

**Graham Elementary & Middle School  
Student & Family Handbook  
2019-2020**



Dear Students and Families:

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year at Graham Elementary & Middle School (GEMS). The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are intended to make our learning environment a safe, effective, and healthy one. Please take time to read all of the enclosed information. We encourage you to discuss school policies and procedures as a family.

It is our intention to provide students with an exciting learning process of discovery and experience through expeditionary learning. All of our policies and procedures focus on respect for individuals, as well as for the community to which we all belong. We have a great interest in the safety and health of our students, staff, families, and visitors, and adherence to the laws of our city, state, and nation.

We appreciate your active participation in our school, and your support of the work that we will accomplish as an entire school community.

Sincerely,

GEMS Faculty, Staff, and Administration

**Nondiscrimination Policy:**

*Graham Elementary & Middle School continue their policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, color, national origin, handicap or disability, as applicable in its educational program, activities and employment policies. This policy is in compliance with Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the regulations of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act and all other applicable state, federal and local laws and ordinances.*

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## **The Graham Family of Schools**

### **Mission**

The mission of The Graham Family of Schools is to help all our students grow in their academic and social and emotional learning, ongoing. Our aim is to continuously advance students' skills and demonstration of: critical analysis and problem solving; collaborative teamwork; thoughtful reflection on experiences; and sharing in responsibility for academic success and a safe learning community for all.

### **Enacting the Mission**

All our efforts are toward preparing students to be successful in achieving this mission as they work toward full readiness for the next grade level and ultimately college and careers. At our schools, we will:

- Maintain and promote a growth-mindset toward all students and staff such that everyone has an expectation to grow in their intelligence and its display.
- Foster in students a commitment to: self-direction in their learning; and, the school and wider community in which they live.
- Teach at all grade levels with sensitivity to brain development in children, including course and class lessons that focus on human brain development and its relation to learning and growth academically, socially and emotionally.
- Utilize the community outside the school doors as a resource to advance experiential learning for our students.
- Treat all students and staff with compassion, honesty and respect.
- View academic achievement as a reflection of both student and teacher jointly teaming for success.
- Create, state and display the norms for how people are expected to act at school regarding academic work and behavioral interactions.
- Design an operational strategy at each TGFS school for advancing our work in academic achievement, social and emotional learning, grade advancement, and college and career readiness.

### **Our Schools**

The Graham Family of Schools (TGFS) is a group of public charter schools located in Columbus, Ohio, begun in the 2000-01 school year and focused on bringing experiential education to urban students. It now has three schools: Graham Elementary and Middle School (GEMS), a K-8 school near The Ohio State University; The Charles School at Ohio Dominican University (TCS), an Early College high school, on Brentnell Avenue near ODU; and The Graham School (TGS), a high school, on Indianola Avenue in Clintonville.

TGFS believes the Columbus community is a vital resource for our students to learn in and with, and partners widely with businesses and organizations in Central Ohio and beyond. Students and staff at our schools interact with these partners for a variety of educational experiences that enhance our academic mission.

GEMS and TGS are formally affiliated with EL Education, a national organization bringing expeditionary learning and best practices to K-12 schools nationwide. TCS partners with Ohio Dominican University, Columbus State Community College, and the Middle College National Consortium in New York City to support its work as an early college high school. Both high schools are partnering with the University of Chicago on a program focused on ninth grade success.

Administrators, teachers and staff at our schools are highly qualified in their teaching or support areas, and serve our students with challenging and caring academic work and social and emotional support. The Boards governing our schools are engaged community leaders, deeply committed to the mission of our schools. The schools are authorized and sponsored by the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio, and all our work is overseen by the Ohio Department of Education and the state's Board of Education.

## **Graham Elementary & Middle School**

### **Mission**

As a member of The Graham Family of Schools and partner with EL Education, Graham Elementary & Middle School's (GEMS) mission is to provide a rigorous and engaging education while developing a strong sense of character and community among a diverse group of learners.

### **Purpose**

The Graham Elementary & Middle School (GEMS) is a K-8 school serving students from central Ohio. GEMS was initiated and planned by the team that started The Graham School (TGS) and The Charles School at Ohio Dominican University (TCS) which form a group of schools known as The Graham Family of Schools (TGFS). GEMS is grounded in the principles of experiential, real-world learning, self-direction, and connection to community developed and proven effective at TGS. It is supported and enriched by technology in all aspects of teaching and learning, as implemented at TGS and TCS. GEMS is also committed to its partnership with EL Education and its three dimensions of student achievement: Mastery of knowledge and skills, character, and high-quality student work. We address the important learning arc that provides the transition from elementary school to success in middle school, and on to success in high school, not only academically but in terms of character development and understanding of the communities in which students live. Key features of the curriculum are that the educational expeditions integrate content across the curriculum, engage real-world issues, engage students with professionals in the field, and develop high-quality work through the process.

GEMS is committed to the ongoing social and emotional growth of all of our students. Research shows that there is a significant connection between academic learning and Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Studies over the past 30 years also connect trauma, including the stressful environment of continuous, pervasive poverty, as a significant factor in many children's school struggles. Therefore, our entire staff is being trained in trauma sensitivity. Our SEL focus incorporates work in the development of daily, small group community advising, the use of Restorative Practices, and the use of mindfulness to equip our students with strategies, skills, experiences and mindsets to enable success both in the classroom and in their lives beyond school.

### **Program Goals**

- Offer engaging academic expeditions including fieldwork and service-learning in which students are challenged to take on new roles and complete significant tasks with real impact in the community, emphasizing learning-by-doing with reflection in order for students to become leaders of their own learning.
- Provide a unique and nurturing environment for students and staff to thrive in their educational and interpersonal development.
- Construct small, interdisciplinary learning environments in which GEMS students apply academics to solve problems encountered in their real world experiences, expeditions, and traditional classes. Through purposeful activity, students make the connection between the abstract and the concrete that is essential to true education.
- Provide guidance and support to students as they transition from childhood to adolescence and in preparation for their transition into high school and beyond, providing a clear path for success between middle school and high school.

### **Exit Goals**

GEMS is committed to providing all students with an excellent, high-quality education and meeting the following overall student goals:

- Learn how to transfer knowledge, make connections and therefore improve knowledge retention.
- Learn how to analyze, explain and apply knowledge.

- Learn how to make decisions and to work cooperatively with others.
- Grow in individuality and diversity.
- Become involved with the community as the learning environment.
- Learn to increasingly take control of their own learning.
- Demonstrate to others how the arts, humanities, math, social sciences and physical sciences are interdependent and enriching.
- Demonstrate how technology supports learning and living.
- Demonstrates how Habits of Learning contribute to academic success

# Graham Elementary & Middle School

## 2019-2020 Academic Calendar

School Hours, 8:45am – 3:30pm

### First Trimester

Back to School Night	August 28 (W)
Labor Day – <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	September 2 (M)
First Day of School, Trimester 1	September 3 (T)
Professional Development (PD) Days – <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	October 3-4 (R-F)
K-4th Picture Day	October 7 (M)
5th-8th grade Picture Day	October 9 (W)
K-8th Invited parent-teacher conferences	October 9 (W)
K-8th Open house	October 10 (R)
EL Education National Conference/Fall Break – <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	October 16-18 (W-F)
Last day of Trimester 1	November 22 (F)
PD Days - <b>NO SCHOOL</b> , K-4 Student Led Conferences	November 25-26 (M-T)
Thanksgiving Break – <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	November 27-29 (W-F)

### Second Trimester

First day of Trimester 2	December 2 (M)
5th-8th Student Led Conferences	December 11-12
Winter Break – <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	December 23 – January 3 (M-F)
PD Day – <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	January 6 (M)
Return from break, classes resume	January 7 (T)
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	January 20 (M)
PD Days - NO SCHOOL	February 6-7 (R-F)
Presidents' Day – <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	February 17 (M)
Last day of Trimester 2	March 4 (W)
PD Day – <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	March 5-6 (R-F)

### Third Trimester

First day of Trimester 3	March 9 (M)
Spring Break – <b>NO SCHOOL</b>	April 10 – 17 (F-F)
PD Days – <b>NO SCHOOL</b> , Student Led Conferences, Passages	May 14-15 (R-F)
Awards Ceremony, 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation	May 21 (R)
Last Day of School, Trimester 3, 5th-8th Zoombezi Bay trip	May 22 (F)

**GEMS Staff Contact Information**140 E. 16<sup>th</sup> Ave

Columbus, OH 43201

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## Section I: GEMS Learning Community

### WHAT IS EL EDUCATION?

EL Education is a nationally reputable organization that utilizes a data-driven, research-based design for comprehensive school improvement. Our partnership with EL Education (EL) has allowed us to design a rigorous curriculum that prepares our children for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In an EL school, curriculum, instruction, assessment, school culture, and shared leadership are combined to produce more engaging learning experiences and higher quality student work. EL schools “break the mold” in three fundamental ways:

1. High expectations for students’ academic achievement rooted in and tied to standards, are evident in rigorous demonstrations of student work to audiences that go beyond the classroom and beyond the school. There is a culture of revision in which many drafts are the norm and nothing less than best work is expected. Students keep portfolios of their work showing not only final products but also the stages along the way. Portfolios are a major assessment strategy.
2. Teaching and learning are much more active and adventurous; school is more exciting and more demanding. There are well-observed protocols for fieldwork and classroom safety making the school physically and emotionally safe for learning.
3. EL is based on the idea that we learn best when we are actively involved and have hands-on experiences that help us make connections between various academic subjects. Therefore, the courses at our school are designed as real-world “learning expeditions” that give students opportunities to explore a single topic or issue in great depth. Learning expeditions can last from six weeks to a trimester, and may involve several different subject areas (*language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, technology, etc.*). In every learning expedition, students do several projects that let them apply, refine, and demonstrate what they know and are able to do. In addition to more typical tests and quizzes, students are formally assessed through projects and through exhibitions of their work to families and community members.

