For purposes of this policy, "records" are recorded information generated internally or received from external sources, utilized in the transaction of school business, related to the school's legal obligations, and/or documenting a transaction or verifying a receipt. Recorded information can be found in many different formats including paper, audio or video recordings, electronic messages, computer hard drives, tapes and discs, microfilm, and microfiche. Records also include Criminal Justice Information ("CJI") clearances maintained for Charter School employees and volunteers. All records are the property of the Charter School, and no employee has any personal or property right to such records regardless of his/her position or the fact that he/she may have developed or compiled them.

All Board members and employees should refer to the Document Retention Schedule below for information concerning the period for specific types of records. Records shall not be destroyed before the required retention period has expired. Additionally, records shall not be retained for longer than the required retention period without first contacting the person designated by the school to implement and ensure compliance with this policy. Duplicates of original documents should generally be discarded after use unless necessary to support current operations. If duplicates are retained, they should be discarded after they have served their purpose. In no event should duplicates be retained for a period longer than the retention period for the original document.

Electronic documents shall be retained as if they were paper documents. Any electronic files that fall into one of the document types on the above schedule shall be maintained for the appropriate amount of time. Electronic and voice mail and other electronic data that are not official records should be destroyed.

Upon any indication of an official investigation of the school or litigation involving the school, document destruction shall be suspended immediately. Destruction shall be reinstated upon the conclusion of the investigation or litigation. Employees are prohibited from discarding documents that would normally be retained for a longer period because they believe that the records might be harmful to any employee or the school. The unauthorized destruction, removal, use, falsification, or inappropriate alteration of any record is prohibited.

Procedure

Physical media (printouts and other physical media) shall be disposed of by one of the following methods:

1. shredding using Charter School issued shredders.
2. placed in locked shredding bins for Shred It to come on-site and shred, witnessed throughout the entire process by a representative of the Charter School designated by the CEO.

Electronic media (hard-drives, tape cartridge, CDs, printer ribbons, flash drives, printer, and copier hard-drives, etc.) shall be disposed of by one of the following methods:

1. **Overwriting (at least 3 times)** - an effective method of clearing data from magnetic media. As the name implies, overwriting uses a program to write (1s, 0s, or a combination of both) onto the location of the media where the file to be sanitized is located.
2. **Degaussing -** a method to magnetically erase data from magnetic media. Two types of degaussing exist: strong magnets and electric degausses. Note that common magnets (e.g., those used to hang a picture on a wall) are weak and cannot effectively degauss magnetic media.
3. **Destruction –** a method of destroying magnetic media. As the name implies, destruction of magnetic media is to physically dismantle by methods of crushing, disassembling, etc., ensuring that the platters have been physically destroyed so that no data can be pulled.

IT systems that have been used to process, store, or transmit FBI CJI information shall not be released from control until the equipment has been sanitized and all stored information has been cleared using one of the above methods.

Any employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School Records Retention Schedule

Permanent Records (may never been destroyed):

- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws
- Deeds and titles
- IRS examinations, rulings, and comments
- Board and Committee minutes
- IRS exemption application and determination letter
- State tax exemptions
- Certified financial statements
- Fixed assets records
- General ledger
- Trial balances – general ledger
- Annual reports

- Insurance records
- Checks used for important payments (e.g., taxes, property, etc.)
- Employee wage and tax statements (W2)
- Pension plan documents
- Employee evaluations, job descriptions and insurance records
- Labor agreements or contracts
- Tax return information and supporting documents (State and Federal)
- Records of lawsuits and other claims

Ten Years:

- Employee withholding statements

- Employee contracts

- Worker's compensation claims
- Payroll tax reports

Seven Years:

- Donor contributions
- Journals
- Sales invoices
- Invoices (after payment)
- Monthly financial reports and statements
- Check register
- Payroll tax report
- Accounts payable and receivable ledgers and schedules
- Receivable ledger
- Petty cash records
- Working papers: accounting and financial reports
- Audit reports of accountants
- Depreciation schedules
- End-of-year financial statement
- Contracts and leases (expired)
- Accident reports (after settlement)
- Payroll journal sheets
- Timecards
- Title Program and Fiscal Records

Six Years:

- Leases – while active plus six years
- Contracts and agreements – while active plus 6 years
- Bank statements and reconciliation

Four Years:

- Employment tax records

Three Years:

- Insurance matters: policies, accident reports, fire inspection reports, claims
- Services contracts (after termination)
- Deposit Slips
- Authorization for change or deduction in payroll
- Employment applications for individuals not hired
- Employment applications and related documents for individuals hired – while active plus three years
- All correspondence

Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy

The Board of Trustees requires that students enrolled at GMCS attend school daily and on time in accordance with the compulsory attendance laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Parents or guardians are required to ensure that their children attend school every day that school is in session through the procedures required by GMCS.

The Chief Executive officer or his/her shall have the responsibility to develop procedures following the guidelines developed by the Board to assure that students attend school regularly and those said procedures comply with all Federal, State, and local laws.

A component of the procedures shall be an early intervention process to assure that assistance is given to students who are experiencing problems in attending school.

Attendance and punctuality procedures will be delineated in the Student Handbook and distributed to every student. Said attendance and punctuality guidelines are subject to periodic review by the entire Board of Trustees.

Truancy Policy

GMCS believes that good attendance is essential if students are to achieve and reach their potential. Each day is important for learning. Parents are required to ensure their son/daughter maintains good attendance.

Truancy – Overview

A child is "truant" if he/she has three (3) or more school days of unexcused absence during the current school year. An unexcused absence is any absence from school without an acceptable excuse (as articulated in GMCS's Student/Parent Handbook), or without any reason at all. This also includes any student who leaves class without the permission of the teacher. An out of school suspension shall be considered an excused absence. A child is "habitually truant" if he/she has six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year. When a child demonstrates truant behavior, GMCS will schedule a school/family conference to discuss the cause of the child's truancy and develop a

mutually agreed upon Attendance Improvement Plan to resolve the truant behavior. The plan can include a myriad of options for the elimination of truancy that are mutually agreed upon by the participants.

For the first and second unexcused absences, GMCS will send the parent/guardian a notice of the unexcused absence as well as attach a copy of the legal penalties for violation of compulsory attendance requirements. In addition to stating the legal consequences, the name and telephone number of a school contact person will be included.

For the third unexcused absence, GMCS will send the parent/guardian notice by certified mail within 10 school days of the child's third unexcused absence that the child has been truant. This notice shall 1) include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant in the future; 2) will be in the mode and language of communication preferred by the person in parental relation; and 3) include the offer of an Attendance Improvement Conference.

Procedure when child is habitually truant:

- Habitually truant children under fifteen (15) years of age: GMCS will refer the child to either: 1) a school-based attendance improvement program; or 2) the county children and youth agency (CYS) for services or possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act. Additionally, GMCS may file a citation against the parent/guardian of a habitually truant child under fifteen (15) years of age in a magisterial district court. The venue of the filing shall be based on the location of the school in which the child is enrolled or shall be enrolled.
- Habitually truant children fifteen (15) years of age and older: GMCS will either; 1) refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program; or 2) file a citation against the student or parent/guardian in the appropriate magisterial district court. The venue of the filing shall be based on the location of the school in which the child is enrolled or shall be enrolled. If a habitually truant child aged fifteen (15) or older incurs additional absences after a school refers that child to an attendance improvement program or the child refuses to participate in an attendance improvement program, GMCS may refer the child to the local CYS agency for possible disposition as a dependent child.

In all cases, regardless of age, where GMCS refers a habitually truant child to a magisterial district court or CYS, GMCS will provide verification that it convened and held an Attendance Improvement Conference.

Students that are absent from school for ten (10) or more consecutive days without appropriate documentation will be removed from GMCS's rolls.

GMCS will report unexcused absences directly to PDE through the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).

Children who are habitually truant from school while subject to compulsory school attendance are subject to an assessment to determine if there is a need for general protective services. Children will not be referred to the county children and youth agency for assessment as possibly needing services until after GMCS has made a formal effort to involve the family and child in resolving the cause of the truant behavior.

School Attendance Improvement Conference and Attendance Improvement Plan

The Attendance Improvement Plan is developed cooperatively with involved stakeholders through an Attendance Improvement Conference, which is required upon GMCS's notice to the child's parent/guardian following the child's third unexcused absence. GMCS will invite the following individuals to the conference:

- The child;
- The person in parental relation to the child;
- Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource (e.g., a grandparent, sibling, family friend, advocate, community member, etc.);
- Appropriate school personnel;
- Appropriate service providers, if applicable (e.g., case managers, behavioral health providers, probation officers, children, and youth practitioners, etc.)

GMCS is permitted to proceed with the Attendance Improvement Conference and Attendance Improvement Plan without the child's parent present at the conference.

Teachers are the first line of defense for compulsory attendance, as they are the first to recognize students with possible attendance issues. Therefore, the Board of Trustees directs the CEO or designee to work with GMCS's teachers to implement a plan of action that includes but not limited to:

- Sharing and reviewing GMCS's policy on attendance and student responsibilities with students and families;
- Contacting a child's parent/guardian upon the child's absence from school;
- Meeting individually with students to discuss reason(s) for absence;
- Following up with the CEO (or assigned attendance officer);
- Making referrals to guidance counselors; and
- Collaborating with Student Assistance Teams as appropriate.

The Attendance Improvement Conference engages all participants involved in the child's life to explore possible solutions to increase the child's attendance. Maintaining open communication between the child and adults will facilitate positive outcomes.

The purpose of the Attendance Improvement Conference is to discuss the cause(s) of the truancy and to develop a mutually agreed upon plan to assure regular attendance. Issues to be addressed at the Attendance Improvement Conference will include but not be limited to:

- Appropriateness of the child's educational environment;
- Possible elements of the school environment that inhibit student success;
- Child's current academic level and needs;
- Social, emotional, physical, mental, and behavioral health issues;
- Issues concerning family and home environment

and; − Any other issues affecting the child's attendance.

The participants in the Attendance Improvement Conference should work collaboratively to conduct a holistic assessment to determine the reason(s) the child is exhibiting truant behavior. Every member should have a vested interest in and responsibility for determining an appropriate plan to assist the child to succeed both socially and academically. This Attend Improvement Conference also provides an opportunity to ensure that both the child and the family clearly understand the legal ramification of not adhering to the state's compulsory attendance requirements.

GMCS will not impose discipline for truant behavior that excludes the child from the classroom, including in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion.

The primary goal of the Attendance Improvement Conference is the development of a comprehensive Attendance Improvement Plan which is understood by, agreed upon and supported by the child, the parent/guardian, GMCS representatives and all other conference participants. The Attendance Improvement Plan should include but not be limited to the following components as appropriate:

- Identification and provision of appropriate academic supports by GMCS and/or community organization(s);
- Identification and provision of appropriate social, emotional, physical, mental and behavioral health supports from GMCS and/or community organization(s);
- Identification of the school environment issues that affect the child's success and solution to address these issues;
- Explanation of the child's strengths and responsibilities related to the Attendance Improvement Plan;
- Explanation of the family's strengths and responsibilities related to the Attendance Improvement Plan;
- Clarification of method(s) used for monitoring the effectiveness of the Attendance Improvement Plan;
- Explanation of the consequences for each stakeholder if the Attendance Improvement Plan is not fully implemented;
- Discussion of the benefits for successfully implementing the Attendance Improvement Plan;
- and Following up and reporting the outcome of the Attendance Improvement Plan.

The Attendance Improvement Plan substantiates efforts made by GMCS, the family and other vested third parties to assist the child in addressing and resolving school attendance issues. This comprehensive system of support and services provides documentation of the good faith effort between GMCS and the child's family should future action be required.

The CEO or designee is directed to develop procedures that may be necessary to implement this policy.

Student Absence on Religious Holidays

The Principal will review the annual listing of religious holidays identified by the State Department of Education when planning school activities including testing, special programs, etc. Efforts will be made to schedule around these holidays whenever possible. All absences occasioned by the observance of the student's religion on a day approved by the Board as a religious holiday shall be excused, and no student so excused shall be deprived of an award or eligibility to compete for an award or the opportunity to make up a test given on the religious holiday. To be entitled to the privileges set forth above, the student must present a written excuse signed by a parent/guardian. Any absence because of a religious holiday must be recorded in the school register or in any group or class attendance record as an excused absence.

Student Conduct

The Board directs the CEO/Principal to develop a Code of Conduct that creates an environment for positive student development and achievement that enhances and leads to success in school and in life. This code shall include expectations that apply to academic endeavors as well as student behavior. Compliance with these expectations will foster positive and productive behavior that will enable the student to fulfill his/her own potential. The code shall also describe various means by which the school will recognize appropriate conduct. While emphasizing the importance of encouraging good conduct, the code shall also state the consequences of inappropriate behavior as well.

Positive student conduct requires a partnership in responsibility between the school and the home in several areas:

- Environment – which includes the climate of the school
- Education – which includes preparation and work habits
- Respect – which includes treatment of others
- Participation – which includes involvement in school activities
- Expression – which includes dress as well as verbal and non-verbal issues

The Code of Conduct, attached to this manual as Attachment 4, shall be distributed to parents/guardians, students and teachers, and visitors and volunteers at the beginning of each school year. The parent/guardian, student and teacher will be required to sign the acknowledgement page, which states that the parent/guardian understands the Code of Conduct, including the consequences of unacceptable behavior by students. The acknowledgement page also states that the parent/guardian has explained and reviewed the Code of Conduct with the student, and that the teacher shares responsibility with the parent/guardian to ensure a safe, secure school environment for learning.

The following expectations for student conduct in the school's common areas should also be taught and reinforced throughout the school year:

1. Playground – Students will play safely in all games and on all equipment, showing consideration and respect for others.

2. Hallways – The school's hallways will be a safe and quiet environment where people interact with courtesy and respect.
3. Restrooms – The school's restrooms will be clean and safe.
4. Meals – School lunch and snacks will be enjoyed in a safe, clean, and friendly environment where people interact with courtesy, manners, and respect.
5. Assemblies – Students will demonstrate respectful behavior during assemblies by listening, participating, and following directions.
6. Before and After School – Students will arrive at and depart from the school in a safe and orderly manner.

Guiding and encouraging students in meeting these expectations will facilitate the creation of a safe and orderly learning environment. Such encouragement may occur in the following ways:

1. Positive Interaction and Positive Feedback: Daily interactions between staff and students provide the best opportunities for encouraging appropriate behavior and promoting the development of good habits. Staff should always interact with students in a friendly, supportive manner.
2. Correcting Inappropriate Conduct: When misbehavior occurs, teachers should calmly and consistently handle the matter by taking appropriate steps to correct such inappropriate behavior. While the steps taken by the teacher may include consequences, the situation should also be used as a teaching opportunity.
3. Corrective Action Plan: There are three categories of inappropriate behavior warranting the development of a corrective plan:
    a. Insubordination, e.g., disrespect toward faculty, staff, or peers; refusal to follow directions.
    b. Physically dangerous behavior, e.g., fighting, assault, physical intimidation.
    c. Illegal behavior, e.g., theft, vandalism, use of illegal substances.

When developing a corrective plan, the primary focus should be on teaching appropriate behavior for achieving the desired outcome. It should also include an opportunity for the student to practice the correct way to achieve the desired result.

4. Office Referrals: If the inappropriate behavior of a student is serious enough to warrant an office referral, the teacher should describe the incident for which the student is being referred to the CEO/Principal. The CEO/Principal or his/her designee will meet with the student and parent/guardian, if necessary, to determine an appropriate course of action. In cases where students have been referred to the office three times for insubordination, physically dangerous or illegal behavior, an Intervention Planning Team must meet to discuss an individual intervention plan to support the student's specific needs. This meeting shall be scheduled by the CEO/Principal/designee and should take place within one week of the incident.

Student Bullying and Harassment

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School (GMCS) is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful learning environment. Bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited. Every report will be taken seriously, reviewed promptly, and addressed in accordance with this policy, the Student Code of Conduct, and applicable law.

Authority and Purpose

This policy is adopted under Section 1303.1-A of the Pennsylvania Public School Code, as amended by Act 20 of 2026. It is part of the GMCS Student Code of Conduct and applies to all students.

Definitions

Bullying: An intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act, or series of acts, directed at another student or students, occurring in a school setting, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of:

- substantially interfering with a student's education;
- creating a threatening environment; or
- substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Cyberbullying: Bullying through electronic technology or communication, including data, computer software, or online platforms regardless of origin, using a device, system, network, Internet service, email, social media, or other digital means, including artificial intelligence-generated or modified media, when the conduct is directed at another student or students, is severe, persistent, or pervasive, and produces one or more of the effects listed above.

Artificial intelligence-generated or modified media. Text, code, images, audio, or video data created or modified from its original source through artificial intelligence technology, programs, or platforms.