### EL EDUCATION’S 10 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The design principles express the philosophy of education and core values of EL. Drawn from the work of Outward Bound’s founder, Kurt Hahn, and other educational leaders, they shape school culture and provide a foundation for the moral purpose of schools.

#### *1. THE PRIMACY OF SELF-DISCOVERY*

Learning happens best with emotion, challenge and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher’s primary task is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can.

#### *2. THE HAVING OF WONDERFUL IDEAS*

Teaching in EL schools fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

#### *3. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING*

Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity. Everyone learns both individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of an EL school encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

#### *4. EMPATHY AND CARING*

Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust. Learning groups are small in EL schools, with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child. Older students mentor younger ones, and students feel physically and emotionally safe.

#### *5. SUCCESS AND FAILURE*

All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are hard, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

#### *6. COLLABORATION AND COMPETITION*

Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

#### *7. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION*

Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students investigate and value their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.

#### *8. THE NATURAL WORLD*

A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.

#### *9. SOLITUDE AND REFLECTION*

Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need time to exchange their reflections with other students and with adults.

#### *10. SERVICE AND COMPASSION*

We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others, and one of an Expeditionary Learning school's primary functions is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service.

## **LEARNING EXPEDITIONS**

At GEMS, classes and instruction are focused around learning expeditions, which are “*journeys of learning*” where students study science and social studies topics that are local and relevant to students’ lives. Learning expeditions use state and district standards in all subject areas to focus instruction and involve students in real-world projects, fieldwork, and opportunities to learn from experts in the community. GEMS classrooms integrate all of the subject areas, as students work as readers and authors, use math to explore their physical and social worlds, and make meaning through play, imagination and the arts. It is our goal that GEMS students develop a deep love of the world while gaining in-depth knowledge and the skills of historians and scientists as they learn how to be responsible, active, and engaged learners.

## **FIELDWORK**

We cannot learn everything we need to know by staying within the school’s walls. An important part of any academic study takes learners out into the world. GEMS is committed to taking advantage of our community’s rich learning resources and heritage. Your child will be learning both in the classroom and at multiple field sites in our community. Fieldwork is a privilege for all students, but if a student misbehaves or fails to exhibit safe behaviors, fieldwork may be temporarily suspended until improvement is shown.

## **BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNING**

The foundation of a successful EL school is a community that brings out the best in students, families, and the staff. The school climate is characterized by safety, kindness, joy in learning, and positive leadership by staff and students. The school’s mission encompasses academic success and compassionate character. The school celebrates both student academic growth and character development. Teachers and school leaders communicate clear expectations for student character and model those values in their own practice. Policies and practices encourage students to take responsibility for learning, to demonstrate empathy and caring, and to be stewards of the school.

## **WE ARE CREW, NOT PASSENGERS**

An EL school culture is planned for, developed, and sustained through practices that bring the community together, promote shared understandings, and encourage all community members to become “crew, not passengers”. Students at GEMS will be known well and supported by the adults that surround them. In grades K-2, each morning students come together for a morning meeting, known as crew. Crew allows students to build positive connections with their peers and teachers. In grades 3-8, Crew also begins the day, but also is a formal structure in the middle of the day built around a curriculum with intentionality and purpose.

In addition, we will hold regular community meetings to celebrate learning and to foster character. As we mature as a school community, our students will play an active role in establishing and maintaining traditions, and acting as leaders (i.e., being ambassadors for visitors, leading meetings, maintaining the building, mentoring younger children, leading morning announcements). GEMS is committed to maintaining a learning environment where everyone can reach his/her full potential. The school community is based upon mutual respect and a shared set of values about the importance of education.

## **HABITS OF LEARNING**

The foundation of our learning and behavior policies stem from our school’s belief that all of our community members are committed to:

- Perseverance
- Responsibility
- Thoughtfulness
- Teamwork
- Quality

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone is expected to fulfill the following responsibilities, and to respect the rights of others.

### A. Student Rights

- **Learning:** Every student has the right to expect high-quality learning experiences at GEMS. Every student has the right to expect faculty, staff, and administration to be prepared to guide high-quality learning experiences each day. To ensure this, the following aspects of our school should be expected:
  - High standards for academics, fieldwork, and personal character
  - Small school environments where students know their peers and teachers well and are able to establish positive relationships with both as the year progresses
  - A learning environment where students are active participants in learning, not passive recipients of learning
  - Consistent opportunities for cooperative working situations with peers and staff
  - Opportunities to extend learning outside of the classroom, including hands on experiences that enrich academic and personal lives
  - Relevant projects that will seek to address real needs in our community, and that will be shared with authentic audiences that include more than teaching staff
- **Safety:** Every student has the right to be safe and protected during all GEMS endeavors and experiences.
- **Respect:** Every student has the right to expect GEMS faculty, staff and administration to treat him/ her with respect and courtesy at all times.
- **Planning:** Every student has the right to assist in the development and implementation of his/her education. It is expected that students grow in and take responsibility for their learning.

### B. Student Responsibilities

- **Attendance:** Every student is responsible for attending school and all required school functions every day unless the student is justifiably excused. Furthermore, students are responsible for arriving to school on time. This is essential to meet our goal of 95 percent attendance for the school year.
- **Preparation:** Every student is responsible for coming to school and to class each day prepared to contribute and participate in his/ her learning environment to the fullest extent of his/ her capabilities. Students are expected to come to class with the necessary materials to be an active part in their learning environment.
- **Participation:** Every student is responsible for participating in classes and all other school related functions to the best of his/ her ability every day. Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions, projects, programs and activities, and to ask for help when something is unclear.
- **Self-Direction:** Much is expected from each student at GEMS. At the core level, we expect each student at GEMS to be willing to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for his/ her education. How this manifests itself within each student is unique.
- **Compliance:** GEMS has adopted policies, procedures and a Code of Conduct. It is the responsibility of each student to be aware of, to understand and to abide by these simple, fair and common sense rules.

### C. Family Rights

*(For the purposes of this handbook, we use the word "Family" to refer to both Parent(s) and Legal Guardian(s))*

- GEMS will create a learning environment that is safe, nurturing and academically challenging for their child.
- Families have the right to expect high-quality learning experiences for their children at GEMS.
- Families have the right to be informed of their child's academic progress at appropriate times during the school year, including regular contact with their child's teacher.
- Families have the right to be informed of issues regarding their child's behavior at school, and to be informed of all serious disciplinary actions concerning their child; Families may exercise their right to appeal suspensions and expulsions.

- Families are welcomed into the classroom for planned events. Please see school calendar for those events.

#### **D. Family Responsibilities**

- **Attendance:** Families are responsible for making sure that their child gets to school on time every day. In the event that their child is justifiably excused, it is the responsibility of the Families to notify the school office by phone or email no later than 8:45 a.m. of the absence. Additionally, should your child need to leave school for a medical appointment or other justified reason, it is the family's' responsibility to notify the office of this need in writing prior to taking your child from school. This is essential for us to achieve our goal of 95% attendance rate for the school year. Students are not to be taken from school between 8:45a.m. – 9:30 a.m. or 3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., with the only exceptions being medical or family emergency.
- **Preparation:** Families are responsible for ensuring that their child is prepared to take advantage of the learning opportunities that are available at GEMS and throughout our learning community. This means that Families should ensure that their child comes to school with the proper materials with which to actively participate in their education, and that their child is rested, safe, and healthy.
- **Communication:** Families are responsible for participating in effective communication with faculty and staff, particularly in matters of a child's mental and physical health that could impact learning. Families are responsible for communicating with the school on issues regarding illness, medical appointments and any other factors that may result in their child either being absent or unprepared on any given school day. Please provide the office with two working phone numbers, current mailing address, and an email address (if applicable).
- **Support:** Families are responsible for supporting GEMS's efforts to establish a safe and healthy community by being aware of, understanding, and reinforcing our Student & Family Handbook.

Families are responsible for reporting to the office any changes in a student's address or telephone number as soon as possible, so that the school database is accurate and the parent can be contacted in case of an emergency.

#### ***Process for Addressing Concerns of Families***

Families may contact the school at any time by calling 614.253.4000 or 614.253.4001. In order to respect the smooth functioning of the school, families may request to speak with a specific staff member by appointment only. Other concerns such as the student's behavior, grades, or classroom-specific items are best addressed through direct contact with the student's teacher. If concerns of families are not resolved at this initial level, they are encouraged to make an appointment to meet with an administrator. Social media outlets are not an appropriate forum for addressing concerns as school administration are often not directly connected to them nor do they allow for productive conversation.

Families may bring further concerns or any other matter to the attention of the GEMS Board President, either through individual contact with a member of the Board, or by addressing the full Board at its monthly public meeting. Concerns brought before the Board at public meetings will receive formal notice of grievance disposition by U.S. Mail.

#### **We support Families by communicating with them through the following measures:**

- Families and students are given a copy of the Student & Family Handbook at the beginning of each school year (or upon enrollment).
- Information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities are communicated to all families through the school's newsletters and during parent meetings.
- Emergency or vital information is sent home in student communication folders or via direct phone call. Communication is also maintained through phone calls, email, direct mail, media and social media outlets.
- Families are given opportunities to meet and share ideas at parent meetings or at special events.
- Families are provided information on techniques, strategies, and skills to use at home to improve their children's academic success in school directly through the student's teacher.
- Families are informed each trimester by teachers through the mailing of academic report cards of their children.

- Teacher and staff email addresses are found in this handbook or online through the GEMS website.
- Classroom teachers also provide regular communication to families through classroom newsletters, homework assignments, emails, or notes sent home via the student’s communication folder.

GEMS is committed to the development of an effective collaboration between the parent/guardian and the child’s classroom teacher or Crew teacher. The parent and teacher provide a synergy that only enhances the quality of the child’s educational experience.

## **VISITING OUR SCHOOL**

Families that visit GEMS are asked to follow school policies, procedures, and rules and conduct themselves appropriately, following the directions of posted signage, administrators, and/or staff. Families are asked to sign-in and wear an office-provided badge while on school property to be in compliance with the school’s emergency/safety policies.

We welcome families who wish to observe or visit in a classroom. As our first priority is student learning – and visits can interrupt the learning – so scheduling observations or classroom visits is required. Families can either contact the front office to schedule in advance or speak directly with the student’s teacher in advance of the observation or visit.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT IN OUR SCHOOL**

### ***Our Classroom Space Is Used Flexibly***

GEMS classrooms and work areas are arranged to help students collaborate in small groups. This requires group tables or clusters of desks as opposed to rows of individual desks. A section in each classroom is set aside for whole group meetings, which is essential to building a supportive community of learners.

### ***Our Classrooms Have Ongoing Conversations and Are Full of Movement***

Student conversation is the center of much of our learning. We believe that deep learning takes place when children challenge one another, ask questions, share ideas, and build on one another’s knowledge through verbal interactions – not just teacher instruction. At certain times during the day, children are getting out of their seats to gather materials, consult with one another, and look at information on the walls.

### ***We Use Primary Sources As Much As Possible***

We believe in providing students with authentic resources and materials. Classrooms are filled with nonfiction and fiction books, magazines, articles, newspapers and computers for research opportunities. Conducting interviews and having conversations with experts is a frequent practice of our students.

### ***Revising Work Is a Habit***

Students at GEMS are not finished with a piece of work until they complete multiple drafts. This expectation reaches across grades and disciplines. Improving on work again and again is common practice in an EL school. Teachers guide students from draft to draft. Students collaborate to assess the work of their peers. Rubrics set high standards for finished pieces and guide students as they strive to get their work to meet these high standards.

### ***Learning Is Public and Collaborative***

Students read their writing aloud, solicit comments, and present project drafts for formal peer critiques. We do public work just like in the adult/ professional world. Having an authentic audience helps hold us accountable, supporting quality work with high standards. It is common to see work, including scores, posted on walls as a way to share the hard work we do at GEMS.



### ***Service and Character Development Are Part of Our Curriculum***

We focus on habits of learning and service as well as academics. Quality academic work is mirrored by the quality of the ways in which we treat one another, our community, and our environment. Students are encouraged to be honest, respectful, determined, creative, and responsible. Morning Meetings or Crew are a place to check-in on how the class is doing in terms of our habits of learning and academic progress, and how well individuals are doing. If there are problems with courtesy, behavior, tolerance, or responsibility in the group, those problems are often addressed in this setting. Crew also provides an opportunity to help students define what it means to be an EL school (i.e., commitment to positive character, exploration of the design principles, the concept of “crew, not passengers”).

### ***We Need Families to Support Their Children with Their Homework***

We invite Families to be aware and supportive of their child’s efforts with homework. GEMS students will usually bring home homework nightly, as we believe that practicing at home what is happening in the classroom makes learning “stick.” We invite families to ask questions and share with teachers if a student is struggling with the completion of homework. We expect that all students complete and turn in homework on time. Homework and the completion of homework are a part of our habits of learning.

### ***Community Meetings***

One of the community-building structures at GEMS is our Community Meeting. Community Meetings are a time when students and faculty members are together, and serves as an important opportunity for communication and celebration. Families are invited to join us for these meetings.

### ***Family Participation***

Families are key partners in the education of their children. Students and staff at GEMS want to make our families feel welcome, get to know you well, and engage you actively in the life of the school. Regular communication and multiple opportunities for participation encourage families to be strong partners in their children’s learning. In addition, we will host interactive family education nights (i.e. a curriculum nights to discuss the content and standards of what is being taught, workshops to show how students are learning in the various disciplines). We invite families to check in with teachers and to be interested in their children’s learning.

## Section II: The Academic Program at GEMS

### EARNING ACADEMIC CREDIT

#### Evaluations

GEMS does not give traditional A-B-C-D-F grades, nor do we utilize traditional report cards. Instead, we use narratives and other methods designed to evaluate whether a student has mastered the core concepts of our curriculum. Students are not compared against each other. Instead, over time, a student's work is measured against his/ her previous work in order to evaluate individual progress within essential skill areas and across disciplines, including the habits of learning.

GEMS issues a standards-based report card at the end of each trimester. These evaluations are reported in two parts; a student's progress based on a scale of expectations, and through a narrative describing what and how the student is performing overall. Our evaluative structure measures expectations based on the following scale:

**EE (Exceeds Expectations):** The student produces/demonstrates outstanding work, participation, and mastery of subject matter, going above and beyond what is required. This evaluation indicates that a student has exceeded the expectations that were established for this student by the classroom teacher.

**ME (Meets Expectations):** The student produces/demonstrates consistent work and participation, meeting all class requirements, demonstrating full understanding of subject matter. This evaluation indicates that a student has met the expectations that were established for this student by the classroom teacher.

**AE (Approaches Expectations):** The student produces/demonstrates inconsistent work and participation. Student is failing to demonstrate adequate understanding of the material in all areas. This evaluation indicates that a student has made strides toward meeting the expectations that were established for this student by the classroom teacher. The student is on the way toward meeting expectations but is not there yet.

**JB (Just Beginning):** The student is so inconsistent with producing/ demonstrating work or participation that adequate understanding is not established.

#### *Final Comments on Standards-Based Report Cards at GEMS*

Our evaluations are not grades in the traditional sense, because they do much more than sort and rank students. Instead, our evaluation system describes what work looks like when it approaches, meets, or exceeds our expectations. Moreover, our evaluations are presented in narrative form so that the student, the family, and other interested parties will have a greater understanding of the totality of the student's performance in a variety of identified essential skills, academic objectives, and experiential abilities. These evaluations are transferable to other schools.

### ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

GEMS administers the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment each fall, winter and spring to help determine the student's ability in the areas of math and reading. Students entering kindergarten also take the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy (KRA-L) within the first three days of school. The data gathered from these assessments are used by the staff and administration to help focus the writing of instruction. Additional assessments may be required for students identified as potentially at risk. Attendance on each of these assessment days is required unless a parent or doctor's note is received stating that the student is unable to attend that day. It is understood that the missed assessment(s) are made up as soon as possible within the evaluation window. Families should make sure that their student is well-rested on the day of each assessment and has had a healthy breakfast to ensure that the student has the best possible chance of doing well on each assessment.

#### State Mandated Assessments

Students take the required Ohio assessments for math and reading in grades 3-8 and science in grades 5 & 8. GEMS understands that if it, like any community and other public school, does not meet all the requirements, the school must work to show improvement in the passing rates in alignment with the goals of the Ohio Department of Education.

### **Third Grade Reading Guarantee**

All students entering the third grade must demonstrate a certain level of competency in reading before advancing to the fourth grade unless the student meets one of the criteria as noted in ORC 3313.608(A)(2).

An English language arts (ELA) diagnostic assessment will be given by September 30 of each year for students in kindergarten through Grade 3 (ORC 3313.608(B)(1)). If the diagnostic assessment shows that the student is not on-track to be reading at grade level by the end of the year, schools must provide the parents, in writing (ORC 3313.608(B)(2)(a)):

- Notice that the school has identified a reading deficiency with their child;
- A description of current services provided to the student;
- A description of proposed supplemental instruction services;
- Notice that the Ohio Achievement Assessment for third-grade reading is not the only measure of reading competency; and
- Notice that unless the student attains the appropriate level of reading competency by the end of Grade 3, the student will be retained.

For each student shown to be not on-track, schools must:

- Begin reading intervention immediately using research-based reading strategies targeted at the student's identified reading deficiencies (ORC 3313.608(B)(2)(b));
- Develop a reading improvement and monitoring plan within 60 days of learning of the reading deficiency (ORC 3313.608(C)); and
- Beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, provide a teacher who has either passed a reading instruction test or has a reading endorsement on his/ her teacher's license (ORC 3313.608(C)(6)).

### **Assessment Materials Security**

All non-electronic assessment materials are kept in an assessment administrator's office in a locked cabinet while not in use. During the evaluation periods, no assessments will be given out to students prior to the start of the evaluation time periods. At the end of each assessment day, all assessments that have been used are inventoried to ensure that all have been returned, and then they will be locked in the administrator's cabinet. At the end of the evaluation period, all assessment materials are again inventoried to ensure that all assessments that were received are being returned to the assessment company that is overseeing the process.