School setting. The school, school grounds, school vehicles, a designated bus stop, or any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by GMCS.

A single act may meet the definition of bullying when it is severe and otherwise meets the required elements.

Conflict, disagreement, or unkind behavior that does not meet the legal definition of bullying may still violate the Student Code of Conduct and will be addressed as appropriate.

Scope

This policy applies in the school setting. GMCS may also address conduct that occurs outside the school setting, including conduct outside school hours, when it is directed at another student or students, is severe, persistent, or pervasive, and substantially interferes with a student's education, creates a threatening environment, or substantially disrupts school operations. Cyberbullying does not need to originate on school property or through a school-owned device or account.

Reporting

The Assistant Principal is the designated staff member to receive reports of alleged bullying or cyberbullying. Reports may also be made to the CEO/Principal, a teacher, counselor, or any other GMCS employee. An employee who receives or observes a reportable incident must promptly notify the Assistant Principal or CEO/Principal.

Students, parents/guardians, employees, and others may report concerns verbally or in writing. Reports should include, when known, the names of the students involved, what occurred, when and where it occurred, witnesses, and any supporting messages, images, recordings, links, or other evidence. Reports may be submitted anonymously; however, anonymity may limit the school's ability to investigate or respond.

Retaliation against a person who in good faith reports, participates in an investigation, or supports a student is prohibited. A knowingly false report may result in disciplinary action. A report that cannot be substantiated is not, by itself, a false report.

Immediate Safety Response

Upon receiving a report, staff will first address immediate safety and health needs. GMCS may separate students, adjust supervision, preserve digital evidence, contact parents/guardians before the investigation is complete, or take other interim steps.

Suspected criminal conduct, threats, child abuse, or other safety concerns will be reported to law enforcement, ChildLine, Safe2Say Something, or other authorities when required or appropriate.

Investigation Procedure

1. The Assistant Principal or CEO/Principal will document the report and assign a prompt, impartial investigation. If the assigned investigator has a conflict of interest, another administrator or qualified designee will conduct the investigation.
2. The investigator will identify the allegations, determine whether immediate protective measures are needed, and preserve available evidence, including electronic or AI-generated or modified content.
3. The investigator will separately interview the reporting person, the student alleged to have been targeted, the student alleged to have engaged in the conduct, and relevant witnesses. Students will have an opportunity to identify witnesses and provide information. Group confrontation or mediation will not be required as an investigative method.
4. The investigator will review relevant records and evidence, which may include written statements, messages, posts, images, audio or video, device or platform information available to the school, prior related incidents, staff observations, and other reliable information. GMCS will respect student privacy and applicable law throughout the process.
5. The investigator will determine whether the conduct meets the definitions of bullying or cyberbullying in this policy and document the evidence considered, findings, safety measures, parent/guardian contacts, and actions taken. Conduct that does not meet the definition may still be addressed under other school rules or policies.
6. After GMCS determines that bullying or cyberbullying occurred, the school will notify, immediately or as soon as practicable, the parent or legal guardian of every student involved in the incident. Any notice will comply with FERPA and other privacy laws; GMCS will not disclose another student's confidential educational or disciplinary information.
7. GMCS will implement appropriate corrective action, supports, and discipline and will follow up as needed to assess safety, retaliation, and whether the conduct has stopped. The investigator will make any required referrals and ensure the incident is included in applicable school and state reporting.

Consequences and Supports

A student who violates this policy may receive consequences under the Student Code of Conduct, up to and including suspension or expulsion. Responses will be based on the nature, severity, frequency, and impact of the conduct; the student's age and disciplinary history; and applicable protections under an IEP, Section 504 plan, or other law. GMCS may also use education, counseling, restorative practices when appropriate and voluntary, safety planning, schedule or supervision changes, behavioral supports, and other interventions. Supports may be provided to any student involved.

Harassment and Other Misconduct

Conduct involving discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, hazing, threats, assault, stalking, or other prohibited behavior may be addressed under additional GMCS policies and legal procedures at the same time as this policy. Nothing in this policy limits rights or responsibilities under federal or state civil rights, disability, child protection, or criminal laws.

Notice Education Review and Reporting

- GMCS will make this policy available on its publicly accessible website, in every classroom, and in a prominent location in the school building.
- GMCS will review the policy and reporting procedures with students within 90 days after adoption and at least once each school year thereafter.
- The Board will review this policy at least once every three years.
- GMCS will provide the policy and required prevention, intervention, and education information to the Pennsylvania Department of Education annually as part of the applicable report.
- GMCS will report incidents determined to be bullying or cyberbullying as required by law, including cyberbullying suspected to involve artificial intelligence-generated or modified media.

Policy References

24 P.S. § 13-1303.1-A; 24 P.S. § 13-1319-B; 22 Pa. Code § 12.3(c); Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and 34 C.F.R. Part 99.

Sexual Harassment - Employees/Students

The Board recognizes that sexual harassment is a violation of both federal and state discrimination laws and that these laws apply to employees and students. Please refer to the *Sexual Harassment* section under the *Personnel Policies* in this handbook.

Non-Harassment Policy

Everyone employed by GMCS and each student attending our School has the right to be free from inappropriate conduct where that conduct could be viewed as harassment in the workplace or the school setting. Please refer to the *Non-Harassment Policy* section under the *Personnel Policies* in this handbook.

Plagiarism/Cheating

Plagiarism is the act of claiming the work of another as one's own. Such action on the part of students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at GMCS. Suspected cases of plagiarism or cheating shall be brought to the attention of the CEO/Principal/designee. Upon investigation, confirmed cases of plagiarism/cheating are to be described in writing by the classroom teacher. A copy of this written report shall be submitted to the CEO/Principal/designee. Once an offense has been confirmed, the student and his/her parents/guardians shall be notified of the findings. Depending upon the situation, the opportunity for the student to re-do the assignment as well as the assignment of a grade shall be left to the discretion of the teacher. Cheating will always result in a "0" for the project.

Any student who willingly allows another to copy his/her work or provides information for cheating will receive the same disciplinary action as the person committing the offense.

Positive Behavioral Support Policy and Procedures

In accordance with applicable state regulations, including Title 22 Pa. Code, § 711.46, the Board has established this policy to effectuate a program of positive behavior support at the school.

Definitions

Aversive techniques: Deliberate activities designed to establish a negative association with a specific behavior.

Positive behavior support plan: A plan for students with disabilities who require specific intervention to address behavior that interferes with learning. The IEP team shall develop a positive behavior support plan shall be developed based on a functional behavior assessment, which becomes part of the student's IEP. These plans include methods that utilize positive reinforcement and other positive techniques to shape a student's behavior, ranging from the use of positive verbal statements as a reward for good behavior to specific tangible rewards.

Restraints: The application of physical force, with or without the use of a device, for the purpose of restraining the free movement of a student's body. The term does not include briefly holding, without force, a student to calm or comfort him, guiding a student to an appropriate activity, or holding a student's hand to safely escort him from one area to another. Excluded from this definition are hand-over-hand assistance with feeding or task completion and techniques prescribed by a qualified medical professional for reasons of safety or for therapeutic or medical treatment, as agreed to by the student's parents and specified in the IEP. Devices used for physical or occupational therapy, seat belts in

wheelchairs or on toilets used for balance and safety, safety harnesses in buses, and functional positioning devices are examples of mechanical restraints that are excluded from this definition.

Positive Behavior Support

Positive, rather than negative measures, shall form the basis of positive behavior support programs to ensure that all the school's students shall be free from demeaning treatment, the use of aversive techniques, and the unreasonable use of restraints. Positive techniques required for the development, change, and maintenance of behavior shall be the least intrusive necessary.

Research-Based Practices

Behavior support programs must include research-based practices and techniques to develop and maintain skills that will enhance an individual student's opportunity for learning and self-fulfillment.

Functional Behavior Assessment

Behavior support programs and plans shall be based on a functional assessment of behavior ("FBA") and utilize positive behavior techniques. When an intervention is needed to address problem behavior, the types of intervention chosen for a particular student must be the least intrusive necessary.

Restraints

The use of restraints is considered a measure of last resort, only to be used after other less restrictive measures, including de-escalation techniques. Restraints to control acute or episodic aggressive or self-injurious behavior may be used only when the a student is acting in a manner as to be a clear and present danger to himself, to other students, or to employees, and only when less restrictive measures and techniques have proven to be or are less effective.

Notification Of Use Of Restraint And Procedures

The use of restraints to control the aggressive behavior of a student shall cause the school to notify the child's parent of the use of restraint. Said notification shall be provided within one (1) day, and when used on a student having an IEP in place, shall cause a meeting of the IEP team within ten (10) school days of the inappropriate behavior causing the use of restraints in order to review the effectiveness and appropriateness of the current IEP, unless the parent, after written notice, agrees in writing to waive the meeting or other procedures are written in the student's IEP. At this meeting, the IEP team shall consider whether the student needs a functional behavioral assessment, reevaluation, a new or revised positive behavior support plan, or a change of placement to address the inappropriate behavior.

Inclusion Of Use Of Restraints In A Student's IEP

The use of restraints may only be included in a student's IEP when all the following are met:

1. Utilized with specific component elements of positive behavior support.
2. Used in conjunction with the teaching of socially acceptable alternative skills to replace problem behavior.
3. Staff are authorized to use the procedure and have received the staff training required.

4. There is a plan in place for eliminating the use of restraint through the application of positive behavior support.

The use of restraints may not be included in the IEP for the convenience of staff, as a substitute for an educational program, or employed as punishment.

Prohibition Against Prone Restraints

Prone restraints are those in which a student is held face down on the floor. The use of prone restraints is prohibited in educational programs.

Restraint Reporting And Procedures

The school shall maintain and report data on the use of restraints as prescribed by the Secretary of the Department of Education. The report is subject to review during cyclical compliance monitoring conducted by the Department.

Mechanical Restraints

Mechanical restraints, which are used to control involuntary movement or lack of muscular control of students when due to organic causes or conditions, may be employed only when specified by an IEP and as determined by a medical professional qualified to make the determination, and as agreed to by the student's parents. Mechanical restraints must prevent a student from injuring himself or others or promote normative body positioning and physical functioning.

Prohibition Against Aversive Techniques

The following aversive techniques of handling behavior are considered inappropriate and shall not be used in educational programs:

1. Corporal punishment.
2. Punishment for a manifestation of a student's disability.
3. Locked rooms, locked boxes, or other locked structures or spaces from which the student cannot readily exit.
4. Noxious substances.
5. Deprivation of basic human rights, such as withholding meals, water, or fresh air.
6. Suspensions constitute a pattern.
7. Treatment of a demeaning nature.
8. Electric shock.

Training Of Personnel

The Board hereby directs that school personnel be trained each school year on the general use of positive behavior support, de-escalation techniques, and emergency responses. In addition to general positive behavior support training, when students are identified as in need of these supports, individual

teachers and teacher groups are notified and trained accordingly so that they can act in accordance with the student's specific Positive Behavior Support Plan and de-escalation techniques, and respond appropriately in emergencies. In accordance with guidance issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the core training components of the positive support plan and de-escalation (restraint reduction) staff trainings should include:

1. The growing concern and potential legal issues surrounding physical restraints;
2. How to create a commitment to the reduction of the use of physical restraints;
3. Creating a safe environment where positive rather than negative measures form the basis of behavior management programs;
4. How staff can avoid taking conflict personally;
5. Avoiding power struggles;
6. Prevention of problem behaviors through a system of recognition of signs of anxiety and distress in students and staff;
7. Identification of the phases of crisis events and matching behaviors to interventions;
8. Demonstration and modeling of the de-escalation techniques and other alternatives to physical restraint;
9. Effective positive behavior support plans that include methods of utilizing positive reinforcement and other positive techniques to shape replacement behavior(s);
10. Research-based practices that develop and maintain replacement behaviors that enhance student learning and skills for life;
11. Risks associated with the use of physical interventions including the signs of physical distress, positional asphyxiation, and the psychological effects of restraint;
12. Safe techniques for the use of physical restraints (prone restraints prohibited); 13. Documentation of the incident and compliance with notification procedures; and
14. Post intervention debriefing with student and staff.

Reporting

The CEO/Principal is directed to write internal procedures that detail who is responsible for reporting restraints, who is responsible for notifying key administrators regarding the use of a restraint, and who is responsible for entering said use of restraints into any Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) system to reporting on the use of restraints. The CEO/Principal is further directed to comply with PDE guidelines regarding the reporting of the use of restraints.

Staff trained and/or certified in a program of positive behavioral supports, de-escalation techniques, and safe physical management techniques will be designated as the individuals to intervene in crisis management situations that might require restraint of a student. Physical interventions should only be undertaken by staff persons who have successfully completed a comprehensive crisis management course that covers crisis definition and theory; the use of de-escalation techniques; crisis communication; anger management; passive physical intervention techniques; the legal, ethical, and

policy aspects of physical intervention use; decision making related to physical interventions and debriefing strategies.

Any restraint that results in an injury to a student and/or staff person must be reported to the CEO/Principal, who will comply with any requirement to report the injury to the PDE's Bureau of Special Education.

Additional Requirements And Administrative Procedures

The CEO/Principal or his/her designee is directed to ensure that behavior support programs administered at the school are in accordance with Title 22 Pa. Code Chapter 711, including the training of personnel for the use of specific procedures, methods, and techniques, and for having written procedures on the use of behavior support techniques and obtaining parental consent prior to the use of restrictive or intrusive procedures or restraints. The CEO/Principal or his/her designee may convene a review, upon Board approval, including the use of human rights committees, to oversee the use of restrictive or intrusive procedures or restraints, only to the extent the use of such procedures is allowed by law and this policy.

The CEO/Principal or his/her designee is further directed to make professional development opportunities provided by the PDE Bureau of Special Education available to train staff regarding Positive Behavior Support. The CEO/Principal or his/her designee is charged with using the most updated forms available through the Bureau of Special Education related to positive behavior support, including the use of any forms promulgated for functional behavior assessments and behavior support plans.

Referrals To Law Enforcement

Procedures in the school's MOU should be followed regarding all contact with law enforcement. If a referral is made to law enforcement for a student with a disability who has a Positive Behavior Support Plan, an updated functional behavior assessment and Positive Behavior Support Plan shall be required.

Disciplinary Actions

Any disciplinary action taken by the school is intended to benefit the student through improving attitude and subsequent behavior. The disciplinary options available to the school are regulated by law and school policy. The disciplinary option chosen depends on (1) nature of the offense, (2), the nature of the student's previous behavior, and (3) stated policy or precedent based on previous actions.

Denial of Student Privileges

Privileges must be earned. They will be withdrawn for improper behavior. The length of denial depends on (1) the nature of the offense and (2) the previous behavior of the student. Privileges can be denied from one day to the entire year depending on the circumstances.

The following actions may result in immediate suspension:

- Fighting (both students, regardless of who started the fight)
- Sexual harassment
- Cutting class (leaving the school premises)
- Writing on walls or destroying school property
- Possession of a weapon, drugs, or sexual content in the lockers
- Refusal of direct order from Principal, teacher, and/or staff.

Suspension from School

Students suspended from school are excluded from all school activities. Suspension is the temporary exclusion from school and all school-related activities for serious and or repeated infractions of school rules. The student will not be able to participate in field trips, assemblies, and any extra-curricular activities. Suspension from school is an extremely serious matter resulting in an Unsatisfactory rating in citizenship and exclusion from many school social functions from the current rating period. The length of the suspension can run one to ten days depending on the nature of the infraction. Parents will be notified by mail and by telephone and in most cases must confer with the administration before the student is readmitted to school. Suspension should be the last resort taken to redirect student misbehavior. Students who are suspended are not eligible for honor roll status during the current rating period, regardless of their academic average. Students have a maximum of 5 days to make up schoolwork. If the suspension exceeds four days, the parent/guardian has the right to request a suspension hearing.

Students cannot be on school grounds or surroundings while on a suspension. The student must be accompanied by the parent/guardian upon return of his/her suspension.

Expulsion from School

Expulsion is the permanent exclusion from school. Such action results from a Board action preceded by the recommendations from the CEO/Principal. Recommendation for expulsion may be repeated misconduct, continued illegal or unexcused absence, theft, illegal drug activity, inciting a riot, actions that endanger the welfare of others, assault upon a staff member, and vandalism.

Discipline and Students with Disabilities

A student's IEP is a document that describes specifically the educational services to be provided by the school and a schedule for the provision of such services. Within the IEP is a statement of placement that identifies the environment in which the student will be educated. It is unlawful to deny a student the services described in his/her IEP under any circumstances (excluding illegal activity, e.g., carrying weapons or using, carrying, or selling controlled dangerous substances).