### **Response to Intervention (RTI)**

*(from <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what/whatisrti>)*

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RTI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. These services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. RTI is designed for use when making decisions in both general education and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data. For RTI implementation to work well, the following essential components must be implemented with fidelity and in a rigorous manner:

- High-quality, scientifically based classroom instruction. All students receive high-quality, research-based instruction in the general education classroom.
- Ongoing student assessment. Universal screening and progress monitoring provide information about a student's learning rate and level of achievement, both individually and in comparison with the peer group.

These data are then used when determining which students need closer monitoring or intervention. Throughout the RTI process, student progress is monitored frequently to examine student achievement and gauge the effectiveness of the curriculum. Decisions made regarding students' instructional needs are based on multiple data points taken in context over time.

- Tiered instruction. A multi-tier approach is used to efficiently differentiate instruction for all students. The model incorporates increasing intensities of instruction offering specific, research-based interventions matched to student needs.
- Parent involvement. Schools implementing RTI provide parents information about their child's progress, the instruction and interventions used, the staff who are delivering the instruction, and the academic or behavioral goals for their child.

### **Tier 1: High-Quality Classroom Instruction, Screening, and Group Interventions**

Within Tier 1, all students receive high-quality, scientifically based instruction provided by qualified personnel to ensure that their difficulties are not due to inadequate instruction. All students are screened on a periodic basis to establish an academic and behavioral baseline and to identify struggling learners who need additional support. Students identified as being "at risk" through universal screenings and/or results on state- or districtwide tests receive supplemental instruction during the school day in the regular classroom. During that time, student progress is closely monitored using a validated screening system. At the end of this period, students showing significant progress are generally returned to the regular classroom program. Students not showing adequate progress are moved to Tier 2.

### **Tier 2: Targeted Interventions**

Students not making adequate progress in the regular classroom in Tier 1 are provided with increasingly intensive instruction matched to their needs on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress. In the early grades (kindergarten through 4th grade), interventions are usually delivered in small group settings by reading specialists. In grades 5-8 at GEMS, we use a structure during 9th period called "Intensives." As an EL Education school, we define success as having three dimensions: "Knowledge and Skills," "Character," and "High Quality Work." Our intensives have been focusing not only on the academic support for our students but also on the social-emotional learning depending on a student's needs. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is based on the understanding that the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful. Students who continue to show too little progress at this level of intervention are then considered for more intensive interventions as part of Tier 3.

### **Tier 3: Intensive Interventions and Comprehensive Evaluation**

At this level, students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the students' skill deficits. Students who do not achieve the desired level of progress in response to these targeted interventions are then referred for a comprehensive evaluation and considered for eligibility for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004). The data collected during Tiers 1, 2, and 3 are included and used to make the eligibility decision.

To monitor student progress throughout the RTI process, we use the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment, the Star Reading and Math assessments, the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA), student academic interim grade reports, and student self-assessments to place students in appropriate interventions.

### Section III: GEMS Policies and Procedures

*The policies and procedures contained in this handbook have been carefully prepared and presented so that this handbook is of value in helping you understand the philosophy of our school's management plan, and to become an integral part of it. The ultimate purpose of education is to help each student become an effective citizen in our community. To develop and accept the responsibilities and obligations of good citizenship will help us to participate successfully in the world of tomorrow. Families, students, and staff working collaboratively make for a dynamic team.*

#### **ABSENCES**

Please call the GEMS office (614.253.4000 or 614.253.4001) or e-mail Dodie Thebeault (dthebeault.1@gemsschool.org) or Sha'Ron White – (swhite.1@gemsschool.org), whenever your child is going to be absent. To ensure your child's safety, we call you at home or at your place of business if your child is not in class and we have not heard from you. Non-reported absences are marked as unexcused. Excessive absences are reviewed. Written excuses (parent or doctor) should be turned in to the office no more than two days after the student has returned from their absence. ***Students who are sick and may be contagious should not come to school.*** Students are expected to have excellent attendance. When a student is absent, the parent must call the school by **9:00 a.m.** If families fail to report an absence, the student's absence is considered unexcused. It is a courteous gesture to contact the student's teacher also to inform him/her of the student's absence.

#### **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINE**

It is the policy of GEMS that all student medication, both prescriptive and over-the-counter, should be administered at home. Under exceptional circumstances and subject to a written agreement between a legal guardian and the administration of GEMS, a student's medication may be administered during the school day. In the absence of our school nurse, our trained administrator or office staff will administer medication. Interested families should contact the front desk to learn more.

#### **APPOINTMENTS WITH TEACHERS AND/OR ADMINISTRATORS**

Please make appointments for your student during after school hours, professional development days, or vacation days. We want to keep interruptions to a minimum during the school day.

#### **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL**

The staff is not responsible for supervising students before 8:00am or after 3:45pm. For the safety of our school, families who drive to school are encouraged to drop their students off at school after 8:25am and picked up at 3:30pm. There is staff supervision in the gym from 8:00am until 8:30am every morning. If a family should need their child supervised outside of these times, please make other arrangements on your own to ensure your child's safety. If staff is unable to reach a parent or guardian, or if a child is routinely left at the school outside of school hours without supervision, the school may contact Franklin County Children's Services.

#### **ASSIGNMENTS FOR ABSENT STUDENTS**

If a student is absent for any number of days, a family should call the office (614.253.4000 or 614.253.4001) or contact the student's teacher directly to arrange a time and/or method to obtain any schoolwork that is available to be sent home.

#### **ATTENDANCE & TARDINESS**

**Chronic Absenteeism** is defined by the Every Child Succeeds Act as missing **10 percent or more (~18 days, or 92 hours) of the school year** for any reason. It includes **excused and unexcused** absences. This includes "**excessive absences**" in which a child is absent 38 or more hours in one school month with or without a legitimate excuse or absent 65 or more hours in one school year with or without a legitimate excuse. GEMS will work with our community partners

to help any chronically absent children get to school every day. Early intervention can keep chronic absenteeism from becoming truancy.

**Habitual Truancy**, according to Ohio House Bill 410, is reflected by any child of compulsory school age **who is absent without legitimate excuse** from his or her public school for **30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one school month or 72 or more hours in a school year**. This includes “*excessive absences*” in which a child is absent 38 or more hours in one school month with or without a legitimate excuse or absent 65 or more hours in one school year with or without a legitimate excuse.

Truancy counts only absences without a legitimate excuse. When a child is habitually truant, the law requires the school to follow several administrative procedures and legal solutions to make sure the child attends school regularly.

**Ohio House Bill 410**: Every student should be in school every day. Even if an absence is excused, it still results in loss of important instruction time for the student. Ohio Revised Code Section 3321.04 and Ohio Administrative Code 3301-69-02 set forth situations in which an absence can be excused. In December 2016, the Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 410 to encourage and support a preventative approach to excessive school absences and truancy.

**Habitual Truancy Protocol**: When a child is identified as habitually truant, GEMS will place the child on an attendance intervention team, create an attendance intervention plan for the child, and make three meaningful attempts to secure the participation of the child’s parent or legal guardian on the attendance intervention team. If the child does not make progress on the attendance intervention plan within 61 days or continues to be excessively absent, GEMS will then file a complaint with the juvenile court.

**Legitimate Excuses**: GEMS will request documentation of a legitimate excuse for any absence. Any absence without appropriate documentation will be considered unexcused. Documentation must be received within 7 days of the student’s absence date. If not received within 7 days, then the absence(s) will be considered unexcused.

Ohio Revised Code Section 3321.04 and Ohio Administrative Code 3301-69-02 set forth situations in which an absence can be excused. These include:

1. A personal illness or injury (medical note required from physician/hospital)
2. A family illness (medical note required from physician/hospital)
3. The quarantine of the home (note required from state agency)
4. The death of a relative
5. A religious holiday (Absences must be arranged in advance and be approved by a Dean)
6. Emergencies (Absences to be considered by a Dean as good and sufficient cause for the absence from school)

**Automatic Withdrawal**: A student will be automatically withdrawn from GEMS if they have missed, without a legitimate excuse, 105 consecutive hours.

**Absence Notifications**: The family of the student should contact the school by 9:00am with advance notice of their child’s pending absence on a given day.

**Additional Notes**: School begins promptly at 8:45am. Children who are not with their teacher by 8:45am are considered unexcused without a legitimate excuse. A child who is unexcused will be signed in at the front office by a parent and/or legal guardian along with appropriate documentation for the child’s absence; and then escorted to his or her classroom by a GEMS staff member. Further, GEMS expects all to be in their appropriate class when the bell rings, and prepared

for instruction. Attendance is an extremely high priority at GEMS and Ohio law; 96% is our school wide goal for the year.

### ***BIRTHDAYS***

We would like to recognize each student's birthday. The following guidelines are the same for the school community:

- Classroom birthday celebrations should last about 10-15 minutes at most.
- Birthday celebration plans should be arranged with the child's homeroom at least one week prior to the celebration. The student's teacher will work with the family to decide the day and time that will be best for the celebration, usually at the end of the day (2:45pm or 3:00pm).

### ***BUILDING HOURS***

The GEMS office is open from 8:15am – 4:30pm. Families are welcome to speak with the office staff members during these times, but will not be allowed in the rest of the building without direct permission or an appointment, and following the policy for GEMS community guests. The school and/or individual teachers may have scheduled events before or after these hours. In every case, GEMS will have staff supervision whenever it is open to students.

### ***CAFETERIA/LUNCH***

We expect our students to:

- Follow the school rules
- Model the habits of learning
- Use good manners
- Follow adult directions
- Clean up after themselves

### ***CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR TRANSFER***

Please inform the office and your classroom teacher if you have a change of address or phone number. This is very important so that the school can notify Families of school activities and/or in emergency situations. Please notify the teacher and the office as soon as possible if you are moving and will not be attending GEMS any longer.

### ***COMMUNICABLE DISEASES***

Families of a student with a communicable or contagious illness or parasite (other than the common cold) are asked to contact the office as soon as possible so that the families of other students who may have been exposed can be informed. These illnesses/ diseases/ parasites include: the flu, chickenpox, head lice, mumps, measles, whooping cough, meningitis, staph infection, strep infection, TB, hepatitis A, B, C, pink eye, ringworm, MRSA, and any other communicable or contagious diseases your doctor has informed your family that your student at our school has. Should a student come to school with a communicable disease, the student will be kept in the office, and a parent or legal guardian will be asked to pick him/ her up immediately. Below are some guidelines for when students will be excluded from school:

- acute illness -- fever > 100, vomiting and/or diarrhea
- flu or respiratory symptoms -- chills, severe headache, difficulty breathing
- sore throat, strep throat -- stay home until on antibiotics for at least 24 hours
- pink eye -- inflammation of eye, swelling, redness, draining
- rashes -- open sores that are uncovered, undiagnosed, untreated (need physician direction on return to school and treatment)
- nuisance diseases -- live lice found on student's head (see district policy on head lice below)
- chicken pox -- can return when physician okay's, or when sores are scabbed over and not draining

### **The Graham Family of School's Policy on Head Lice:**

When a student is suspected to have head lice, either by self or other reporting, follow the below procedure:

1. Isolate the student until they can be checked for lice by the school nurse, or other trained staff.
2. If, upon examination, it has been determined that the student does have head lice and/or nits, the student's emergency contact will be called to have them dismissed to home for the day.
3. The student must remain out of school for a full 24 hours to ensure sufficient treatment time.
4. The student may not return to school until they are lice and nit free.
5. Once the student has returned to school, the student will be re-examined by the school nurse or other trained staff to make sure the student has been treated and the presence of lice and/or nits is gone.
6. If lice and/or nits are present the student will again be dismissed to home for the day to be retreated, and will need to remain out for another 24 hours.
7. The process in number 5 & 6 will be repeated until the student is lice AND nit free.

This policy is in accordance with the practices recommended by the Columbus Health Department and the National Pediculosis Association. Educational information about head lice and effective practices of treatment and removal are available upon request.

### **COMMUNICATION**

GEMS uses a variety of communication methods to engage families in the life of the school. Please allow 24 hours for a response to your communication. At all times, communication should be thoughtful and considerate of others.

- *Kickboard:* Regular positive and negative behavior tracking tied to our school's Habits of Learning. Weekly reports sent home to families.
- *Email and Phone:* traditional methods for communicating with school staff between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM.
- *Constant Contact and Autodialer:* automated emails and phone messages sent by the school office with announcements and emergency notifications. Middle school grade level teams also send weekly announcements to families. To receive these, be sure to keep your phone number and email updated in your child's official records. If you have trouble receiving these, please contact the GEMS main office.
- *Website and GEMS Facebook page:* Announcements and calendar events, as well as contact information for school personnel.
- *Remind:* An app used by classroom and crew teachers for short reminder messages. Also has a messaging platform allowing for instant messages between family and teacher within working hours. Please do not send messages to your child's teacher after 5 PM or before 8 AM.

### **COMPLAINTS & APPEALS**

Students and families who wish to formally file a complaint with GEMS, its staff, administration or The Board of Directors are advised to contact the Office of the school to obtain procedural guidelines that will assist in the preparation and filing of a formal complaint. Any party interested in filing a formal appeal of a staff, administrative or board decision can also contact the office to obtain procedural guidelines that will assist in the preparation and filing of a formal appeal.

### **DRESS CODE**

#### **Dress Code Philosophy**

Graham Elementary and Middle School's student dress code supports equitable educational access and is written in a manner that does not reinforce stereotypes. To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and in a manner that does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income or body type/size.



Our values are:

- All students should be able to dress comfortably for school and engage in the educational environment without fear of or actual unnecessary discipline or body shaming.
- All students and staff should understand that they are responsible for managing their own personal "distractions" without regulating individual students' clothing/self expression.
- Student dress code enforcement should not result in unnecessary barriers to school attendance.
- School staff should be trained and able to use student/body-positive language to explain the code and to address code violations.
- Teachers should focus on teaching without the additional and often uncomfortable burden of dress code enforcement.
- Reasons for conflict and inconsistent and/or inequitable discipline should be minimized whenever possible.

Our student dress code is designed to accomplish several goals:

- Maintain a safe learning environment in classes/experiences where particular clothing is needed, such as PE (athletic attire/shoes) or fieldwork.
- Allow students to wear clothing of their choice that is comfortable.
- Allow students to wear clothing that expresses their self-identified gender.
- Allow students to wear religious attire without fear of discipline or discrimination.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories with offensive images or language, including profanity, hate speech, or pornography.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories that denote, suggest, display or reference alcohol, drugs or related paraphernalia or other illegal conduct or activities.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories that will interfere with the operation of the school, disrupt the educational process, invade the rights of others, or create a reasonably foreseeable risk of such interference or invasion of rights.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories that reasonably can be construed as being or including content that is racist, lewd, vulgar or obscene, or that reasonably can be construed as containing fighting words, speech that incites others to imminent lawless action, defamatory speech, or threats to others.
- Ensure that all students are treated equitably regardless of race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income or body type/size.

## **Dress Code**

Graham Elementary and Middle School expects that all students will dress in a way that is appropriate for the school day or for any school sponsored event. Student dress choices should respect the School's intent to sustain a community that is inclusive of a diverse range of identities. The primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). The School is responsible for seeing that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student, that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student, and that dress code enforcement does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, or body type/size. Any restrictions to the way a student dresses must be necessary to support the overall educational goals of the school and must be explained within this dress code.

### **1. Basic Principle: Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times.**

Clothes must be worn in a way such that genitals, buttocks, breasts, midriff, and upper thighs are fully covered with opaque fabric. All items listed in the "must wear" and "may wear" categories below must meet this basic principle.

2. Students Must Wear\*, while following the basic principle of Section 1 above:

- A Shirt (with fabric in the front, back, and on the sides under the arms), AND

- Pants/jeans or the equivalent (for example, a skirt, sweatpants, leggings, a dress or shorts), AND
- Shoes.

*\*Fieldwork experiences may include assignment-specific dress, but should not focus on covering bodies in a particular way or promoting culturally-specific attire. Activity-specific shoes requirements are permitted (for example, athletic shoes for PE).*

3. Students May Wear, as long as these items do not violate Section 1 above:

- Religious headwear
- Hoodie sweatshirts (wearing the hood overhead is allowed, but the face and ears must be visible to school staff).
- Head scarves (face and ears must be visible to school staff).
- Fitted pants, including opaque leggings, yoga pants, and “skinny jeans”
- Ripped jeans, as long as underwear, buttocks, and legs above mid-thigh are not exposed.
- Shorts, no shorter than approximately mid-thigh in length
- Tank tops, including spaghetti straps; halter tops
- Athletic attire
- Visible waistbands on undergarments or visible straps on undergarments worn under other clothing (as long as this is done in a way that does not violate Section 1 above).

#### 4. Students Cannot Wear:

- Violent language or images, including gang identifiers.
- Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity).
- Hate speech, profanity, pornography.
- Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or consistently marginalized groups.
- Any clothing that reveals visible undergarments (visible waistbands and visible straps are allowed)
- Swimsuits (except as required for a field trip).
- Accessories that could be considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon.
- Any item that obscures the face or ears (except as a religious observance).
- Earbuds or headphones.
- Clothing or shoes with flashing lights.
- Hats

#### 5. Dress Code Enforcement

To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently using the requirements below. School administration and staff shall not have discretion to vary the requirements in ways that lead to discriminatory enforcement.

- Students will only be removed from spaces, hallways, or classrooms as a result of a dress code violation as outlined in Sections 1 and 4 above. Students in violation of Section 1 and/or 4 will be provided three (3) options to be dressed more to code during the school day:
  - Students will be asked to put on their own alternative clothing, if already available at school, to be dressed more to code for the remainder of the day.
  - Students will be provided with temporary school clothing to be dressed more to code for the remainder of the day.
  - If necessary, a student’s parents may be called during the school day to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear for the remainder of the day.
- No student should be affected by dress code enforcement because of racial identity, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural or religious identity, household income,

body size/type, or body maturity.

- School staff shall not enforce the school's dress code more strictly against transgender and gender nonconforming students than other students.
- Students should not be shamed or required to display their body in front of others (students, parents, or staff) in school. "Shaming" includes, but is not limited to:
  - kneeling or bending over to check attire fit;
  - measuring straps or skirt length;
  - asking students to account for their attire in the classroom or in hallways in front of others;
  - accusing students of "distracting" other students with their clothing.

These dress code guidelines shall apply to regular school days, as well as any school-related events and activities, such as graduation ceremonies, dances and fieldwork.

Students who feel they have been subject to discriminatory enforcement of the dress code should contact the Dean.