It is critical, therefore, that the CEO/Principal be knowledgeable of all students with IEPs, and that the appropriate procedures are followed when disciplining students who are receiving special education or related services. Any time a student with an IEP is pulled away from the program specified in his/her

plan, it is considered a cessation of services. Such actions include in-school suspension and prolonged timeouts, as well as exclusionary suspensions and expulsion. Teachers and the CEO/Principal should consult often with the Special Education Coordinator regarding the special needs of each student and develop alternative plans for discipline, as necessary.

The CEO/Principal may suspend students with disabilities and cease educational services for up to ten (10) consecutive or ten (10) cumulative school days in one school year, without providing special education safeguards. Any disciplinary exclusion (for any length of time) involving a student found eligible for special education with an intellectually disabled is considered a change of placement.

When school officials anticipate a referral for expulsion or to an alternative school, or when they anticipate that suspension may exceed ten (10) cumulative school days, the following will apply:

The parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the disciplinary action being considered and the date of the IEP meeting, which must be held within ten (10) days of the date of misconduct. The IEP team must:

1. Determine if the conduct is related to the student's disability by reviewing evaluation and diagnostic results, information from the parent/guardian, observations of the student and the student's IEP and placement. The behavior will not be considered a manifestation of his/her disability if:
    a. The student was given appropriate special education supplementary aids and intervention strategies
    b. The disability does not impair the ability to control or understand the impact or consequences of the behavior.
2. Review and revise, if necessary, the behavior intervention plan or, as necessary, develop a functional behavior assessment and intervention plan to address the misconduct.
3. Determine the appropriateness of a different educational setting and, as indicated, include in the IEP those services and modifications that will enable the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum and address the behavior so that it will not recur.

If the student's behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, school officials may suspend the student, however, in no event may the student be suspended for more than ten (10) cumulative or consecutive days in a school year without providing appropriate educational services.

If the student's behavior is a manifestation of a disability, the student's placement may be changed. Such a change may include a more restrictive setting within the school or a request to the local school district for an alternative educational setting. (Revised and approved June 27, 2024)

Suspension and Expulsion

Suspension (Exclusion from School)

The Board recognizes that exclusion from the educational program of the school, whether by suspension or expulsion, is the most severe sanction that can be imposed on a student and one that cannot

be imposed without due process. In response to cases of severe misbehavior in which a student violates school policies, rules, or regulations, or otherwise interferes with the orderly operation of the school, the CEO/Principal may suspend or temporarily remove the student from school for up to ten calendar days and shall report the suspension to the Board.

No student shall be suspended without notice for the reason for which he/she is suspended and an opportunity to be heard in his/her own behalf before the school CEO/Principal. Parents/guardians are to be informed immediately of all suspensions. The student's parents/guardians shall be required to meet with the CEO/ Principal and any staff members involved in the suspension prior to the students return to school. A suspended student must make up missed work and will not be allowed on school grounds or to attend any school-related function during a period of suspension.

When the suspension exceeds three (3) days, the student and parents/guardians will be given the opportunity for an informal hearing with the designated school official. Such hearing shall take place as soon as possible after the suspension except that, when extraordinary circumstances involving the health and safety of the student or others in the school require immediate exclusion, the hearing may be delayed to such time as circumstances permit. A student may be suspended up to, but not exceeding, ten (10) calendar days by the CEO/Principal.

Expulsion

The Board may either expel for a period exceeding ten (10) calendar days or may permanently expel from the rolls any student whose misconduct or disobedience is such as to warrant this sanction. No student shall be expelled without an opportunity for a formal hearing before the Board or before a duly authorized committee of the Board.

If it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in his/her normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety, morals, or welfare of others and it is not possible to hold a formal hearing within the period of a suspension, the student may be excluded from school for more than ten (10) school days if the formal hearing is not unreasonably delayed. Any student so excluded shall be provided with alternative education, which may include home instruction.

The Board requires that each hearing shall be closed to the public; but should the parents/guardians make a request in writing, the meeting may be held in public. The name of a student whose conduct has been disciplined shall not become part of the agenda or minutes of a public meeting, nor part of any public record of the Board.

Disciplinary Exclusions and Hearings Policy

Exclusion from School: may take the form of suspension or expulsion.

Suspension

Suspension is exclusion from school for a period from one (1) to ten (10) consecutive school days.

Suspensions may be given by the CEO/Principal or his/her designee. A student may not be suspended until the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and given an opportunity

to respond. Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened. The parents or guardians shall be notified immediately in writing when the student is suspended. When the suspension exceeds three (3) school days, the student and parent shall be given the opportunity for an informal hearing consistent with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Code. Suspensions may not be made to run consecutively beyond the ten (10) school day period. Students shall have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension. The child shall be given every reasonable opportunity to complete all assignments within a time of no less than the period of the suspension.

Expulsion

Expulsion is exclusion from school by the Board for a period exceeding ten (10) school days and may be permanent expulsion from the school. Expulsions require a prior formal hearing pursuant to the Pennsylvania Code. The following procedures should be followed in the event of an expulsion:

1. During the period prior to the hearing and decision of the Board in an expulsion case, the student shall be placed in his/her normal class except as set forth in subsection (2).
2. If it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in his/her normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety or welfare of others and it is not possible to hold a formal hearing within the period of a suspension, the student may be excluded from school for more than ten (10) school days. Any student excluded from school for longer than fifteen (15) school days, shall be provided a formal hearing unless mutually agreed upon by both parties. Any student excluded for longer than fifteen (15) days shall be provided with alternative education, which may include home study.
3. Students who are under seventeen (17) years of age are still subject to the compulsory school attendance law, even though they have been expelled, and shall be provided an education, as follows:
    a. The initial responsibility for providing the required education rests with the student's parents or guardian, through placement in another school, tutorial or correspondence study, or another educational program approved by the district's superintendent.
    b. Within thirty (30) days of action by the Board, the parents or guardians shall submit to the school written evidence that the required education is being provided as described in paragraph (3a) or that they are unable to do so. If the parents or guardians are unable to provide the required education, the school, within the ten (10) days of receipt of the notification, shall make provision for the student's education. A student with a disability shall be provided educational services as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004.
    c. If the approved educational program is not implemented or the terms of which fail to be complied with, the school may take action in accordance with 42 Pa.C.S. Chapter 63 (relating to the Juvenile Act) to ensure that the child will receive a proper education. See Pennsylvania Code § 12.1(b) (relating to free education and attendance).

Exclusion from classes—In-school Suspension

A student may not receive an in-school suspension unless the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and has been given an opportunity to respond before the suspension becomes effective. Communication to the parents or guardian shall follow the suspension action timeline taken by the school.

When the in-school suspension exceeds ten (10) consecutive school days, an informal hearing with the CEO/Principal or his/her designee shall be offered to the student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the eleventh (11th) school day in accordance with the procedures in the Pennsylvania Code. The school has the responsibility to make provision for the student's education during the period of the in-school suspension.

Hearings

General education is a statutory right, and students shall be afforded due process if they are to be excluded from school. In a case involving a possible expulsion, the student is entitled to a formal hearing. Informal hearings may be conducted for students who have been suspended.

1. Formal hearings. A formal hearing is required in all expulsion actions. The hearing may be held before the Board or an authorized committee of the Board, or a qualified hearing examiner appointed by the Board. When a committee of the Board or a hearing examiner conducts the hearing, a majority vote of the entire Board is required to expel a student. The following due process requirements shall be observed regarding the formal hearing:
    a. Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student's parents or guardians by certified mail.
    b. At least three (3) days' notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given. A copy of the Expulsion Policy notice that legal counsel may represent the student, and hearing procedures shall be included with the hearing notice. A student may request the rescheduling of the hearing when the student demonstrates good cause for an extension.
    c. The hearing shall be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.
    d. Counsel may represent the student, at the expense of the parents or guardians, and may have a parent or guardian attend the hearing.
    e. The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses.
    f. The student has the right to request that the witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
    g. The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his/her own behalf.
    h. A written or audio record shall be kept of the hearing. The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy. A copy shall be provided at no cost to a student who is indigent.
    i. The proceeding shall be held within fifteen (15) school days of the notification of charges, unless mutually agreed to by both parties. A hearing may be delayed for any of

the following reasons, in which case the hearing shall be held as soon as reasonably possible:

i. Laboratory reports are needed from law enforcement agencies.

ii. Evaluations or other court or administrative proceedings are pending due to a student invoking his/her rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (20 U.S.C.A. § § 1400—1482).

iii. In cases in juvenile or criminal court involving sexual assault or serious bodily injury, delay is necessary due to the condition or best interests of the victim.

j. Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student with the expulsion decision.

2. Informal hearings. The purpose of the informal hearing is to enable the student to meet with the appropriate school official to explain the circumstances surrounding the event for which the student is being suspended or to show why the student should not be suspended. The informal hearing is held to bring forth all relevant information regarding the event for which the student may be suspended and for students, their parents or guardians, and school officials to discuss ways by which future offenses might be avoided.

a. The following due process requirements shall be observed regarding the informal hearing:

i. Notification of the reasons for the suspension shall be given in writing to the parents or guardians and to the student.

ii. Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing shall be given.

iii. A student has the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing. iv. A student has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his/her own behalf.

v. The school shall offer to hold the informal hearing within the first five (5) days of the suspension.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

The school shall comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) and any applicable federal and state statutes or regulations when disciplining students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who engage in inappropriate behavior, disruptive or prohibited activities, and/or conduct injurious to themselves or others shall be disciplined in accordance with their IEP, behavioral intervention plan, Title 22 Chapter 711 and relevant portions of Chapter 12 of the State Board of Education Regulations, IDEA 2004, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and any other applicable federal or state law.

Corporal Punishment

Conduct is closely related to learning; an effective instructional program requires a wholesome and orderly school environment. Each student attending the school shall adhere to the rules and

regulations promulgated by the Board and the school administration and shall submit to such disciplinary measures as are appropriately assigned for infractions of the rules.

The Board prohibits the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure. Corporal punishment shall be defined as punishment applied to the body of the offender. Failure on the part of any staff member to comply with this policy may result in immediate termination.

While corporal punishment is prohibited, force may be used by staff members in the following circumstances and in accordance with the training provided by the school and as required by applicable laws:

1. To quell a disturbance;
2. To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects;
3. For self-defense; or
4. For the protection of persons or property.

Staff members having authority over students shall take reasonable actions as may be necessary to ensure the safety of all students in all situations and in all places where such students are within the jurisdiction of this Board and when such conduct interferes with the educational program of the school or threatens the health and safety of others.

The Board directs the CEO/Principal to make sure all staff/teachers are trained in the appropriate use of force, and how and when such force may be used on a student.

Student Dress and Grooming

One of the main objectives of the school is to help its students in preparing successfully for life in the business and social world of today. We believe that training in appropriate dress and grooming is part of this education. Good judgment should dictate what is appropriate attire for a particular occasion. Students whose attire, in the judgment of teachers and administrators, does not meet these criteria will be referred to the administrative office. All students should dress appropriately when in the classroom and especially on other academic and social occasions.

In the interest of supporting the general welfare, the educational program, as well as protecting the health and safety of all students, the following shall comprise the basis for the development of individual school dress and grooming codes:

1. Students are expected to use good judgment and show respect for themselves and others in their dress and grooming.
2. Students shall not wear clothing, hair styles, or other personal items which interfere with the educational program.
3. Students shall wear sneakers for physical education classes and closed toed shoes for outside recess.

4. Students shall, when present in areas where the possibility of injury to the student or to others exists such as rotating machinery, power tools or chemicals, wear appropriate protective clothing or devices needed for health and safety.
5. Students participating in sports may be required to wear protection or change hair styles to promote safety.

The following examples of attire are considered inappropriate for school:

1. Clothing, patches, etc. that contain vulgarity, references to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, Satanism, or any instigative language.
2. Sunglasses or mirrored glasses in the building.
3. Clothing, which is excessively tight, revealing, or immodest including, but not limited to: transparent blouses, bare midriffs, bare sides, miniskirts (must be below mid-thighs), short-shorts, or spandex as outer garments.
4. Clothing with holes if the skin that is exposed is not allowed in the dress requirements listed above.
5. Bare feet; students must wear footwear.

NOTE: Any of the above may be modified by administration for medical reasons or for other approved activities.

Computing Resources Acceptable Use Policy for Students

New technologies are shifting the ways that information may be accessed, communicated, and transferred. Those changes provide enhanced educational experiences for students. At GMCS, students will have access to the school's computer network for Internet exploration. To gain access to the Internet all students must obtain parental permission. Parents/guardians along with the student must sign an Acknowledgment Form and return it to the classroom teacher.

The Board recognizes that the Internet is an electronic highway connecting thousands of computers all over the world and millions of individual subscribers. Access to the Internet provides students with the opportunity to reach out to many other people and to share and exchange information with Internet users throughout the world. The Board's goal in providing this resource to students is to promote educational excellence and to prepare students for life in the twenty-first century.

While students' use of the Internet will be supervised by staff, the Board cannot guarantee that they will not gain access to inappropriate material. The Board believes that the valuable information and interaction available on the Internet far outweighs the possibility that students may procure information that is not consistent with the educational goals of the School. The Board also believes that ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and converging the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

To inform parents/guardians, a copy of the following information shall be sent to each student's home:

1. Computing Resources Acceptable Use Policy for Students
2. Rules and Code of Ethics for Students Use of Computers
3. Computing Resources Acceptable Use Policy for Students Acknowledgment Form
4. The attached cover letter to parents/guardians

Search and Seizure

The Board acknowledges the need for safe in-school storage of books, clothing, school materials and other personal property and may provide lockers, cabinets and or desks for such storage.

All lockers/cabinets/desks are and shall remain the property of the school. Students are encouraged to keep their assigned lockers/cabinets closed and locked if appropriate against incursion by other students, but no student may use a locker/cabinet/desk as a depository for a substance or object which is prohibited or which constitutes a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of the occupants of the school or the school itself.

The CEO/Principal shall have the right to authorize his/her employees to inspect a student's locker/cabinet when such employee has reason to believe that the locker/cabinet is used for the storage of contraband, a substance or object the possession of which is illegal, or any material which poses a hazard to the safety and good order of the school.

The CEO/Principal shall develop procedures to implement this policy which shall require:

1. All requests or suggestions for the search of a student's locker/cabinet/desk shall be directed to the CEO/Principal.
2. Whenever possible, before opening the locker/cabinet for inspection, the Principal shall appoint a third party to be present at the inspection.
3. The CEO/Principal/designee shall be responsible for the safekeeping and proper disposal of any substance, object or material found to be improperly stored in a student's locker/cabinet/desk.
4. The CEO/Principal/designee shall be responsible for the prompt recording in writing of each locker/cabinet inspection which record shall include the reasons for the search, persons present, items found and their disposition.
5. Whenever the search of a student's locker/cabinet is prompted by the reasonable suspicion that the contents of the locker/cabinet create an emergency, the Principal/designee may open the locker/cabinet as soon as it is necessary to do so to discharge properly his/her duty to protect the persons and property in the school.

A student's person and possessions may be searched by the CEO/Principal or his/her representative if individual has reasonable grounds to suspect that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. Under no circumstances shall a search be conducted based solely upon an anonymous tip and/or a rumor that contraband is present. The

extent or scope of the search shall be reasonable related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive considering the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction. Whenever possible, before conducting such a search, the CEO/Principal or his/her representative shall appoint a third party to be present at the search. Whenever the search of a student or his/her possessions is prompted by the reasonable suspicion that the items in possession of the student create an emergency, the CEO/Principal or his/her representative may conduct the search as soon as it is necessary to do so to discharge properly his/her duty to protect the persons and property in the school.

Students and the Police

The Board recognizes its responsibility both for the protection of the legal rights of its students and for notification to parents/guardians of matters affecting these rights. The CEO/Principal/designee shall permit properly identified police, court, or law enforcement officers to interview students on school premises. When police request permission to interrogate a student at school, the CEO/Principal/designee shall make a record of the name(s) of the student(s); the name and badge number of the officer(s); the purpose of the interview; and the date and time of the interview and so inform parents/guardians.

Whenever the CEO/Principal/designee has determined that the police have a legitimate purpose in interrogating a student within the confines of a school building, the CEO/Principal/designee shall be present throughout the proceedings. A female member of the staff shall be present when female students are being interviewed.

When the police request permission to arrest a student at school, the CEO/Principal shall inform the Board Chair; to the degree possible, determine why such arrest could not be made at the student's home; attempt to inform the student's parents/guardian; and request and inspect the arrest warrant. No student shall be released to the police authorities without a proper warrant; or appropriate evidence or written parental/guardian permission, except in the event of emergency or for the protection of life or property as determined by the CEO Principal/designee.