*\*Inspired in part by Oregon NOW Model Dress Code and Evanston Township High School Student Dress Code.*

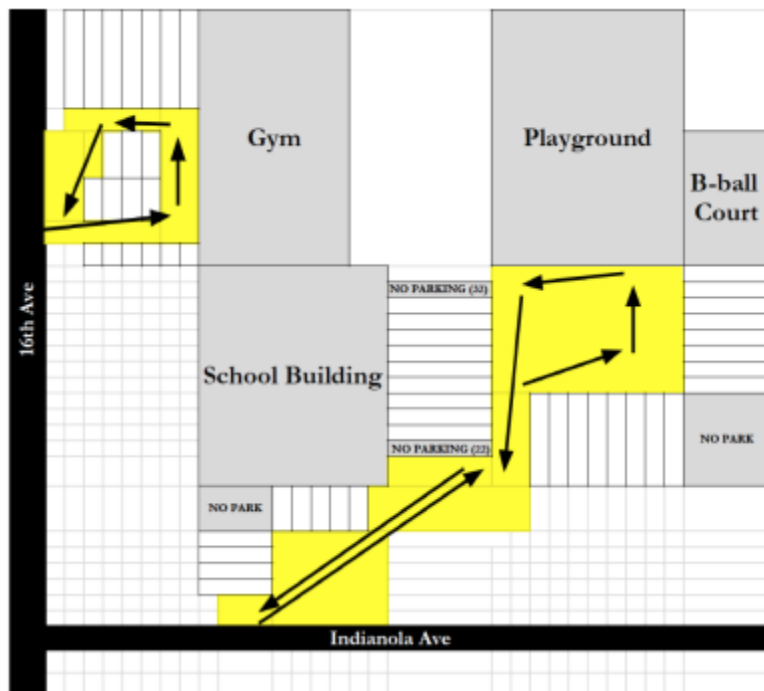
### ***DROP OFF & PICK UP***

Families and other responsible adults who are planning to either drop off or pick up students at GEMS must abide by the city street regulations, traffic flows, and staff directions. No student will be released to someone who is not on the *Dismissal Information Form* (no exceptions; please complete and submit a new form as authorization preferences change); these are available in the office and on the school website. Adults picking up a student should be prepared with/expect to have a state issued piece of identification with them to present, as staff members may frequently ask to see one before releasing a student. Families with students in grades K-4 pick up their students in the back of the building accessible from Indianola Ave. Families with students in grades 5-8 pick up their students in the front of the building accessible from 16<sup>th</sup> Ave - see diagram below.

\*5th- 8th grade students are to be dropped off and pick up in the front parking lot (8:30am - 3:45pm).

\*Any younger siblings of a 5th - 8th grade student will also be dropped off and picked up in the front parking lot.

\*Any K-8 student may be dropped off at 8:00am in the front parking lot (until the ramp door is closed at 8:30am).



\*K-4th grade families are to drop off and pick up their student in the back parking lot (8:30am - 3:40pm).

### ***EARLY DISMISSAL***

If your student is to leave early, please have him/ her present a note to the teacher before school starts indicating the time and reason for departure. No student is permitted to leave after 3:00pm in order to ensure the safety and order of dismissal. Families will need to come to the office to sign their student out, and then wait in the office area until the student has been dismissed to the office. An extreme need must be presented to be considered an exception otherwise the student risks being marked as not being present for a full day.

### ***ELECTRONIC DEVICES & CELL PHONES***

Use or display of cell phones, electronic games, cameras, earbuds/headphones, and other electronic devices are prohibited during school hours (from 8:30am – 3:30pm). No student shall use or display any electronic devices while in the school building. If any of these devices is used during school hours, it may be confiscated, and will be available to the student at the end of the school day. The second time one of these items is confiscated, the device will remain in the custody of the teacher or dean until the family retrieves it.

Families are asked to call the school office if contact with their children during school hours is necessary. As the use of cellphones in school is prohibited, the office will alert the student to the parent's call.

### ***EMERGENCY DRILLS & PROCEDURES***

Fire drills are held at least once a month. When a Fire Drill is announced, students should follow the directions of their teacher or staff member present. Directions and maps indicating the safe locations in the building are always posted.

Tornado warning drills are conducted twice a year, during spring months. Instructions are posted in each room. When a Tornado Warning Drill is announced, students should follow the directions of their teacher or staff member present. Directions/ maps indicating the safe locations in the building are always posted.

Our school has in place a procedure for locking down the school should events or issues warrant such an action. Those actions include, but are not limited to: Someone armed and outside of building, someone armed and within the building, someone at large in community that poses a threat to our school, or directions by law enforcement agencies alerting us to undergo lockdown. Lockdown Drills happen two times per year.

### ***FIELDWORK***

During the school year we go on many fieldwork outings together as an integral component of our curriculum. Families can expect to be notified by their student's teacher of what the upcoming fieldwork is within two-weeks of the experience.

Fieldwork is a privilege, not a right. Positive behavior is a requirement for participation in fieldwork up to, and including, the day of departure. While participating with fieldwork, students are representing our school and all school rules and dress codes apply. Students who exhibit inappropriate behavior are sent home.

In order to make the fieldwork a positive experience for everyone, we want to share a few guidelines:

1. All fieldwork starts and ends at the school. It is vital that everyone, including volunteers, arrive on time in order to stay on schedule.
2. Everyone (including family members) must follow directions and remain with the group at all times.
3. Dress appropriately for all school related activities.

### ***GUM, CANDY & SUGARY DRINKS***

Gum, candy and sugary drinks (i.e., sodas and sports drinks) are not permitted in the classrooms. We also strongly request that these items and other sugary foods are not sent in student lunches.

### ***HALLS***

Students, faculty and staff, and visitors are asked to be courteous at all times and to keep to the right when moving in the halls. Running and shouting in the halls are never permitted.

### ***INCLEMENT WEATHER***

GEMS follows the Columbus City Schools closing announcements with respect to snow and inclement weather days. A decision by the Columbus City Schools to suspend classes on a given day due to inclement weather would mean that GEMS would also suspend classes on that day. Should the decision to close school be made, students and their families will find notification on local TV stations, our website, and our message on the school's phone line (614-253-4000 or 614-253-4001).

### ***INJURIES & ACCIDENTS***

During School hours, any accidents or injuries, even minor ones, need to be reported to a staff member immediately. The staff member will assess the severity and determine the next action that is required, which could include one or more of the following: informing the school administrator, contacting the school nurse, contacting the family of the student(s) needing attention, calling emergency medical personnel. Regardless of the actions taken, an incident report will be written and kept on record. All school staff receives training on common first aid issues, and first aid supplies are always available in the office.

### ***LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY & MANDATORY REPORTING***

It is important that students and their Families understand the limits of confidentiality within the school setting. Teachers, administrators, counselors, psychologists, social workers, and many other select licensed persons who work with the public, are considered by Ohio Revised Code, Mandatory Reporters. As such, those persons are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect. Those suspicions may be directly observed, expressed by student or Families in conversation, or may be inferred through observation of mood, physical appearance, etc. They may also be physical, emotional, or psychological in nature. If a situation arises that would prompt a suspicion of abuse or neglect, the school employee will be compelled to make such a report to Children's Services. No GEMS employee may hold confidential information of that nature. Students and Families should be aware that students sometimes share information in a confidential manner with teachers or advisors. As employees of GEMS, there are times that those conversations may be confidentially shared with supervisors or administrators as necessary.

### ***LOST & FOUND***

Any items found in and around the school should be brought to the office. These items will be kept in a safe location, and will be held for about 60 days; any unclaimed items beyond this point will be donated.

### ***LUNCH***

Students will eat in the cafeteria, supervised and supported by GEMS staff. Each day, students may choose to either bring a lunch from home or purchase a school catered lunch for \$2.92. Students will not have access to microwaves or refrigerators, so lunches packed at home should take this into consideration.

### ***MONEY***

Students should not bring to school more money than they might need to purchase lunch, at any time. The school will not be responsible for lost money.

## **NUTRITION**

“High quality food service supports improvements in academic performance and behavior. Nutrition affects students’ physical well-being, growth and development, readiness to learn and risk of disease. Children tend to develop unhealthy eating habits early in life and then maintain those habits as they age. . . . Improvements in nutrition positively affect academic performance and improve students’ behavior. . . . Inadequate nutrition is a major cause of impaired cognitive development and is associated with increased educational failure among children.” (www.ebasedprevention.org/school\_climate)

The links between nutrition, physical activity and learning are well documented. GEMS supports the health and wellness of all its students. Section 204 of Public Law 108-265, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, requires school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program to develop a local wellness policy that addresses student wellness and childhood obesity by the first day of the 2017-2018 school year.

### **Good nutrition and fitness improves academic performance:**

1. Reduces apathy
2. Reduces absences
3. Improves participation
4. Improves test scores
5. Improves academic achievement

### **Good nutrition and physical activity enhances positive behavior:**

1. Reduces irritability
2. Reduces anxiety
3. Reduces depression
4. Improves attendance
5. Improves energy levels

GEMS promote and encourage students to make healthy food choices and does not allow advertising that promotes less nutritious food choices. Food served at GEMS meets or exceeds nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal regulations. Snack and other a-la-carte food sales are limited to areas of the school separate from the lunchroom. Snack sales are not to be in direct competition with the school lunch program. Drinking fountains are available for students to get water at meals and throughout the day. Foods and beverages served at school-sponsored parties, celebrations and social events will follow the school nutrition standards.