Requests by private investigators shall be directed to the Office of the Police Chief. Representatives of non-government agencies shall not be permitted to interview students within the school.

Use of Electronic Devices By Students

The use of electronic devices, including beepers, tablets, and cell phones by school personnel where supportive of the general welfare and the instructional program of the school is endorsed. The use of such by students has been found not only disruptive but, in many instances, contributory to illegal purposes.

This policy is to serve notice to all concerned that their use by students on school premises is prohibited.

The Board authorizes the CEO/Principal to develop and enforce rules to prohibit the use of cell phones, tablets, gaming devices or other electronics by students that shall include the following:

1. Confiscation of items whose use has not been approved by the CEO/Principal; and
2. Investigation of the incident by the CEO/Principal/designee who may:
    a. Return the item to the parent/guardian.
    b. Suspend the student.
    c. Refer the matter to the police.
    d. Recommend expulsion of the student.
    e. All the above.

The CEO/Principal shall be responsible for the enforcement and reporting of the progress of this policy to the Board. The CEO/Principal shall inform students and parents/guardians of this policy by general announcement, by inclusion in the school's handbook and a letter to parents/guardians. Staff shall be kept informed continually of the provisions of this policy and its effectiveness.

Student Rights

This policy sets forth guidelines by which student rights are to be determined consistent with law. The Board has the authority and responsibility to establish reasonable rules for the conduct and deportment of the students of GMCS. At the same time, no student shall be deprived of equal treatment and equal access to the educational program, due process, a presumption of innocence, and free expression and association in accordance with these guidelines.

Attendant upon the rights established for each student are certain responsibilities, which include respect for the rights of others, obedience to properly constituted school authority and compliance with the rules of GMCS. The CEO/Principal shall develop administrative procedures consistent with law and Board policy to ensure that student rights under varying conditions are properly described. Such procedures shall be reviewed and updated when necessary.

Student Participation in School Affairs

The Board believes that students should participate in the governance of school activities at levels appropriate to their ages and competencies because:

1. Schools, as an institution fundamental to the operation of a democratic society, should exemplify citizen participation in decision making.

2. The curriculum should develop increasing knowledge, students' skills and responsibilities in planning and executing cooperative activities.
3. Students are a valuable resource whose contribution can materially aid and benefit the school.

The Board authorizes the CEO/Principal to encourage student participation in activities commensurate with students' understanding and abilities. Recommendations for the improvement of the school may be offered by any student, provided the recommendations are of a constructive nature and contribute toward the realization of the educational goals of the school.

The CEO/Principal shall develop procedures to implement this policy which:

1. Provide for the submission, consideration, and response to constructive student suggestions.
2. Designate how students shall be selected for participation in school matters.
3. Ensure that student participation is a representation of the student body.

Excusal from Instruction on Religious Grounds

No religious belief or non-belief should be promoted by GMCS or its employees, and none should be disparaged. The school should encourage all students and staff members to be tolerant and respectful of each other's religious views. The school should foster mutual respect among students and parents with differing religious beliefs or views.

To this point, the school recognizes the statutory right of parents to have their children excused from specific instruction which conflicts with their religious beliefs. Therefore, the Board directs the CEO/Principal to respond to parent requests for exemptions from curriculum requirements using the following guidelines in accordance with applicable State regulations:

1. Maintain the expectation that all students complete the curriculum as established by the school in conjunction with State Board of Education curriculum rules and regulations.
2. Students should be excused from participating in practices which are contrary to their religious beliefs or cultural beliefs unless there are clear issues of law that would prevent such an excuse.
3. Evaluate all requests to ensure that the materials and/or practices to which there are objections do not violate the protections of the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America.

Parents requesting exemptions from specific instruction for their children which conflict with their religious beliefs shall complete a "Request for Exemption from Specific Instruction" form (Attachment 5) and submit said form to the CEO/Principal.

It shall be the policy of the Board that:

1. Students may be excused from portions of courses when the subject matter is incompatible with the religious beliefs of such students and/or their parents.
2. Only those students may be excused whose parents or guardians have submitted a signed "request for exemption" to the CEO/Principal.
3. The CEO/Principal shall review the request for exemption, notifying parents of his/her recommendations within ten (10) days.
4. Parents in disagreement with the CEO's/Principal's decision may appeal to the Board, who shall review and respond to the parental written request, within ten (10) days after a regularly scheduled board meeting.

Any complaints with regards to a Board policy or any aspect of the school's curriculum shall be brought in accordance with the Parent/Public Complaint Policy contained in this manual.

Limited English Proficiency Students

In educating students with limited English proficiency (LEP), GMCS will employ "structured immersion," whereby LEP students learn English by immersing themselves in the spoken and written language. Educational programming for LEP students will therefore be similar to that provided for all students at the school. All instruction will be in English, but the teacher will tailor the language used to students' increasing comprehension. For such students, simple English will be spoken at the very beginning, and more complex English will be used over time as they gain fluency. When possible, the native language will be used to clarify instruction and provide a reassuring and affirming connection to the child's home language and culture.

In severe cases of limited English proficiency, students will be placed in a language instruction class that will focus primarily on speaking complete sentences, using English to identify objects, and developing proper syntax and sentence structure. Once such basic skills are established, LEP students will benefit from the school's regular curriculum.

Upon enrollment, all students will be asked to complete a Home Language Survey. Results from this survey will be used to guide the school's ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher in identifying students who may need language services. Each student's proficiency will be calculated using assessments selected at the school and/or those prescribed by the state, and decisions regarding the need for special language services will be made based on the student's performance.

Once a roster has been established of students who are eligible to receive ESL services, the ESL instructor, the Special Education Coordinator, and the CEO/Principal/designee should hold a conference with parents of eligible students to discuss the school's structured immersion program.

Field Trips

Field trips can be an educationally sound and important ingredient of the instructional program of the school. *Field trips are a privilege not a right.* Field trips shall be defined as any journey by students away from the school premises, under the supervision of a teacher, which is an integral part of an

approved course of study and conducted for the purpose of affording a first-hand educational experience not available in the classroom.

Students on field trips remain under the supervision and responsibility of the school and this Board and are subject to their rules and regulations.

The CEO/Principal or his designee shall prepare procedures for the operation of field trips which shall ensure that:

1. The safety and well-being of students shall be protected at all times;
2. Parental permission is sought and obtained before any student may be removed from school for a field trip;
3. The CEO/Principal approves the purpose, itinerary, and duration of the proposed trip;
4. Each field trip is properly planned, integrated with the curriculum, and followed up by appropriate activities which enhance its usefulness; and
5. The effectiveness of field trip activities is monitored and evaluated.

Costs for field trips are to be supported to the extent approved in the school budget. In the absence of field trip funds, costs may be borne by parents/guardians or approved school/parent organizations. Students with financial hardships may have all costs borne by the school/parent organization financing the trip if after checking available resources it is found that the funds are available.

Policy and Procedures for School Meal Accounts

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School ("GMCS") offers meals and ala carte (milk) for purchase in the school cafeteria every school day. Meals and ala carte (milk) sales are tracked using an electronic debit Point of Sale system ("POS"). The amount of the purchases is subtracted from each student's account at the time of sale. To access their meal account, each student is given an ID Number. They will use this number each time they make a purchase. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to provide adequate funds to cover their child's daily purchases.

Free and reduced meal programs

If financial difficulty exists in the household resulting in a negative balance on a Student Account, completion of a Free and Reduced-Price School Meal Application should be immediately considered. A free reimbursable breakfast or lunch consists of 3 or more of the 5 meal components offered. Per Federal regulations, no free milk is provided to students who pack lunches. Programs such as these are made possible through the National School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs.

Applications are available throughout the school year at each school's office or on GMCS website at www.gettysburgmontessoricharter.org. The application may also be completed online. Please visit GMCS website for online completion information. The parent/guardian is responsible to pay the full price for meals until the application is approved. All charges to the student's account are the

responsibility of the Parent/guardian and must be resolved upon applying and being approved for free or reduced meals. If negative charges accumulated before or during the application process, the parent or guardian is responsible for paying that debt up to the date that the free lunch status is approved.

Low meal account balances

Low balance notices are emailed to all parents monthly if there is a current email address on file.

Parents and guardians may use the POS Parent Portal on GMCS's website. Please visit www.gettysburgmontessoricharter.org and then click on School Meals. Parents and guardians may create an account using the student's ID number to monitor their child's meal transactions and meal account balance. They may also set up email notification to receive an email when the student's meal account balance drops below a specified amount. They will also use this portal to add funds to their child's account using a credit card or an ACH payment from a checking or savings account. The POS provider collects a small convenience fee to add funds to the account.

End of School Year Balance

Balances will remain in the account at the end of each school year and will be ready for use when the student returns at the beginning of the following school year. Balances for sixth grade students will be transferred to a sibling if one exists. Otherwise, if the balance is under $10.00 the amount will be refunded to the student, and if the balance is over $10.00 a check will be issued to the parent or guardian. Upon written request the balance can be donated to benefit a needy family.

Unclaimed Balances

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Bureau of Unclaimed Property requires GMCS to turn over all unclaimed balances after a prescribed period. Bad debts are an unallowable cost to the food service account. A transfer of funds will occur into the food service account from non-federal sources.

Withdrawal from GMCS

If you move or withdraw your child from GMCS, parents/guardians should contact the Food Service Department by phone or email to review their child's account and to receive a refund for any funds left in the account.

Lunch Charge Procedures

Students will be allowed to charge up to five meals. When a student owes money for five or more school meals, GMCS will make at least two attempts to reach the student's parent or guardian and have the parent or guardian apply for participation in the school fund program.

No milk may be charged.

A student who orders a school meal will be provided with one regardless of whether the student has money unless the student's parent or guardian has directed the school, in writing, to withhold meals from the student.

Parents are charged for all meals that have been ordered, except for days their student is out for an excused absence.

No adult will be permitted to charge breakfast, lunch, or ala carte items.

Communications, regarding money owed by a student for school meals are made to the student's parent or guardian and not to the student.

A student who cannot pay for a school meal or who owes money for school meals will not be publicly identified or stigmatized.

A student who cannot pay for a school meal is not required to perform chores or other work to pay for the school meal.

A student is not required to discard a school meal after it is served to the student due to the student's inability to pay for the meal or the amount of money owed by the student for prior school meals.

Unpaid lunch charges will be due in full to GMCS no later than the close of business on the last day of school each year. If a parent/guardian does not pay the negative balance within 10 days of the charges or in full by the last day of school, whichever comes first, a letter will be mailed by GMCS to the parent/guardian informing them they have two (2) weeks from the date of the letter to resolve the debt. GMCS reserves the right to take legal action if the debt is not resolved. If the balance is not resolved within thirty (30) days of the letter, the debt may be turned over to the appropriate authority for collection.

Personnel Policies

Employee Files

GMCS maintains personnel files on all employees. Personnel files are categorized into two types – general personnel files and employee health files. Employee health files contain any medically related information that the employee may provide to the employer during employment. Personnel files contain all other non-medical work-related materials. Access to employee health files is strictly limited to the CEO/Principal and select office staff designated by the CEO/Principal.

Faculty and Staff Personnel

Personnel records will be stored in the office of the school secretary or CEO/Principal. Upon initial employment an employee file shall contain:

- A completed employment application and resume
- Federal and state withholding forms
- Direct deposit forms
- I-9 form
- Benefits forms

- Criminal background checks
- Confidentiality agreements (if applicable)
- References (to remain confidential)
- A copy of the applicable teaching certificate(s)
- Transcripts
- Recommendations
- Physical examination record
- Retirement registration
- Hospitalization forms
- Annuity forms, where applicable
- Insurance beneficiary forms, where applicable
- Examination application and test scores

During the period of employment, the following data shall be maintained in the personnel files in addition to the data required upon initial employment:

- Rate of compensation
- Completed copy of employment contract or offer letter, as applicable
- Attendance record
- Performance evaluations
- Disciplinary incidents
- Special awards or distinctions

Personnel files will also include, but are not limited to, communications between administration and staff, formal and informal observations, and samples of students' work. They will also include background clearances, copies of any certifications, certificates, transcripts, etc. It is the responsibility of the employee to report any relevant changes in personal status (e.g., change in name, marital status, beneficiaries, persons to notify in case of emergency).

The Board designates the establishment and the maintenance of official personnel records to the CEO/Principal of the school. A central file shall be maintained; supplemental records may be maintained for ease in data gathering. Only that information which pertains to the professional and legal role of the employee and submitted by duly authorized staff, or the Board may be entered in the official record file. A copy of each such entry shall be made available to the employee.

Personnel files are confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone outside the school, except upon written authorization of the employee, or in compliance with a lawfully served subpoena or other

legally binding order upon the employer. Employee records shall not be available to the Board except as may be required in the performance of its function as a Board.

Each employee shall have access to his/her file except for confidential recommendations, which were submitted upon employment with the Board. Employees wishing to review their own records shall submit prior written notice to the CEO/Principal or designee. The file review shall take place in the presence of the administrator designated to maintain such records and shall make no alteration or additions to the records, nor remove any material without the prior written authorization of the CEO/Principal, and shall sign a log attached to the file indicating the date and name of the reviewer. Under no circumstances may an employee remove personnel files or copies thereof from school premises, submit any documents for inclusion in the file, or remove any documents from the file, without the prior written authorization of the CEO/Principal. Violators of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

An employee wishing to appeal material in his/her file shall make a request in writing to the administrator delegated to maintain the records and specify therein the employee's name, date of review, material to be appealed and reason for the appeal. The responsible administrator shall hear the appeal and make a determination for review by the CEO/Principal and permit the addition of employee comments.

Personnel files of persons who are no longer employed with GMCS must be maintained for at least three years and may be destroyed only after three complete years from the date the employee was terminated from employment or the date of the employee's last day on payroll.

The Board requires that an annual audit of all personnel files be conducted by the finance committee or board designee.

Terms of Employment

The Board has the authority under law to prescribe employment conditions for the personnel of GMCS. Willful misrepresentation of facts material to the employment and determination of salary level shall be considered cause for disciplinary action or dismissal of the employee.

It shall be the policy of the Board that all teaching employees be provided a letter offering employment upon initial employment and letters of intent every year thereafter that shall include the beginning compensation, employment date, benefit package and job description. Employment is on an "at-will" basis, except for the CEO/Principal or other designated staff that signs a contract for a specified period.

A school employee may be terminated at any time with or without cause through written notice to the staff member. Such notice shall be given thirty (30) days in advance of the date of termination except in those cases where circumstances are such that an immediate termination is warranted.

The Board may amend or rescind its policies and procedures, terms, and conditions of employment, from time to time at the sole discretion of the Board.

Unexcused Absences – Staff

The CEO/Principal and all employees are expected to report to work on every workday designated by the official school calendar unless properly excused. Unexcused absences are to be treated as acts of insubordination and may be considered as cause for dismissal.

Attendance and Punctuality – Staff

The efficient operation of the school requires that each member of the school community carry his/her share of responsibility. When a member of the team is absent, instruction and productivity are interrupted.

The following procedures must be followed in reporting absences:

1. All employees who will not be reporting to work must call the CEO/Principal as soon as they are aware that they will be unable to work, but not later than one (1) hour before school opens. The CEO/Principal shall report absences to the Chair of the Board.
2. The CEO/Principal and all employees must call each day that he/she will be absent from work unless prior arrangements have been made as to the date of return.
3. Substitutes may be secured through the authorization of the CEO/Principal.
4. The CEO/Principal/administrative assistant shall maintain an office log of employee attendance/absence for all personnel. The Chair of the board will track absences of the CEO/Principal.
5. Continuous personal illness/absence of three (3) days or more must be certified to by a properly licensed physician. This note is to be submitted to the CEO/Principal upon return to work. The CEO/Principal shall submit documentation to the Chair of the Board.

The CEO/Principal and other employees who work regular hours during the summer months when school is not in session shall follow the procedures above to report his/her absences. Vacations and other anticipated absences should be requested as early in advance as possible and no later than the amount of time off that is being requested. For example, if the employee is requesting a week off work for vacation, then the employee should make that request at least one week in advance of the start of the requested absence. The CEO/Principal shall make his/her requests to the Chair of the Board.

Leaves of Absence

Leaves of absence may be granted to regular full-time and part-time employees for reasons including those listed below. A leave of absence may not exceed six (6) months except for military leave and worker's compensation. The employee must request a leave of absence from the CEO/Principal as soon as possible after it is known that a leave of absence is necessary and at least thirty (30) days of the beginning of the leave, unless the leave of absence is due to accidental or sudden injury of illness or other circumstances that would preclude the employee from providing 30 days' notice. Any leave taken without the approval of the CEO/Principal may be considered job abandonment, which could lead to termination of employment.

Medical Leave

Medical leave is time off from work due to non-work-related illness or injury as determined by a qualified physician. A medical leave begins on the first day after the last day worked and ends the first day the attending physician releases the employee. Unpaid leave may be granted for medical situations that do not fall under short-term disability. All personal and vacation days must be used prior to requesting leave without pay. The Board is not obligated to guarantee reinstatement if this leave extends beyond two

(2) weeks.

Employees do not earn vacation time, sick days, or personal days while on an unpaid leave of absence. Employee benefits shall be continued on a normal basis; however, employees must continue to make their scheduled contributions for their benefits while on unpaid leave.

Whenever possible, employees must apply for a leave of absence at least thirty (30) days in advance of the start of the leave, and state in writing the purpose for which the leave is requested. Employees should also make arrangements for payment of their employee benefit contributions, if any, before the leave begins. When the basis of the leave involves a health condition, medical certification may be required.

Return to Work

An employee on medical leave is required to notify the CEO/Principal immediately upon release by a physician to return to work. The employee should obtain specific written instructions concerning his/her work capacity, limitations, and medications, if any. Termination may occur if an employee refuses to return to work after a physician has released him/her to return to work.

While the Board cannot guarantee that it will hold a position open for an employee on leave of absence, it will make every effort possible to do so. If it becomes necessary to fill the position, the Board will reinstate the employee in question to an equivalent position provided such a position is available and provided his/her leave does not exceed twelve (12) weeks. If a leave of absence exceeds twelve (12) weeks, the Board cannot guarantee that the position will be held.

Military Leave

Employees serving in the National Guard or reserve units are granted a leave of absence without pay to participate in annual training programs. An employee may elect to use vacation time for military leave.

If an employee enters active military service, he/she will be placed on a leave of absence. Upon completion of active military duty, the employee may be rehired in accordance with federal regulations as described in the Uniformed Services Employment Rights Act of 1994 (USERA).

Bereavement Leave

Full-time and regular employees are entitled to an absence not to exceed three (3) days, without loss of pay, in the event of death in the immediate family. An immediate family member is defined as a

parent, spouse, sibling, child, or spouse's /partner's parent. One (1) day of paid leave is granted for the death of a grandparent.

Employees are eligible for bereavement leave at any time after their first day of employment. Requests for this type of leave should be made to the CEO/Principal. Bereavement leave may be extended using personal day leave as provided by Board policy.

Family and Medical Leave Act

Qualifying employees may take up to twelve weeks off from work without pay for certain family and medical reasons. Unpaid leave is granted for any of the following reasons:

1. The employee has given birth or received placement of a child through adoption or foster care;
2. The employee is caring for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition;
3. The employee has a serious health condition that prevents the employee from performing his/her job responsibilities.

Employees who have worked at GMCS for at least one year and who have worked 1,250 hours in the twelve months preceding the requested leave, are eligible to take an unpaid leave of absence in any twelve-month period for any of the conditions listed in the Family and Medical Leave Act. The twelve-month period is a "rolling" period measured back from the date the employee first uses any such leave. Employees may also combine any paid leave to which they are entitled with the unpaid leave allowed by the Family and Medical Leave Act, but the amount of time that employees take off for paid leave will run concurrently with their unpaid leave. Unpaid paternity leave also runs concurrently with leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Employees do not earn vacation time, sick days, or personal days while on an unpaid leave of absence. Employee health benefits will be continued on a normal basis, however, employees must continue to make their scheduled contributions, if any, for their benefits while on unpaid leave.

Whenever possible, employees should apply for a leave of absence at least thirty days in advance of the start of the leave, and state in writing the purpose for which the leave is requested. When the basis of the leave involves a health condition, medical certification may be required.

Employees taking Family or Medical Leave will have their jobs available upon their return.

Hiring Family Members

Employees have an obligation to conduct business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee can influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative because of the organization's business dealings.

The Board recognizes that it may employ members of the same family. However, one family member may not directly or indirectly supervise another or process, review, or audit the work of another family member without written approval from the supervisor of the highest-ranking employee.

Furthermore, confidential information may never be shared among family members employed by the school.

Definition of family for these purposes includes spouse, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, stepchild, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, aunt, uncle, cousin, and dependents, whether living in the same household.

Anti-nepotism Policy

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School ("GMCS") Board of Trustees ("Board") is committed to the best-qualified persons available for GMCS employment positions, and to ensure that human resources management decisions are made based upon individual merit. Fulfilling this commitment requires that

GMCS maintain an atmosphere free of the appearance of nepotism, the hiring, rewarding, advancement of other favorable treatment of employees based upon or influenced by family relationships. Nepotism, or the appearance of nepotism, can degrade staff morale; can arouse public distrust; and is an obstacle to teamwork, effectiveness, and quality performance. It is the policy of GMCS to prevent nepotism, in actuality or appearance, to the fullest extent possible under the law. Except where specifically required under this policy for the prevention of nepotism, the family relationship of an employee or applicant for employment to a member of the Board or to any other GMCS employee shall not be a basis for, factor in, nor an influence upon hiring, assignments, advancement, evaluations, or other personnel actions.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to the interpretation and implementation of this policy only:

Family Relationship – the relationship, whether by blood, marriage, adoption or otherwise, to a family member as defined below.

Family Member – a person's spouse, parent, stepparent, foster parent, child, stepchild, foster child, brother, step-brother, foster brother, sister, step-sister, foster sister, grandparent, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, or nephew. The term also includes any other person who shares the same residence and who is generally regarded within that family as being one of the foregoing family members.

Immediate Family Member – a person's spouse, parent, stepparent, foster parent, child, stepchild, foster child, brother, stepbrother, foster brother, sister, step-sister, or foster sister. The term also includes any other person who shares the same residence and who is generally regarded within that family as being one of the foregoing immediate family members.

Management Team Member – the Chief Executive Officer, and any principal, assistant principal, or department chairperson, and any central office administrator whose job title includes the terms director, coordinator, supervisor, manager, department head or assistant to one of the foregoing, as well as any administrator or supervisor whose primary duties are comparable to any of the foregoing.

Personnel Actions – includes, but is not limited to, employment decisions and actions such as: hiring; dismissal; demotion; suspension or furlough; discipline; commendation; granting or denial of

leave or time off; assignment or scheduling of work; changes in job classification, title or duties; promotion or other advancement; wage or salary determinations; performance evaluations or ratings; performance or employee development counseling; approval or denial of attendance at or payment for conferences or employee development programs; and actions or determinations of a similar nature affecting wages, hours, conditions of employment or eligibility for employment or advancement.

Supervisory Functions – includes but is not limited to monitoring or reporting on job performance; enforcing compliance with workplace rules and policies; tracking absences or time worked; and making initial assessments, reports, recommendations, or decisions regarding personnel actions.

Immediate Supervisor – with respect to an employee, the person who performs supervisory functions regarding that employee at the first supervisory level. Where such supervisory functions are performed at the first level by different persons with respect to the same employee, all persons performing one or more of such supervisory functions with respect to that employee are immediate supervisors.

Second-level Supervisor – with respect to any employee, a person who is an immediate supervisor of that employee's immediate supervisor and/or a person who reviews, recommends, or takes further action, at the next supervisory level above the immediate supervisor, on supervisory functions or personnel actions regarding that employee.

Guidelines

General Prohibition and Reporting. In the context of supervisory functions and personnel actions, GMCS personnel shall not request or show favoritism for, nor request or give other special consideration or treatment to, an employee or applicant for employment based in whole or part upon that employee's or applicant's family relationship to any GMCS employee or Board member. GMCS personnel whose higher supervisory chain includes a family member of the employee or applicant involved shall not permit that fact, nor the fact that the employee or applicant involved is a family member of a member of the Board or Management Team, to influence supervisory functions or personnel actions. GMCS personnel shall not "trade favors" involving such prohibited favoritism or special consideration or treatment with respect to family members of other employees and shall not influence or attempt to influence supervisory functions or personnel actions involving their family members performed by other GMCS employees. GMCS personnel shall report to the CEO any actual or attempted violation of this policy.

Limitations on Future Hiring or Assignments. No person shall be hired for or assigned to any position of employment in GMCS in which the person would be the immediate supervisor of a family member, or in which the person's immediate supervisor would be a family member. No person shall be hired for or assigned to any position of employment within GMCS in which the person would be a second-level supervisor of a member of their immediate family, or in which the person would be supervised at the second level by a member of their immediate family.

Special Review in the Case of Employees Currently Assigned to Supervise Family Members. In the case of persons who prior to the adoption of this policy were assigned to positions where one family member is the immediate or second-level supervisor of another, the administration shall ensure that personnel actions and supervisory functions initiated, performed, recommended, or reviewed by the

related supervisor regarding the supervised family member are subject to further review at the next higher level of supervision.

Reassignment or Restructuring when Supervisors become Family Members of Persons Supervised. If, after initial employment or assignment, an employee and that employee's immediate supervisor become family members with respect to each other, every effort shall be made consistent with law to affect a reassignment of one or both parties. If the CEO determines that such a reassignment is not feasible, the administration shall endeavor to restructure or reassign responsibilities for supervisory functions and personnel actions regarding the related employee in a manner that is consistent with the goals of this policy.

Special Review in the Case of Immediate Family Relationship to Second-Level Supervisor or Management Team Member. In the case of any employee who, as a result of past or future assignment, hiring, or establishment of family relationship, is a member of the immediate family of their second-level supervisor or the immediate family of any member of the Management Team, the administration shall endeavor to ensure that supervisory functions and personnel actions regarding that employee which are initiated, performed, recommended or reviewed by the related second-level supervisor or Management Team member are subject to further review at the next higher level of supervision.

Family Relationship Not To Otherwise Disqualify. Except as specifically set forth above, a person's family relationship to a member of the Board, member of the Management Team, or other GMCS employee shall not otherwise disqualify that person from employment or assignment at GMCS, and such persons may be recommended for employment or assignment based upon their individual merit and qualifications.

Family Members Not To Participate in Hiring or Assignment Decisions. Whenever an applicant for any assignment or position of employment in GMCS has a family relationship to a member of the Management Team, a Board member, or to any other GMCS employee, the related Management Team member, Board member or other related employee shall not participate in screening, interviewing, evaluating, or recommending the applicants for such assignment or position of employment.

Disclosure of Family Relationship with Management Team or School Board Member. Whenever a person with a family relationship to any member of the Board or member of the Management Team is recommended for employment or assignment, and the fact of such a relationship is known to any person involved in the hiring or assignment process, this information shall be disclosed to the CEO and the Board prior to the time the recommendation appears on the agenda for formal action.

Exceptions. The Board may approve exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis, where exception would be in the best interests of GMCS or required by law, in accordance with the procedures set forth in Board policy.

(Approved September 18, 2018)

Personal Relationships

Objective

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School ("GMCS") strives to provide a work environment that is collegial, respectful, and productive. This policy establishes rules for the conduct of personal relationships between employees, including supervisory personnel, to prevent conflicts and maintain a productive and friendly work environment.

Procedure

A "personal relationship" is defined as a relationship between individuals who have or have had a continuing relationship of a romantic or intimate nature.

An employee who is involved in a personal relationship with another employee may not occupy a position in the same department as, work directly for or supervise the employee with whom he or she is involved.

GMCS reserves the right to take prompt action if an actual or potential conflict of interest arises concerning individuals who engage in a personal relationship that may affect terms and conditions of employment. Supervisors and managers are prohibited from dating subordinates and may be disciplined for such actions, up to and including termination.

When a conflict or the potential for conflict arises because of a personal relationship between employees, even if there is no line of authority or reporting involved, the employees may be separated by reassignment, or terminated from employment. If such a personal relationship between employees develops, it is the responsibility and obligation of the employees involved to promptly disclose the existence of the relationship to the GMCS CEO.

When a conflict or a potential for conflict affecting terms or conditions of employment arises because of the relationship, the individuals concerned will be given the opportunity to decide who is to be transferred to another position, or terminated, if no position is available. If no decision is made within 30 calendar days of the offer to resolve the situation, GMCS CEO will determine who is to be transferred or, if necessary, terminated from employment.

Employee Dress Code

To help create an environment conducive to learning and to underscore the notion that educating children is a serious endeavor, it is important for every employee to always maintain a professional image. The Board, therefore, expects all employees to be neatly groomed and dressed in clothing suitable for the subject of instruction, the work being performed or the occasion.

The Board retains the authority to specify the following dress and grooming guidelines for staff, within law, which will prevent such matters from having an adverse impact on the educational process. All staff members shall:

1. Be physically clean, neat, and well groomed
2. Dress in a manner reflecting his/her assignment, as well as a high degree of professionalism
3. Dress in a manner that does not cause damage to school property

4. Dress and be groomed in such a way so as not to cause a health or safety hazard, or dress in a manner that detracts from the educational process.

If a staff member feels that an exception to this policy would enable him/her to carry out assigned duties more effectively, a request shall be made to the CEO/Principal.

Inclement Weather

On days when school is closed because of snow and/or other inclement weather, or a national state of emergency has been declared, school staff will not be required to report to work. GMCS will follow the closings of GASD; therefore, if GASD closes or delays opening its schools, GMCS shall be similarly delayed or closed. GMCS will not be responsible for additional notification other than that provided by GASD.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action

It is the policy of the Board to promote diversity and equal access to all categories of employment, including retention and advancement, through a positive continuing program of specific practices designed to ensure full realization of equal employment opportunity without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, social or economic status, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, medical condition, marital status, parenthood, or veteran status. The Board believes that a diverse staff brings a valuable breadth of perspectives to tasks and decisions the school faces.

Equal employment opportunity is not only the law, but it is a principle of the Board's operation. Employees are selected, retained, and promoted solely based on their qualifications and job performance, and all reasonable accommodations are made for those covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act. All employees are expected to cooperate in achieving this goal and the Board stands behind this principle. To implement this policy, the Board shall:

1. Recruit, hire, train and promote persons in all job classifications without regard to race, religion. color, national origin, social or economic status, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, medical condition, marital status, parenthood, or veteran status.
2. Ensure that all personnel actions, including but not limited to compensation, promotion, demotion, benefits, transfers, layoffs and return from layoffs, will be administered without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, social or economic status, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, medical condition, marital status, parenthood, or veteran status.
3. Refrain from doing business with any vendor who does not adhere to the principles of nondiscriminatory employment practices.

The CEO/Principal is responsible for maintaining the highest standards for equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. This responsibility includes complying with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and initiating and supporting programs and practices designed to create and sustain a diverse faculty and staff.

Evaluation of Teachers

Observation and evaluation are an ongoing process that exists to support and encourage instructional excellence. In this process, the teacher and supervisor work cooperatively in a professional atmosphere conducive to mutual growth. The process of observation and evaluation should promote teacher self-esteem. It is characterized by its fairness, consistency, and collegiality. The recognition of different teaching styles, levels of experience, and expertise form the basis for this process. Endowing the process with meaning is the joint responsibility of the supervisor and the teacher.

The purposes of the evaluation program are:

1. To improve teacher effectiveness
2. To motivate teachers to attain high, outcome-based performance levels
3. To promote teacher self-esteem
4. To provide a basis for self-improvement
5. To assess performance objectively and fairly
6. To support the teacher in the development of teaching and classroom management skills
7. To provide a basis for decision-making relative to employment
8. To foster a cooperative professional atmosphere
9. To increase teacher and administrator awareness regarding curriculum, methodology, and activities in the classroom.

The CEO/Principal and/or Assistant Principal shall have the responsibility for observing and evaluating personnel under his/her supervision. Other certified supervisory administrators may also be called upon to conduct formal classroom observations. The number and length of classroom observations shall vary in accordance with the needs and status of the employee. The observer shall give consideration to the type of class, the intellectual level of the students, any students with special learning or behavior problems, and special circumstances that could affect classroom conditions. Each observation shall be followed by a conference that stresses the cooperative sharing of ideas and focuses on the assessment of the employee's performance and the improvement of instruction.

Based on the standards outlined in this Administrative Procedure, the CEO/Principal shall conduct a formal review of all staff members. Evidence of student achievement and other objective data shall also serve as components of the school's comprehensive faculty evaluation system. In addition, each faculty member shall be required to perform an annual self-assessment based on the standards for evaluation used by the CEO/Principal. Each staff member shall receive an overall performance evaluation rating based on his/her evaluation.

At a minimum teachers will be evaluated, following their date of hire, at intervals of three and six months, one year, and thereafter annually, on their anniversary date. The CEO/Principal may complete additional evaluations at his/her discretion.

Performance may determine whether a salary increase is warranted beyond regular percentage-based salary increases authorized by the board for all school employees.