GEMS consider students’ needs in planning for a healthy school nutrition environment. We ask for student input and feedback, and listen to what they have to say. The opportunity for a free or reduced meal plan is available to every student who qualifies. We use an accounting system that protects the identity of students who eat free and reduced price school meals. Information about other food sources such as WIC, Food Stamp Program and Second Harvest is available for families through contact with the Dean. GEMS encourages families to provide a variety of nutritious foods if students bring meals or snacks from home. Again, sugary foods or drinks are strongly discouraged.

School staff does not use food as a reward or punishment for students. For example: we don’t give coupons for fast food meals as a reward for an “EE” on a class project or withhold snacks as punishment for misbehaving. Health/nutrition education is offered as part of health and wellness class required of all students prior to graduation. The health class meets federal standards for health education and provides students with knowledge and skills necessary to make positive life choices. Students participate in a variety of rigorous and lifelong physical education activities including, but not limited to team sports, cardiovascular exercises, and running. Additional opportunities will be added as student interests increase.

Students receive positive, motivating messages about healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school setting. Administration supports the development of healthy lifestyles for students, and establishes and enforces policies that improve the school’s nutritional environment. They address issues such as the kinds of foods available on the school campus; mealtime schedules; dining space and atmosphere; nutrition education; and physical activity.

School staff, students, and families are a part of the policy-making process and support a healthy school nutrition environment. Menus are planned with input from students and include local, cultural and ethnic favorites of the students. GEMS provide a positive dining environment that encourages a pleasant eating experience. The school encourages socialization among students and between students and adults. Adults properly supervise dining rooms and serve as role models to students. GEMS also provide a clean and attractive environment with access to and education about hand washing and other sanitation methods.

### ***PERSONAL SEARCH***

A student's personal belongings/space (i.e. backpack, cubby) may be searched, with an adult staff member witness present, whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials.

### ***PETS/ ANIMALS***

For health and safety reasons, please do not bring pets or animals of any kind in the school building unannounced. There may be times during the school year where special exceptions are made, but these would need to be approved by GEMS Administration, and with at least one week's notice.

### ***RECESS***

Students in grades 5-8 receive recess at lunchtime for 8 minutes. Students in grades K-4 receive recess at lunchtime for 30 minutes and also usually have one additional recess block during the school day. Students must refrain from rough play including tackling, wrestling, pushing, and any other physical aggression in all games and activities during the recess period. Games involving weapons are not condoned. Students are expected to line up in an orderly fashion prior to re-entering the building. Students will use the fenced space on the north side of the school grounds for recess time on days where the weather is not a factor. On days with inclement weather, recess will be held in the classroom with a teacher.

### ***RECESS CLOTHING***

Appropriate attire and footwear is requested daily for recess to avoid accidents and injuries. Students are requested to dress warmly during the cold months. Coats, gloves or mittens, and caps are expected to be worn while outside. During recess days with snow cover, all students are strongly encouraged to wear some type of winter boots that can be put on when they go outside and then taken off in the building. GEMS may not always have a change of clothes or additional warm clothing for students who do not dress appropriately. The school does not have alternative recess location for students unless requested by a doctor with an explanatory note.

### ***RECESS - COLD WEATHER***

Usually, if the temperature is 10 degrees or higher recesses are held outdoors. However, if the wind chill is in the danger category, the students stay in the building regardless of the outside air temperature. Administration will make the decision as to whether the children are indoors or outdoors at any particular recess.

### ***SCHOOL SAFETY***

At GEMS, we are building a learning community based upon respectful relationships between one another. GEMS administration and staff thrive because of the relationships we build and nurture.

While this aspect of GEMS may distinguish us from other schools, we anticipate some of the usual behavioral problems that are an aspect of all American elementary schools. Our efforts aim to respond to behavioral problems in a manner consistent with the school's vision, mission and philosophy. Our objective is to respond to behavioral problems in a preventive rather than punitive manner. The misconduct described below includes that misconduct occurring on school

property, a school bus, or at a school-related function and in addition and regardless of where it occurs, misconduct that is directed at another student, school employee or school official or school property.

Therefore, teachers will first address behavioral problems on an individual basis. If problems are not resolved at the level of teacher-student, the problem will be referred to the administration of the school where more serious consequences will be considered, up to and including suspension and expulsion. Families will be informed of any persistent behavioral problems of their child's that detract from the school's learning environment. Our actions depend on the specific person, their willingness to solve the problem and the situation in consideration.

GEMS considers the safety of all of its students and staff extremely important and a high priority of our work. In case of emergencies, families will be contacted in multiple methods; letters home, our texting communication service - Remind 101, mass emails, through website posts, and/or from an off-campus phone location at The Graham School (614.262.1111). In the case that the school needs to relocate the staff and students for any reason, we will be relocating to The Ohio State University Student Union (1739 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43210). Arrangements for student pick-up will be communicated through the same methods listed above.

### ***SCHOOL BOOKS***

All books, unless otherwise arranged by the teacher and/or school, are on loan to students for their use during the school year. These borrowed books are to be kept clean and handled carefully.

### ***SNOWBALL AND ROCK THROWING***

Due to the inherent danger of injuring another student or a staff member, throwing or kicking snowballs or rocks is strictly prohibited on school grounds.

### ***SPECIAL EDUCATION***

Special education services and adaptations to the general education program are provided for students who are eligible for special education. People with questions concerning these services and eligibility issues should contact the student's teacher directly first.

### ***TECHNOLOGY USE***

GEMS is pleased to offer members of its learning community access to our computer network. This network includes use of the Internet. This access provides immense, diverse and valuable resources to our learning community. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

Access to the Internet will allow learners to explore thousands of databases and libraries, as well as communicate with Internet users worldwide. Some material accessible from the Internet may contain information that has no educational value and in some cases is inappropriate and even illegal. Misuse of GEMS technology of any kind may result in a student losing any or all privileges with regards to our technology. A complete copy of the school's Acceptable Use Agreement is available for review in the school office.

GEMS reserve the right to limit student access to the network or technological resources for any reason and may result in suspension or revocation of computer privileges and disciplinary action, including, but not limited to suspension and/or expulsion from school. These reasons include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Logging on with another person's user ID.
- Plagiarism or violating copyright law.



- Logging onto Facebook, Kik, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, or other social media or texting sites are inappropriate during the school day.
- Accessing or posting material that is sexual, inappropriate, violent or annoying.
- Vandalizing the computers or the network or other technology, i.e. camera, network, or computer

### **TOYS**

Occasionally, some students like to bring toys to the classroom or for recess. However, that can cause problems in the classroom. We ask toys remain at home, unless otherwise notified by the student's teacher.

### **TRANSPORTATION & BUSING**

*To and From GEMS:* Columbus City Schools Transportation Department routes our students and deems their eligibility. All other students must arrange their own transportation. Questions on this matter should be directed either to the school office (614.253.4000 or 614.253.4001) or to the CCS Transportation Department (614-365-5074).

### **VISITORS**

Visitors must report first to the front desk to sign to receive a visitor's badge. Families may visit classrooms by appointment. Staff is available to meet with families during reserved meeting times, conference periods, and professional work days, subject to individual staff schedules.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

We welcome volunteers and feel that they are a vital part of our program. Families assist teachers in the classroom as well as at home. If you are interested in volunteering in the school, please contact the office. If you are interested in volunteering in a classroom, please contact your child's teacher directly. ***Please check in at the office before entering the hall(s) and classroom(s).*** To ensure the safety of our students, volunteers are asked to wear a volunteer badge. These are only available in the office.

## Section IV: Behavior & Discipline

### Maintaining Positive School Culture

Part of maintaining a culture of quality is taking the time as a school community (staff, families, students, greater community) to build and sustain structures, traditions, and rituals to make sure these realms of the school are positive. There are no shortcuts to building and maintaining a school community of courtesy and kindness, of integrity and responsibility. Being strict about issues of character and physical environment is essential, but strict rules alone are not the answer: they maintain order but do not guarantee that children will treat each other well or feel good about themselves. What is necessary is a school community that not only demands the best of its students in terms of character, but that models that character through school tone, routines, and practices. This work cannot be attended to with little effort, in the margins of the school day. At GEMS these efforts are viewed as a primary and explicit priority and commitment of time, all day, every day.

When a student does not behave in a manner that is compatible with the school's behavior expectations, every effort will be made to provide the student with opportunities for self-improvement and individual growth. Administrators, teachers, and community members share the responsibility for supporting students struggling with issues of character and school culture.

If a student's behavior is one in which remaining in the classroom is no longer an option, he/she may be relocated from the classroom to the main office, guidance counselor or culture coordinator's office, or to another classroom.

Depending on the student's behavior after relocation, administration will make a determination as to whether or not:

- A. the student may return to the classroom
- B. the student would benefit from an in-school suspension; the student will remain out of his/her classroom for at least one school day, provided with work, assignments, reading, etc. from his/her teacher to be completed in school, and supervised by a GEMS staff member
- C. the student would benefit from an out-of-school suspension; the student will remain out of his/her classroom for at least one school day, provided with work, assignments, reading, etc. from his/her teacher to be completed at home
- D. the student and family are to work with GEMS administration to create a behavior plan for success in the classroom and with peers

Violation of any of the following rules may result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to receiving a community violation, loss of privileges such recess or choice of lunch seat/location, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and/or expulsion from school. If a student is assigned an out-of-school suspension during a snow day, the student will be expected to serve the consequence on the next school day.