Faculty Responsibilities/Standards for Evaluation

Faculty evaluations will be based on performance in the categories listed below, and others as the CEO/Principal sees fit:

Planning and Preparation

- Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy
- Demonstrating knowledge of students
- Setting instructional outcomes
- Demonstrating knowledge of resources
- Designing coherent instruction
- Designing student assessment

The Classroom Environment

- Creating an environment of respect and rapport
- Establishing a culture for learning
- Managing classroom procedures
- Managing student behavior
- Organizing physical space

Instruction

- Communicating with students
- Using questioning and discussion techniques
- Engaging students in learning
- Using assessments in instruction
- Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness

Professional Responsibilities

- Reflecting on teaching
- Maintaining accurate records
- System for managing students' data
- Communicating with families

Evaluation of the CEO/Principal

Regular periodic evaluation of the CEO/Principal's performance is a Board responsibility. In carrying out this responsibility, it is recognized that the CEO/Principal is entitled to such a review in an objective and

straightforward fashion so that his/her leadership may be as effective as possible. The Board will evaluate the performance of the CEO/Principal at least annually.

Prior to the beginning of the period under evaluation, the Board set priorities and shall agree upon the criteria to be used for evaluation purposes.

The format of the evaluation will focus on:

1. Goals and objectives set forth by the Board and the CEO/Principal;
2. The working relationship between the Board and the CEO/Principal;
3. The CEO/Principal's relationship with staff, students, parents, and the community;
4. The CEO/Principal's ability to communicate to staff, parents, students, and the Board;
5. The CEO/Principal's personal professional growth;
6. The compilation of assessments by individual Board members, which shall then be reviewed by the Board and the CEO/Principal;
7. Evaluation interviews between the CEO/Principal and the Board or Board Committee during which no other business is discussed;
8. Consideration of objective data;
9. The CEO/Principal's self-analysis;
10. Leadership and administrative ability;
11. The CEO/Principal's vision for the school (plan for future school development); and
12. The development of a comprehensive staff training program.

As an outcome of the evaluation of the CEO/Principal, the Board should determine the necessity of any action regarding the employment of the CEO/Principal.

Evaluation of Non-Certified Employees

The CEO/Principal shall prepare a plan, including procedures, for the evaluation of all non-certified employees.

The goals of the evaluation plan for non-certificated employees are:

1. To identify, improve and reinforce the skills, attitudes and abilities which enable an employee to be effective.
2. To identify and improve upon those areas which prevent an employee from effectively carrying out assigned duties.

The evaluation plan shall group classified employees into position classes based upon similarities of duties, responsibilities, and qualifications; the evaluation process shall be similar for all classes of employees. The evaluation plan shall ensure that appropriate evaluation of performance takes place during probationary periods of employment.

Professional Development

The Board recognizes the importance of maintaining, developing, and extending the skills of all staff members. The Board encourages employees at all levels to engage in programs and activities that will lead to their professional growth, expansion of skills, and increased job competence. Programs and activities may include in-service education, conferences, workshops, and graduate study. Programs and activities for professional growth shall serve the following purposes:

1. To improve the skills of professional staff members in their work with children, youth, and adults.
2. To increase the ability of staff members in their field of specialization.
3. To develop sensitivity to other human beings, their needs, aspirations, and abilities in relation to cultural, religious, socioeconomic, and other differences.
4. To assist staff members in the implementation of innovative curricula and instructional practices.
5. To encourage staff members to examine new trends in education.
6. To promote evaluation of current practices.
7. To facilitate the involvement of parents as partners of teachers in the education of their children.

Within budgetary limitations, the CEO/Principal is authorized to initiate programs and activities to promote professional growth for employees GMCS. As part of professional development, GMCS Induction Plan will be established to assist new teachers in making the transition from student to teacher and to support them in enhancing their skills consistent with the mission and operating procedures of the school.

It shall be the responsibility of the CEO/ Principal to establish an Induction Plan for each new teacher and to implement a professional development plan for all individual faculty members as well as a school-wide professional development plan.

Advanced Degree Pay Increase Policy

To recognize the accomplishments made by full-time employees in obtaining higher education degrees and certifications while employed at Gettysburg Montessori Charter School (GMCS), the following pay increase policy is adopted.

Instructional II Certification: $2000 stipend (one-time bonus), will be given upon receipt of certificate.

Master's Degree: $2000 Base salary increase upon entering employment with GMCS. If a Masters' Degree is obtained while already employed with GMCS, eligibility for the salary increase will be given upon submission of required documentation.

Doctorate: $7000 base salary increase will be given upon submission of required documentation.

The CEO and GMCS Board may use discretion to provide reimbursement for any other educational advancement not addressed above.

Employee Conduct

It is expected that school staff will reflect in their own conduct that which is expected from our students. The CEO/Principal should regularly emphasize that all staff members contribute to the school's friendly, inviting environment, and each helps set the tone for the school through his/her action and attitudes. The faculty and staff's continuous support and encouragement of students will be demonstrated through four important procedures:

- Faculty and staff will teach students expectations for reasonable behavior in every school environment by relating student actions to the school's guidelines for success. Students will be encouraged to be responsible; always try to do their best, cooperate with others, and treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Faculty and staff will provide positive feedback to students when they are meeting expectations and following the school's guidelines for success.
- When misbehavior occurs, faculty and staff will view the misbehavior as a teaching opportunity, responding with calm, consistent corrections, or consequences.
- Faculty and staff will work collaboratively to solve problems that are severe in nature.

Through consistency, faculty and staff will encourage all students to develop the skills and attitudes needed to build self-confidence and to maximize learning.

The following acts by employees may be considered cause for dismissal. This list should not be considered conclusive.

- Falsifying documents or records, such as an employment application or timesheets.
- Insubordination, or refusal to carry out reasonable instructions from responsible authority, or willful neglect of appropriately assigned duties.
- Misuse, unauthorized possession, destruction, or theft of school owned or leased equipment, or any other property of the school.
- Physical violence or harassment, including threats, intimidation, or retaliation against any individual.
- Possession, use, sale, or transfer of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs while at work or reporting to work under the influence of any of the aforementioned substances.
- Divulging or using inappropriately any information of a confidential nature.
- Possession of firearms or dangerous weapons on school property.
- Absence from work for three (3) consecutive days without prior notification to and approval from the employee's supervisor.

Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)

(Only available when the school has 20 full time employees)

COBRA gives employees, spouses, and dependent children the opportunity to purchase medical benefits coverage if they would otherwise lose their coverage due to:

1. The result of work termination;
2. A reduction in work hours;
3. The divorce or death of a spouse;
4. Marriage (children); or
5. Going beyond the age limit (children only).

If the decision is made to purchase COBRA benefits, the employee, spouse, or dependent children must pay 100% of the cost of these benefits. COBRA coverage may be purchased for up to eighteen (18) months if you terminate employment or no longer qualify due to a reduction in hours or are on an approved leave of absence. COBRA coverage may be extended to twenty-nine (29) months if you have a Social Security Administration-approved disability for a condition that existed when you enrolled in COBRA. Coverage may be purchased by a dependent for up to thirty-six (36) months if you die, divorce your spouse or your dependent child marries or reaches the termination age of twenty-one and one-half years of age.

To apply for a purchase of COBRA coverage, you must apply within sixty (60) days after the qualifying event that caused you to lose eligibility.

The employer shall:

1. Notify you of the COBRA provision by giving you a copy of the Notification Letter upon your employment by GMCS.
2. Notify you, your spouse, and your children of their right to purchase within fourteen (14) calendar days of receiving notice that a qualifying event has occurred.

The employee and his/her dependents are required to:

1. Notify the employer that a divorce, legal separation, or death has occurred or that your child has married or reached the age of twenty-one and one-half years of age. Notification must be given within sixty (60) days of the date the event occurred.
2. File an application form indicating the desire to purchase coverage.
3. Pay the required cost.
4. Pay retroactive premiums to the date of group coverage termination.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 is an Act, which prohibits discrimination against persons with a handicap in any program receiving federal assistance. As defined in the Act, a person with a handicap is anyone who:

1. Has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (major life activities include activities such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working);
2. Has a record of such an impairment; or
3. Is regarded as having such an impairment.

To fulfill its obligation under Section 504, GMCS recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a handicap will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices in the school.

The school has specific responsibilities under the Act, which include the responsibility to identify, develop and implement a plan that affords accommodations to perform the essential functions of an employee's job duties.

For information on how Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 applies to students, refer to the

Section 504 Policy contained in the Special Education Policies and Procedures section of this manual.

Grievance Procedure – Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

A 504 grievance shall mean a complaint by a student, an employee or the parent/guardian of a student attending GMCS in which there is an allegation that discrimination on the basis of handicap has occurred. The grievant shall discuss the alleged violation within 60 days of its occurrence with the appropriate teacher/supervisor. The teacher/supervisor shall communicate his/her decision to the complainant within five (5) school days after having received the complaint.

If the complainant is not satisfied, he/she must submit the grievance in writing to the CEO/Principal (who shall serve as the 504 Compliance Officer) within five (5) school days. The CEO/Principal may reply to the appeal based upon the record or appoint a committee to investigate the facts and report the findings to him/her or appoint a committee to conduct a hearing. A hearing shall be set within five (5) school days from the date of receiving of the appeal. The CEO/Principal shall render a decision within ten (10) school days of the appeal. Said decision shall be in writing with a copy to the Board Chair.

If the complainant feels that the decision of the CEO/Principal is not satisfactory, the complainant within seven (7) school days may request a hearing with the Board.

Conflict of Interest

Officers and employees of GMCS have a duty of loyalty to the school and to the public whose interests they are sworn to serve. The purpose of this Conflict of Interest policy, which provides guidance and a general standard of conduct with respect to actual or apparent conflicts, is in keeping with public official and employee ethics laws that the public has the right to be assured that the financial interests of public officers or employees do not conflict with the public trust, and the principle which prohibits public officers and employees from entering into situations where private interests may conflict with official duties.

The appearance of a conflict of interest undermines the public confidence in the integrity of the school, its officers, and employees, and should be scrupulously avoided. Where an employee's outside private activities could appear to an observer to conflict with the school employee's job responsibilities or where the employee's position with the school appears to give the employee a competitive advantage in his/her private activities, the employee should inform the CEO/Principal of the potential appearance of a conflict of interest. The CEO/Principal will investigate the matter and apprise the Board of his/her findings. Failure to report a potential appearance of a conflict of interest could result in the CEO/Principal recommending disciplinary action. No officer of the board or employee shall:

1. Engage in conduct that constitutes a conflict of interest, which shall be defined as use by an officer or employee of authority of his/her office or employment of any confidential information received through one's employment for the private pecuniary benefit of the officer/employee, a member of the officer's/employee's immediate family, or a business with which the officer/employee or a member of the officer's/employee's immediate family is associated.
2. Engage, or have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct, or indirect, in any business, transaction or professional activity, which conflicts with or impairs the proper discharge of official duties, or which could bring disfavor or disrespect upon the officer/employee of the school.
3. Accept an honorarium which represents a payment in recognition of published works, appearances, speeches, and presentations and which is not intended as consideration of the value of such services which are non-public, occupational, or professional in nature.
4. Recommend, vote, or otherwise participate in the decision to make any contract valued at $200.00 or more between the school, including student activity funds, and any business or entity in which the officer or employee has a personal or financial interest without notice to the Board, the CEO/Principal, and the officer's or employee's superior. Such notice shall be in writing and shall include but not be limited to the nature of the officer's/employee's association with the proposed contractor, both personally and financially. Clarifying financial

   documentation shall be provided, if requested, and formal approval of the contract by the Board is required. The foregoing would apply to any business in which the officer's/employee's spouse or child is associated.

   The responsibility of the officer or employee who is excused from administration of the contract by reason of a conflict shall be assigned to an appropriately qualified employee

by the disqualified officer's/employee's superior or supervisor. The assigned contract administrator shall report to the disqualified person's superior or supervisor on that contract.

5. Advertise business or professional activities on school property or use schoolwork hours, property, or services to perform or promote personal or commercial enterprises or to campaign or raise money for any candidates for political office.
6. Disclose confidential information concerning property, personnel matters, or affairs of the school or its employees, without proper authorization, or use such information to advance the financial or other private interests of the officer, employee, or others. Nothing in this provision shall be interpreted as prohibiting the practice of "whistle-blowing."
7. Accept anything of value including, but not limited to, a gift, loan, political contribution, reward, promise of future employment, favor, gratuity, entertainment, transportation, or lodging based on any implied or actual understanding that the judgment of the public employee would be influenced thereby, or under circumstances which might be reasonably interpreted as an attempt to influence the public officer or employee favorably toward the benefactor. The appearance of impropriety should be avoided.
8. Solicit, directly or indirectly, from employees, students or their parents/guardians, anything of value for the officer's/employee's personal benefit.
9. Purchase property of any kind from the school, either directly or indirectly, unless (A) there is an open and public bid process including public notice and subsequent public disclosures of all bids considered and contracts awarded, (B) the officer/employee did not act in an official capacity in connection with the sale, and (C) the officer/employee was not privy to information received in the course of employment.
10. Participate in the review and approval of publications or materials for school purchase if the officer/employee is the author/editor of or has any financial interest in the sale of such publication or materials.
11. Tutor or counsel as a private enterprise, for compensation, students assigned to any class of the employee. Employees may tutor or counsel students enrolled in other classes or schools unless such private enterprise conflicts with or impairs the proper discharge of official duties.
12. Refer a parent/guardian or student to a service, service provider or product in return for anything of value. Officers/employees making referrals as part of their official duties shall make referrals to more than one provider of the services or product. For example, school counselors shall refer parents/guardians or students to more than one counselor or provider of medical services.
13. Upon separation from school employment, represent any individual or business entity on any matter before the school for a period of one (1) year after such termination.

Conflict of Interest Resolution

If a question of conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest arises, the matter shall be referred to and investigated by the CEO/Principal who will report the results of his/her investigation to the Board. CEO/Principal shall call all instances involving a conflict of interest to the attention of the Board with his/her recommendations as to how the conflict situation might best be resolved.

If a question of conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest arises regarding a Board member, the situation shall be investigated by a committee of at least three (3) Board members appointed by the Board Chair. If the question of conflict of interest involves the Board Chair, the Vice Chair of the Board shall appoint the investigating committee. The investigating committee shall report its findings to the Board along with any recommendations for Board action. After considering all facts in the matter the Board shall vote to take whatever action it deems appropriate. The Board member in question shall not vote in such matters.

All violations of the foregoing policy are subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including dismissal and any penalties as prescribed by law.

Computing Resources – Acceptable Use Policy for Staff

New technologies are shifting the ways that information may be accessed, communicated, and transferred. Those changes may also alter instruction and student learning. GMCS offers staff members access to extensive computing resources, including access to the Internet, electronic mail services, and the school's computer network. Along with access to computers and people all over the world, comes the availability of materials that may not be considered appropriate in the workplace. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials. Ultimately, the staff is responsible for setting and conveying the standards that should be followed when using media and information sources.

Rules and Responsibilities

Staff members are responsible for good behavior on computer networks just as they are in an office setting. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General rules for behavior and communications apply. Access to GMCS's computer network is provided for staff members to conduct research and communicate with others in relation to schoolwork. Access to network services is given to staff members who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Access is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, based upon the acceptable use guidelines outlined in this document, the system administrator will deem what is inappropriate use. The system administrator may close an account at any time. The administration, faculty, and staff of GMCS may deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts.

Individual users of GMCS's computer network are responsible for their use of the network. The use of an account must be in support of education and research and must be consistent with academic expectations of GMCS. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Transmission of any materials in violations of U.S. or state regulations including copyrighted, threatening, or obscene materials is prohibited. Use for commercial activities by

for-profit organizations, product promotion, political lobbying, or illegal activities is strictly prohibited. Use of public property for personal gain is a felony and is subject to prosecution.

It is to be understood that the following uses of the network and associated activities are unacceptable and may result in suspension or revocation of network privileges:

1. Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures.
2. Using obscene or inflammatory language.
3. Sending harassing or insulting messages.
4. Damaging computers, computer systems, or computer networks.
5. Violating copyright laws.
6. Using another's password.
7. Trespassing in another's folder, work, or files.
8. Intentionally wasting limited resources.
9. Employing the network for commercial purposes or financial gain.
10. Employing the network to provide addresses or other personal information that may be used inappropriately by someone else.
11. Employing the network for unethical or illegal solicitation.
12. Placing a computer virus on the network.
13. Employing the network to send/receive messages that are inconsistent with the school's code of conduct.

The inappropriate use of electronic information resources can be a violation of local, state, and federal laws. Violations may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action. Violations may result in a loss as well as other disciplinary or legal action. Violations can also lead to prosecution.

A copy of this policy shall be included in the Appendix of the Employee Handbook. Employees shall sign the Computing Resources Acceptable Use Policy Acknowledgment Form and return the form to the CEO/Principal.

Resignation and Termination of Employment

Voluntary Termination of Employment

An employee who intends to terminate voluntarily must notify his/her immediate supervisor and the CEO/Principal in writing at least 30 days in advance of the date of termination. Employees will not be eligible to take any paid sick, vacation or personal days after a resignation notice has been given. The employee will receive his/her last paycheck, including any vacation time owed on the next regular pay date.

Involuntary Termination of Employment

A school employee may be terminated at any time with cause through written notice to the staff member, effective upon the date of such written notice.

Failure to Meet Expected Job Standards/Unsuited for Position

Employees who are not capable of performing their jobs or who are otherwise unsuited for their positions will be released after a reasonable attempt has been made to improve their performance. The employee will be eligible for payment of unused personal days.

Discharge Due to Performance

When the Board initiates termination because of the employee's inability to attain expected performance requirements, such discharge may be immediate or may occur because of corrective action. Reasons for termination include but are not limited to the following: failure to follow procedures, inability to meet required attendance levels, or any action jeopardizing the school's students. Employees who are terminated are not eligible for re-employment.

Discharge Due to Conduct

When termination is initiated by the Board because of the employee's misconduct, such discharge may be immediate or may occur because of corrective action. Reasons for termination include, but are not limited to, the following: insubordination, falsifying documents, or any act of violence in the workplace threatening students, parents, employees, or their own safety.

While a written notice is required to terminate an employee officially, if circumstances permit, a meeting should be conducted to communicate the decision to the employee in person.

Discharge Procedures

All discharge procedures must be documented along with the reason(s) for discharge and filed in the individual's personnel file. The employee's final paycheck will be available on the next regularly scheduled pay date. The employee may choose to have it mailed or deposited directly. The employee will be paid for any unused vacation days in accordance with the Board's policies on Pay Practices and Payroll Deductions, and Paid Time Off. The employee will not be paid for any unused floating holidays.

The CEO/Principal should conduct an exit interview with every resigning employee for the following purposes: to clear the employee and the school of any outstanding obligations to one another, to provide the opportunity for employee feedback, and to help the school leadership in the ongoing task of assessing and improving the work environment.

The exit interview should be conducted during the resignation period with each resigning employee. Timeliness in conducting the exit interview may result in retaining a valued employee. A copy of the information obtained should be included in the employee's personnel file.

Sexual Harassment - Employees/Students

The Board recognizes that sexual harassment is a violation of both federal and state discrimination laws and that these laws apply to employees and students. GMCS shall provide a learning and employment environment free from sexual harassment and will not tolerate such conduct on the part of any employee or student.

Any individual with a complaint of sexual harassment should file the complaint with the CEO/ Principal or the immediate supervisor. All complaints of sexual harassment will be investigated by the CEO/Principal and appropriate corrective action will be taken when deemed necessary. If the alleged perpetrator is the CEO/Principal, the complaint should be filed with the Board Chair who will conduct the investigation.

It is a violation of this policy to retaliate or engage in any form of reprisal because a person has raised a concern, filed a complaint, or has been a witness to sexual harassment. Recent court cases have recognized acts of harassment directed at a person because of gender to be sexual harassment, despite the intent behind the act. The Board adopts this interpretation as part of its policy.

Definitions

1. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
    a. Submission to such conduct is made whether explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education;
    b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such an individual; or
    c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment or education environment.
2. Forms of sexual harassment include but are not limited to the following:
    a. Verbal harassment, such as derogatory comments, jokes, or slurs, sexually oriented sounds, or remarks, inquires and/or discussions about ones' sexual experiences and activities;
    b. Physical harassment, such as unnecessary or offensive touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, brushing against another person's body, or impeding or blocking movement; and
    c. Visual harassment, such as derogatory or offensive pictures, posters, cards, cartoons, graffiti, drawings, or gestures.

The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad. In addition to the examples provided above, other sexually oriented conduct that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating an employment or learning environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to male or female workers or students – whether intentional or not – may also constitute sexual harassment.

Complaint Procedure

If an individual believes that he/she has been subject to sexual harassment, that individual has the right to file a complaint with the CEO/Principal. Such complaints may be filed in writing or verbally. No individual will suffer reprisals for reporting any incidents of sexual harassment or making any complaints. The CEO/Principal will promptly investigate all complaints. The investigation will be conducted in a fair and expeditious manner in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent

practicable. The CEO/Principal will inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the results of that investigation, as appropriate.

In addition to the above, any citizen has a right to file a complaint or a grievance alleging a violation of any federal or state anti-discrimination legislation. If the complaint involves sexual assault, rape, or conduct of a criminal nature, the local police department shall be contacted, and a report of the incident made.

Disciplinary Action

Any individual who is found to be responsible for sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate discipline; the severity of the disciplinary action will be based upon the circumstances of the infraction and could include termination of employment or suspension or expulsion from school.

Notification

Notification of this policy will be incorporated in teacher and student handbooks. Parents/guardians shall also be notified of this policy.

Training

It is the responsibility of the CEO/Principal to ensure that all employees and students receive the appropriate information/training to enforce this policy.

Non-Harassment Policy

Everyone employed by GMCS and each student attending our School has the right to be free from inappropriate conduct where that conduct could be viewed as harassment in the workplace or the school setting. We have a policy against harassment of any student, employee, or applicant on the basis of religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, height, weight, color, age, national origin, handicap, or disability.

GMCS does not permit any comments, statements, jokes, or stories, whether written, verbal, or electronic to be made in the workplace or at a School sponsored function where the basis for such comments is any protected status including religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, height, weight, color, age, national origin, handicap, or disability.

Sexual harassment is prohibited at GMCS. We will provide a learning and working environment free from sexual harassment and will not tolerate such conduct on the part of any employee or student. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any other visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to the conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a condition of the individual's employment or education
2. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting the harassed individual; or

3. The harassment has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or creating an environment which is intimidating, hostile, or offensive to the employment or education environment

Any individual who feels that they have been discriminated against or harassed, sexually or otherwise by anyone associated with GMCS or any parent/guardian who believes that his/her child has been harassed by anyone associated with the School is required to immediately report the conduct in writing to the CEO/Principal. Such reports will be kept as confidential as possible, although investigation will normally require the involvement of third parties. The School will not permit any retaliatory conduct against an employee or student who comes forward with a genuine complaint or concern of discrimination or harassment or who assists in the investigation process, nor will any such individual be discharged, disciplined, or in any way adversely affected in his/her terms or conditions of employment with GMCS or enrollment in the school.

Any individual who is found to be responsible for harassment of any type will be subject to appropriate discipline, the severity of the disciplinary action will be based upon the circumstances of the infraction and could include termination of employment or suspension or expulsion from school.

Jury Duty/Court Appearance

School employees are encouraged to exercise their civic responsibility through jury duty. Should an employee be called for jury duty, a copy of the notice shall be submitted to the CEO/Principal. Employees serving on jury duty will receive the difference between their normal rate of pay and the jury duty pay. If the jury is not in session for a day or more, the employee shall return to work at GMCS.

In case of a required appearance in a court of law involving no moral turpitude or any other breach of the criminal code on the part of the employee, he/she shall be granted time off (use of personal days) for such appearances.

Voluntary court appearances will require the use of personal days. Official school business appearances will not be charged to personal days.

Keys

One means of protecting school property against vandalism and/or theft is to limit access to classrooms, offices, and other work areas in the school to only those staff members who have a need to be in those work areas. Therefore, keys will be issued only to the staff member(s) assigned to a particular work area. It shall be the responsibility of the staff member to secure his/her work area by locking the door to that room any time he/she leaves the room during the school day. At the end of the school day, staff members are to lock the door of their work area as they leave the school.

A master key, which allows access to all areas of the school shall be given only to the following people:

1. CEO/Principal
2. Executive Assistant
3. Custodian

Accidents – Workers' Compensation

In case of an accident to an employee while on duty, no matter how slight, it is necessary to notify the immediate supervisor and the CEO/Principal without delay, and then provide in writing the details of the accident or injury.

The paid absence of an employee due to injury which is compensable under Pennsylvania law shall be subject to deduction of such payments as may be made by the insurance company for loss of wages.

Whistleblower Act Notice

Whistle-Blower Policy – General

Our Code of Ethics and Business Conduct (the "Code") requires our directors, officers, and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of the organization, or any of its subsidiaries, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Reporting Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all directors, officers, and employees to comply with the Code and to report violations or suspect violations in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy.

No Retaliation

No director, officer, or employee who in good faith reports a violation of the Code shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequence. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the Organization rather than seeking resolution outside the organization.

Reporting Violations

The Code addresses the organization's open-door policy and suggests that employees share their questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, an employee's supervisor is in the best position to address an area of concern. However, if you are not comfortable speaking with your supervisor or you are not satisfied with your supervisor's response, you are encouraged to speak with someone in the Human Resources Department or anyone in management whom you are comfortable in approaching. Supervisors and managers are required to

report suspected violations of the Code to the Organization's Audit Committee Chair, who has specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all reported violations.

For suspected fraud or when you are not satisfied or uncomfortable with the Organization's open-door policy, individuals should contact the Organization's Audit Committee Chair directly.

Supervisors

Supervisors are required to report suspected fraudulent or dishonest conduct to the CEO/Principal, Board Chair, Vice Chair of the Board, Board Secretary or Board Treasurer. Reasonable care should be taken in dealing with suspected misconduct to avoid:

- Baseless allegations;
- Premature notice to persons suspected of misconduct and/or disclosure of suspected misconduct to others not involved with the investigation; and
- Violations of a person's rights under law

Due to the important yet sensitive nature of the suspected violations, effective professional follow-up is critical. Supervisors, while appropriately concerned about "getting to the bottom" of such issues, should not in any circumstances perform any investigative or other follow up steps on their own. Accordingly, a supervisor who becomes aware of suspected misconduct:

- Should not contact the person suspected to further investigate the matter or demand restitution.
- Should not discuss the case with attorneys, the media or anyone other than the CEO/Principal, Board Chair, Vice Chair of the Board, Board Secretary or Board Treasurer
- Should not report the case to an authorized law enforcement officer without first discussing the case with the CEO/Principal, Board Chair, Vice Chair of the Board, Board Secretary or Board Treasurer.

Definitions

Baseless Allegations: Allegations made with reckless disregard for their truth or falsity. People making such allegations may be subject to disciplinary action by the Organization, and/or legal claims by individuals accused of such conduct.

Fraudulent or Dishonest Conduct: A deliberate act or failure to act with the intention of obtaining an unauthorized benefit. Examples of such conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Forgery or alteration of documents;
- Unauthorized alteration or manipulation of computer files;
- Fraudulent financial reporting;
- Pursuit of a benefit or advantage in violation of the organization's conflict of interest policy;

- Misappropriation or misuse of the organization's resources, such as funds, supplies, or other assets;
- Authorizing or receiving compensation for goods not received or services not performed; and
- Authorizing or receiving compensation for hours not worked

Whistle-Blower: An employee, consultant or volunteer who informs a supervisor, the CEO/Principal, Board Chair, Vice Chair of the Board, Board Secretary or Board Treasurer about an activity relating to the Organization which that person believes to be fraudulent or dishonest.

Rights and Responsibilities

Investigation

The Executive Committee of the Board, composed of the officers of the board, is responsible for investigating and resolving all reported complaints and allegations concerning violations of the Code and at their discretion shall advise the CEO/Principal. The Executive Committee of the Board is required to report to the full Board at least annually on such compliance activity. A list of current board officers, and contact information for each, is maintained on the school's website. All requests must be made in writing via email to one of the board officers or to the following address:

GMCS Board of Trustees Executive
Committee 888 Coleman Rd.
Gettysburg, PA 17325

Accounting and Auditing Matters

The audit committee of the board of directors shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding accounting practices, internal controls, or auditing. The Audit Committee Chair shall work with the Audit Committee until the matter is resolved.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Code must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Code. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

Confidentiality

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Handling of Reported Violations

The Audit Committee Chair will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within fifteen business days. All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

GMCS shall not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, or any other classification otherwise protected by applicable state and/or federal laws. The board recognizes school administrators' and employees' obligations to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws in providing equal opportunity to all students. Pursuant to 22 Pa. Code §12.4 and consistent with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (43 P.S. §§ 951 - 963), the school does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information or any other classification otherwise protected by law in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, hiring policies, scholarship and aid programs, and other to a free and full public education, nor may a student be subject to disciplinary action on account of race, sex, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

Employee Complaint Policy

The Board strongly believes that staff support, and input are vital to the school's accountability and success. Communication between all school employees is a critical part of the educational process and school leadership takes all concerns/complaints very seriously.

It is the intent of the Board employee concerns/complaints should be resolved as quickly and amicably as possible, in a fair and impartial manner. These procedures shall be made known to all school personnel so that communication may be carried out in an open and convenient way. If employees have a concern about the school, they should adhere to this policy to reach a satisfactory resolution.

The following statements apply to all concerns/complaints:

1. All matters related to a complaint shall be kept as confidential as possible, but in some circumstances absolute confidentiality cannot be assured.
2. All documents, communications, and records dealing with the complaint shall be placed in a school complaint file.
3. No reprisals shall be taken against any participant in a complaint procedure by reason of such participation.
4. Time limits specified in these procedures may be reduced or extended in any specific instance by written mutual agreement of the parties involved. If specified or adjusted time limits expire, the complaint may proceed to the next step.
5. Any complaint not taken to the next step within prescribed time limits shall be considered settled on the basis of the answer given at the preceding step.

6. At all times, employees are expected to act professionally and handle complaints with discretion and the preservation of dignity for all parties involved.

Any health or safety issue should immediately be taken directly to the CEO/Principal or the Board Chair. Complaints involving unlawful harassment or sexual harassment should follow the section of this manual relating to anti-discrimination policy.

Procedures for Addressing Complaints between Employees

Step 1. Contact the Appropriate Staff Member

This section of the policy is for use when a GMCS employee raises a concern/complaint about a co-worker. GMCS Board encourages all school personnel to first discuss their concerns/complaints with the appropriate employee and to work together to resolve the situation.

Step 2. Contact the CEO/Principal

If a concern/complaint remains unresolved after communication with involved school personnel, then the employee should bring the matter to the attention of the CEO/Principal.

Complaints to the CEO/Principal should outline previous steps taken to resolve the issue. If a complaint is made in person or on the phone, the CEO/Principal may require that the complaint be submitted in writing as his/her discretion. The CEO/Principal shall respond to all concerns/complaints in a timely manner. If an in-person meeting is requested, it shall be held within five (5) school days of the request. Employees should note that any time-sensitive concerns shared over email should be followed up with a conversation during the next school day.

The CEO/Principal and all involved employees should make all efforts to bring resolution to any concern/complaint as soon as possible.

Procedures for Addressing Complaints between Employees and the CEO/Principal

If a concern/complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the employee after discussions with school leadership, or if the concern/complaint is regarding the CEO/Principal, employees should submit a letter of complaint in writing to the Board of Trustees. Letters can be mailed to the attention of the Board at 888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325 or submitted by email to board@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org.

To help ensure a thorough and timely response, letters should include a description of the concern/complaint; any previous steps taken to address the issue; copies of any correspondence between complainant and teachers, staff, or the CEO/Principal; what action or relief the complainant is seeking; and the employee's preferred contact information.

The Board will assign members to investigate the concern/complaint and shall consider it in a timely manner. Members may meet with the employee, the CEO/Principal, and/or additional school personnel as determined to be necessary before bringing the issue to the board for consideration.

If the complaint is submitted to the Board five (5) school days prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the complaint will be addressed at that Board meeting. If the complaint is submitted fewer than five (5) business days before a regularly scheduled Board meeting, the complaint will be addressed at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board. Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board responding at or prior to its next regularly scheduled meeting. Depending on the nature of the concern/complaint, the Board may opt to hear the issue in executive session or address it outside of the meeting. The Board shall render a determination in writing if appropriate or required.

Individual Board members do not have the authority to resolve complaints and should not be approached individually with any concerns. All concerns/complaints must be submitted to the Board in writing in accordance with these procedures.

Employment Background Checks and Clearances Policy

The Board places substantial responsibility for the effective management and operation of the charter school with its administrative, professional and support employees. The school is committed to ensuring the safety of the students in its care by employing only those individuals who have demonstrated compliance with the Pennsylvania School Code and the Child Protection statutes.

Pre-Employment Requirements

All applicants for employment at GMCS, including student teachers/interns, substitute teachers, and independent contractors and their employees, but excluding employees who do not have direct contact with students, must undergo state and federal background checks. Administrators shall make and keep a copy of the original background checks. The copy shall include the date copied and the name of the administrator who saw the original.

Direct contact with children is defined as care, supervision, guidance or control of children or routine interaction with children.

Applicants for employment are required to produce five (5) original documents for verification prior to employment:

1. Pennsylvania State Criminal History Record (Act 34)
2. Child Abuse Report (Act 151)
3. Federal (FBI) Criminal History Report (Act 114)
4. Arrest / Conviction and Certification Report (Act 24)
5. Sexual Misconduct / Abuse Disclosure Release (Act 168)

The school shall conduct an employment history review in compliance with state law prior to issuing an offer of employment to a candidate. Failure to accurately report required information shall subject the candidate to discipline up to, and including, denial of employment or termination if already hired, and may subject the candidate to civil and criminal penalties. The school may use the information

for the purpose of evaluating an applicant's fitness to be hired or for continued employment and may report the information as permitted by law.

Before the school may offer employment to an applicant who would be employed by or in the school in a position involving direct contact with children, the charter school shall:

1. Require the applicant to provide:
    a. A list, including name, address, telephone number and other relevant contact information of the applicant's:
        i. Current employer.
        ii. All former employers that were school entities.
        iii. All former employers where the applicant was employed in positions that involved direct contact with children.
    b. A written authorization that consents to and authorizes disclosure by the applicant's current and former employers of the information requested under paragraph (2) and the release of related records and that releases those employers from liability that may arise from such disclosure or release of records.
    c. A written statement of whether the applicant:
        i. has been the subject of an abuse or sexual misconduct investigation by any employer, State licensing agency, law enforcement agency or child protective services agency, unless the investigation resulted in a finding that the allegations were false;
        ii. has ever been disciplined, discharged, nonrenewed, asked to resign from employment, resigned from or otherwise separated from any employment while allegations of abuse or sexual misconduct as described in clause (chin) were pending or under investigation, or due to an adjudication or findings of abuse or sexual misconduct as described in clause (c.i); or
        iii. has ever had a license, professional license or certificate suspended, surrendered, or revoked while allegations of abuse or sexual misconduct as described in clause (c.i) were pending or under investigation, or due to an adjudication or findings of abuse or sexual misconduct as described in clause (c.i).

The school will conduct a review of the employment history of the applicant by contacting those employers listed by the applicant above and requesting the information described in the written authorization.

The school will check the eligibility for employment or certification status of any applicant for a position involving direct contact with children to determine whether the applicant holds valid and active certification appropriate for the position and is otherwise eligible for employment and whether the applicant has been the subject of public professional discipline.

The school will inquire whether the Department of Education has received notification of pending criminal charges against the applicant.

Information received under this section shall not be deemed a public record for the purposes of the act of

February 14, 2008 (P.L.6, No.3), known as the "Right-to-Know Law."

Each candidate shall report on the designated form, arrests and convictions as filed on the form.

Candidates shall likewise report arrests and convictions that occur after initially submitting the form. Failure to accurately report such arrests and convictions may, depending on the nature of the offense, subject the individual to denial of employment, termination if already hired, and/or criminal prosecution.

A candidate shall not be employed until s/he has complied with the mandatory background check requirements for state and federal criminal history and child abuse clearance and the charter school has evaluated the results of that screening process.

Substitute Employees

For substitute employees, the employment history review required by this section shall be required only prior to the initial hiring of a substitute employee or placement on the school's approved substitute list and shall remain valid if the substitute employee continues to be employed by the school or remains on the school's approved substitute list. An employment history review conducted upon initial hiring of a substitute employee by an independent contractor, intermediate unit or any other entity that furnishes substitute staffing services to school entities shall satisfy the requirements of this section. An independent contractor, intermediate unit or any other entity furnishing substitute staffing services to school entities shall comply with the provisions of subsection *Independent Contractors*, section (i)-(iii) below.

Independent Contractors

For employees of independent contractors, the employment history review shall be performed, either at the time of the initial hiring of the employee or prior to the assignment of an existing employee to perform work for the charter school in a position involving direct contact with children. The review shall remain valid if the employee remains employed by the same independent contractor, even if assigned to perform work at other school entities.

An independent contractor shall maintain records documenting employment history reviews for all employees as required by law. The charter school shall request all the required clearances and checks from the independent contractor from which an employee is assigned to perform work. Prior to assigning an employee to perform work for the charter school in a position involving direct contact with children, the independent contractor shall inform the charter school of any instance known to the independent contractor in which the employee:

i. was the subject of any abuse or sexual misconduct investigation by any employer, State licensing agency, law enforcement authority or child protective services agency, unless such investigation resulted in a finding that allegations are false;

ii. has ever been disciplined, discharged, nonrenewed, removed from a substitute list, asked to resign from employment, resigned from or otherwise separated from any employment while allegations of abuse or sexual misconduct as described in subparagraph (i) were pending or under investigation, or due to an adjudication or findings of abuse or sexual misconduct as described in subparagraph (i); or

iii. has ever had a license, professional license or certificate suspended, surrendered, or revoked while allegations of abuse or sexual misconduct as described in subparagraph (i) were pending or under investigation, or due to an adjudication or findings of abuse or sexual misconduct as described in subparagraph (i).

The independent contractor may not assign the employee to perform work for the charter school in a position involving direct contact with children where the charter school objects to the assignment after being informed of an instance listed above.

Miscellaneous

Nothing in this policy shall prevent GMCS as a prospective employer from conducting further investigations of prospective employees or from requiring applicants to provide additional background information or authorizations beyond what is required by law nor to prevent it as a former employer from disclosing more information than what is required under this section.

Delegation of Responsibility

The CEO/Principal or designee shall develop administrative guidelines for employment of staff, in accordance with Board policy and state and federal laws and regulations.

The CEO/Principal or designee shall seek recommendations from former employers and others in assessing the candidate's qualifications. Recommendations and references shall be retained confidentially and for official use only.

The CEO/Principal or designee will inventory the date of all existing clearances, establish an age-tracking system going forward, and prepare notices to employees of the date of expiration.

Clearances

Clearances must be obtained every 5 years. Timelines for renewed clearances are based upon the date of each individual clearance.

Persons employed prior to Dec. 31, 2014 are required to obtain updated clearances as follows:

- Within 5 years of the date of the most recent clearance;
- By Dec. 31, 2015, if the clearance is older than 5 years; or
- By Dec. 31, 2015, if they have not received a clearance because they were employed in the same position and were not required to obtain a clearance under prior law.

For individuals that received clearances prior to 2008 and were not required to obtain the FBI clearance, the three required clearances would be obtained consistent with the timeframes above. Therefore, if either of the individual's Child Abuse and State Police Clearances were obtained within the past 5 years, all three clearances must be obtained within 5 years of the date of the most recent clearance. If all clearances were obtained more than 5 years ago, all three clearances must be obtained by Dec. 31, 2015.

The applicant or employee is responsible for paying the cost of the required clearances.

GMCS will maintain copies of the required information and require the individual to produce the original documents prior to employment or acceptance to serve in any such capacity, except provisional employees for limited periods

Child abuse history clearance information is confidential and may not be released to other individuals.

Any person who obtained their clearances may transfer or provide services in another capacity within the charter school without submitting new clearances if the person's clearances are current.

When an employee begins employment with a new employee with the charter school, new clearances must be obtained.

Provisional Hiring Period for Employees

Individuals may be employed for a single period, not to exceed 90 days if all the following conditions are met:

- The applicant has applied for the three required clearances, and they provide a copy of the completed forms to their employer.
- The employer has no knowledge of information pertaining to the applicant which would disqualify him from employment.
- The applicant swears or affirms in writing that he is not disqualified from employment pursuant to the grounds for denying employment in § 6344 (c) of the Child Protective Services Law or has not been convicted of an offense of a similar nature to those crimes under the laws or former laws of the United States, or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of

Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or a foreign nation, or under a former law of the Commonwealth.

- The applicant is not permitted to work alone with children and must work in the immediate vicinity of a permanent employee.

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCEPTABLLE USE POLICY

Social media, blogs, and social networking websites include but are not limited to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Tumblr, Snap Chat, personal blogs, Internet forums, wikis, and countless others.

Any posting to blogs or dissemination of public messages, including but not limited to audio, video, pictures, text, etc., utilizing any Internet, social media, or social networking websites, including those listed above or any others that are available is hereinafter referred to generally as a "tweet" or "tweets."

It is the policy of Gettysburg Montessori Charter School (the "GMCS") that the personal use of Twitter, blogs, or social networking or media web sites is forbidden on the Charter School computer networks, computers, and Internet-enabled devices consistent with any provisions of the Charter School's policies and procedures.

GMCS recognizes the value of teacher inquiry, investigation, and innovation using new technological tools to enhance the learning experience. GMCS also recognizes its obligation to teach and ensure responsible and safe use of these technologies. GMCS takes no position on employees' decision to participate in the use of social media networks for personal use on personal time. However, use of these media for personal use during school time or on school equipment is prohibited. In addition, employees may not post any information or engage in communications that violate state or federal laws or school policies.

GMCS provides password-protected social media tools and school-approved technologies for e-learning and encourages the use of school tools for collaboration by employees. GMCS may use these tools and other communication technologies in fulfilling its responsibility for effectively communicating with the public. However, public social media networks, outside of those sponsored by GMCS, may not be used for classroom instruction or school-sponsored activities without the prior authorization of the CEO, or designee, and parental consent for each student participating social networks. In addition, any "tweet," "tweets," or other public messages that may have the potential to be interpreted as the "voice" or the position of GMCS must be approved in writing by the CEO or designee prior to distribution to any source.

The line between professional and personal relationships is blurred within a social media context. When employees choose to join or engage fellow employees in a social media context that exists outside those approved by GMCS, they are advised to maintain their professionalism as school employees and have responsibility for addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on these networks, including requirements for mandated reporting. *GMCS does not permit its employees to join or engage with school students and/or their families and/or student/parent groups within the school on any social network outside those specifically pre-approved by GMCS for a School purpose, such as student groups*.

Whether someone uses the electronic resources of GMCS or not, "tweets" or other messages are or can become, public. As such, an individual may be held personally liable (i.e., civil lawsuit, criminal lawsuit, etc.) for any messages that get disseminated via the Internet or any other source. Dissemination of information via the Internet

or any other source may expose an individual to charges of defamation, harassment, privacy violations, breach of trade secrets, bullying or cyber bullying, improper product endorsements, privacy violations, and intellectual property and copyright violations. This list is just a sample of the type of local, state, and/or federal laws that someone may violate.

The following rules and guidelines apply to all employees when referring to GMCS programs, activities, employees, volunteers, and communities on any social media networks:

1. An employee's use of any social media network and an employee's postings, displays, or communications on any social media network must comply with all state and federal laws and any applicable school policies.

2. Employees must be respectful and professional in all communications (by word, image, or other means). Employees shall not use obscene, profane, or vulgar language on any social media network or engage in communications or conduct that is harassing, threatening, bullying, libelous, or defamatory or that discusses or encourages any illegal activity or the inappropriate use of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, sexual behavior, sexual harassment, or bullying.
3. Employees may not use their school e-mail address for communications on public social media networks that have not been approved by GMCS.
4. Employees must make clear that any views expressed are the employee's alone and do not reflect the views of GMCS. Employees may not act as a spokesperson for the School or post comments as a representative of GMCS, except as specifically authorized by the CEO in writing.
5. When authorized as a spokesperson for GMCS, employees must disclose their employment relationship with the School.
6. Employees may not disclose information on any social media network that is confidential or proprietary to GMCS, any of its students, or employees or that is protected by data privacy laws and other student confidentiality laws, including FERPA.
7. Employees may not use or post GMCS' logo on any social media network without express written permission from the CEO.
8. Employees may not post images on any social media network of co-workers without the coworkers' written consent.
9. Employees may not post any nonpublic images of GMCS premises and property, including floor plans.
10. Employees may not post any images, references, or comments about any GMCS student whatsoever.

Anything posted on an employee's website or blog or other Internet content for which the employee is responsible will be subject to all school policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines. GMCS is free to view and monitor an employee's website or blog at any time without consent or previous approval. Where applicable, employees may be asked to disclose to GMCS the existence of and to provide the School with access to an employee's web site or web log or other personal social media network as part of an employment selection, promotion, or disciplinary process. An employee who is responsible for a social media network posting that fails to comply with these rules and guidelines will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. Employees will be held legally responsible for the disclosure, whether purposeful or inadvertent, of confidential or private information,

information that violates the privacy rights or other rights of a third party, or the content of anything posted on any social media network.

Attachment 1

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School
Code of Conduct

All members of the Gettysburg Montessori Charter School (GMCS) community are responsible for fostering and protecting a peaceful and secure learning environment and for following this code of conduct, including:

- Students
- Parents
- Caregivers
- Visitors
- Volunteers
- Teachers
- Administrators
- Staff

Our School Community and a Safe Environment

Dr. Maria Montessori believed strongly in the contributions that the child could make to humanity. She believed that to create peace, you must start with the child. One purpose of our school is to encourage our students to become good citizens within the framework of our educational community. We are committed to supporting children in becoming healthy, responsible, and productive members of society.

A safe and courteous environment is at the very core of a healthy learning environment. We promote an atmosphere that embraces our differences, encourages compassion, and honors the potential in every student. Dr. Montessori integrated a code of conduct into her curriculum emphasizing grace and courtesy to promote knowledge of appropriate social interactions and peaceful relationships. Behavior in a Montessori classroom is no different than in our homes or the social community. Therefore, we expect all members of our community to support the philosophy of grace and courtesy by following these three primary tenets:

1. Respect and care for ourselves
2. Respect and care for others
3. Respect and care for our environment

Every student at GMCS has a right to learn and thrive in a school atmosphere that is conducive to academic achievement and social growth. The code of conduct has been established to support the academic and personal development of GMCS students and to protect the people, property, and rules that support GMCS. All GMCS community members will be held responsible for their own work and actions, and they are expected to conduct themselves in a safe and respectful manner and to abide by the rules and regulations set forth by the school. Steps to maintain an orderly and safe environment, to demonstrate mutual respect and caring for one another, and to ensure that all children have the support that they need are taken daily. Our students are at the heart of the GMCS community, and our guidelines for behavior encourage a spirit of harmony in our school.

Students: A detailed description of our expectation for student behavior and the various levels of misconduct, along with the corresponding consequences, can be found in the Student-Parent Handbook.

Parents/Guardians and Caregivers: GMCS parents/guardians and caregivers play a crucial role in the success of their child(ren). Parents and caregivers are responsible for reading and abiding by the Student-Parent Handbook.

Teachers, Staff, Administrators, Visitors and Volunteers: Students learn to be good adults by being around good adults. All teachers, staff, administrators, visitors, and volunteers at GMCS are expected to set an example for students by aligning their actions with the values identified in this code of conduct. The expectations outlined herein are in addition to all requirements that may be applicable to an individual, including but not limited to state, federal, or local regulations or programmatic requirements.

Respect and Care for Ourselves

There are many ways to respect and care for ourselves. Some important examples include regular attendance; being on time; coming to school prepared and ready to learn; having a positive attitude; listening with our eyes, ears, and heart; giving our best effort at all times; and doing our best work.

Parents help fulfill this responsibility when they ensure their child's daily attendance and punctuality; help their child be neat, appropriately dressed, and prepared for school; provide their child with the time and resources they need to complete assignments; show an active interest in their child's progress; communicate with their child's teacher and the administration; and encourage and assist their child with healthy social skills.

Respect and Care for Others

Starting in kindergarten, GMCS instructs students in the Montessori philosophy of grace and courtesy. Examples include good manners, peaceful communication, helping others, accepting our differences, and respecting physical boundaries. Everyone has a personal responsibility for reducing the risk of violence within our school, and any behavior by a student that threatens to disrupt the learning process or pose a danger to others is unacceptable. The code of conduct is based on the principle that GMCS students will choose to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. However, there are consequences for students on any occasions that they do not.

Respect and Care for our Environment

Just as it takes an entire family to care for a home, all members of our community are vital in maintaining our school building and grounds. All persons are expected to show the same respect and care for school property as they do in nurturing individual relationships. This includes taking care of classroom materials, maintaining a neat and orderly classroom, remembering good manners while eating meals, cleaning up after eating, and reducing waste and recycling.

Acknowledgment

To acknowledge receipt of GMCS's Code of Conduct, please review this statement and return a signed copy prior to your visitation or performance of your volunteer duties at the school.

I, the undersigned, have read GMCS's Code of Conduct, as set forth herein.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date

Attachment 2

Request For Instructional Exemption

STUDENT NAME: _____

PARENT NAME: _____

TELEPHONE: HOME: _____ WORK: _____

REQUEST INITIATED BY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____STATE: _____ZIP: _____

1. Please explain the basis of your objection.

2. Please list below the specific course content objectives and/or specific methodology to which you are objecting. Please reference the Planned Course Guide or textbook for specific content, materials, or practices.

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____