In all cases the first response to student disciplinary issues is restorative justice. This process involves helping students take responsibility for their actions and restoring themselves to the community – people, places, and/or things – for the harm they have caused. It is an intentional process that guides students through the steps to healing and wholeness when necessary and/or makes sense to do so. The goal of restorative justice is to help students take responsibility for their actions, make better choices, and not just respond with punitive outcomes.

At no time will any form of corporal punishment be used by any adult employed by the school.

### ***Abuse, Violence, Assault, and Harassment***

Students are prohibited from engaging in violent, aggressive or abusive behavior, physically abusing an individual, or harassment of an individual, including sexual harassment through conduct or communications. A situation involving any type of abusive behavior will be dealt with immediately and individually. Where appropriate, GEMS will provide information to the Columbus Police Department and will support prosecution of individuals engaging in illegal activity including harassment and abuse. Behaviors associated with this category may result in suspension or expulsion from GEMS. A student shall not behave in such way that could threaten to cause physical injury to another person. A student shall not assemble to observe or encourage an assault nor inhibit school personnel from intervening when an assault occurs. A student shall not engage in violent behavior against a fellow student, teacher, GEMS employee or against anyone who is on GEMS property.

### ***Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Anti-Bullying Policy***

Students are prohibited from engaging in unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying in violation of the **GEMS Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy set forth in Appendix B.**

A student shall not harass, intimidate, disparage, incite, provoke, stalk, or threaten any individual on school premises or otherwise disrupt the school environment. For this purpose, harassment or intimidation includes: slurs; profanity; written information; degrading remarks or actions; obscene gestures; the wearing or display on insignia, signs, buttons, clothing, or apparel; or other verbal or physical conduct including, but not limited to, those based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, citizenship, religion, handicap, age or sex that have the purpose or effect of (1) causing or intending to cause any other student or school employee to be reasonably placed in fear of his or her personal safety; (2) causing or intending to cause a hostile, intimidating, or offensive educational environment for any other student or school employee; (3) causing or intending to cause material disruption of the educational process; (4) unreasonably interfering with a student's curricular, co-curricular or extracurricular performance; or (5) otherwise unreasonably having an impact on a student's educational opportunities.

Hazing activities of any kind are prohibited at all times. Hazing is defined as doing any act of coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into any student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of mental or physical harm to any person or living creature.

### ***Bomb Threat***

A student shall not make a bomb threat.

### ***Inappropriate and/or Disruptive Classroom Behavior***

GEMS teachers have worked together to establish classroom expectations that are consistent and intentional so that the best learning environment for all students can be maintained. However, each teacher creates their own unique classroom environment that supports the mission of GEMS and recognizes the rules and expectations of all GEMS students. Teachers understand that reminders are used to help students remember the expectations of classroom behavior and are designed to be helpful and equally fair for all students, and to preserve the dignity of each student when needed to maintain the least amount of disruption to the learning environment.

### ***Non-negotiable Behaviors***

Non-negotiable infractions will result in immediate office referral without a complimentary reminder.

1. Physical aggression of any kind including, but not limited to, pushing, hitting, and kicking. This includes inside and outside the classroom, at school or in the community during school activities, on the bus during transportation to or from school.
2. Bullying, harassing, threatening or teasing directed towards another member of the GEMS community.

3. Physical contact or communication (i.e. verbally or through gestures) that might be considered sexual in any way. Physical displays of affection including kissing are prohibited.
4. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other physical or verbal conduct or communication of a sexual nature, including gender-based harassment that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education or work environment, including, but not limited to, pinching, grabbing, suggestive comments, gestures or jokes or pressure to engage in sexual activity.
5. Stealing or invading other people's personal property.
6. Possession of unlawful materials including but not limited to tobacco products, drugs, alcohol and associated paraphernalia, lighters, knives, weapons of any kind, or any item that replicates or imitates such items.
7. Leaving school property and/or leaving a designated classroom without staff permission.
8. Lying to a staff member.
9. Acts of defiance in which a student refuses to follow a teacher's request or instruction or which go against school rules and policies.

\*Other offenses may result in office referrals without reminders dependent on the situation.

For all students referred to the office for a non-negotiable infraction, families/guardians will be contacted, and consequential actions will be taken.

**From EL Education Core Practice 21:** “The EL Education model fosters and celebrates students’ academic growth and character development as inseparable. Members of the school community live up to the spirit of EL Education’s Design Principles on a daily basis and create a school climate characterized by physical and emotional safety, joy in learning, kindness, and positive leadership. All adults in the school communicate clear expectations for student character based on the school’s Habits of Character and model those values in their own practice and interactions. Policies and practices encourage students to become effective learners and ethical people who contribute to a better world. This means leaders, teachers, and students value diversity and work to create a community that is equitable, inclusive, and committed to social justice.”

When problem behaviors do occur at GEMS, we use a range and combination of responses defined below, taking into consideration the developmental stage of the child. We approach problem behaviors as an opportunity to learn, take responsibility, and repair harm.

Stage 1 Problem behavior occurs		
	Restorative Response	Punitive Response
<b>Stage 2</b> Problem is easily resolvable.	Affective/I-message statement	Directive
<b>Stage 3</b> Problem is repetitive within a class period or disruptive to learning.	Reflection space (i.e with Crew Teacher)	Community Violation
<b>Stage 4</b> Problem occurs regularly (more than one community violation in a month), or the problem has damaged relationships.	Restorative Circle with Culture Coordinator  Service or action to “make things right”	In-School Suspension  Non-participation in fieldwork on a case-to-case basis

<b>Stage 5</b> Problem continues after Stage 4 response or severity warrants moving directly to stage 5.	Formal Conference with family, Dean, and other stakeholders	Out-of-School Suspension
<b>Stage 6</b>		Expulsion

***Vandalism and other Damage to School and Personal Property***

Vandalism and damage to school property and personal property of students, faculty and staff is inconsistent with the objectives of the GEMS learning community and, in most instances, a violation of the law.

***Smoking and Tobacco Use***

Smoking or any other method of tobacco use by a student at GEMS, on school property, or on a school bus is prohibited.

***Dishonesty***

Students shall not engage in any dishonest behavior, including, but not necessarily limited to, providing false information, forging a parent or teacher signature on school forms, attendance notes, or any other document, and shall not impersonate a parent or a teacher. Cheating on academic work and plagiarism of any kind is inconsistent with the objectives of the GEMS learning community and, in some instances plagiarism is a violation of the law.

GEMS define plagiarism broadly to include the stealing and/or passing off of the ideas, words and works of another as one's own. Plagiarism can take many forms including, but not limited to: The words or ideas of another taken from a variety of sources including, books, magazines, the Internet, newspapers, interviews, television programs and other sources combined with the attempt to use these words or ideas in any format without documenting their source. Whenever in doubt about the origin of thoughts, ideas, words, phrases, or work, students should cite the source for the material rather than run the risk of engaging in plagiarism.

Students who are caught cheating on evaluative tools may be deemed to have earned no credit for the specific piece of work and will forfeit the right to an alternative evaluation. Consequences for students who engage in plagiarism can range from earning no credit on the specific academic assignment to earn no academic credit for the class in which the plagiarism took place. The determination of the sanction for an act of plagiarism begins with the classroom teacher and progresses to the discretion of the Administration when the behavior is chronic or credit for the course is in question. Behaviors associated with this category may result in suspension or expulsion from GEMS. The ability for a student to be reassessed for the learning targets associated with the assignment that was plagiarized is up to the discretion of the teacher and administration.

***Use of Profanity/Disobedient/Insubordinate/Disruptive Behavior***

A student shall not refuse to comply with the reasonable requests of his/her teacher, an administrator, coach, extracurricular activity advisor, staff employees, or adult volunteers. In the case of extracurricular activities, "insubordination" shall also include the failure to comply with the rules or requirements established by the coach or advisor for that particular activity. A student shall not use profane, vulgar, or other improper language, or gestures/actions spoken, written, or sent electronically.

***Other misconduct***

Any other misconduct, which interferes with the educational process, is prohibited.

### ***Appendix A: Suspension and Expulsion From GEMS***

(A) The superintendent or the Dean (who has, pursuant to board policy been given the authority that a principal has for purposes of suspensions) may suspend a student from school for up to but not more than ten school days. If at the time a suspension is imposed there are fewer than ten school days remaining in the school year in which the incident that gives rise to the suspension takes place, the superintendent may apply any remaining part or all of the period of the suspension to the following school year. Except in the case of a student given an in-school suspension, no student shall be suspended unless prior to the suspension the superintendent or Dean does both of the following:

(1) The Dean or superintendent shall provide the student with written notice of the intention to suspend the student and the reasons for the intended suspension and, if the proposed suspension is based on a violation listed in division (A) of section 3313.662 of the Revised Code and if the student is sixteen years of age or older, the notice shall contain a statement that the superintendent may seek to permanently exclude the student if the student is convicted of or adjudicated a delinquent child for that violation;

(2) The student shall have an opportunity to appear at an informal hearing before the Dean, superintendent, or superintendent's designee and challenge the reason for the intended suspension or otherwise to explain the student's actions.

(B)(1) Except as provided for below, the superintendent may expel a student from school for a period up to, but not greater than, eighty school days or the number of school days remaining in the semester or term in which the incident that gives rise to the expulsion takes place, unless the expulsion is extended as provided for in paragraph (F) below. If at the time an expulsion is imposed there are fewer than eighty school days remaining in the school year in which the incident that gives rise to the expulsion takes place, the superintendent may apply any remaining part or all of the period of the expulsion to the following year.

(a) Unless a student is permanently excluded pursuant to section 3313.662 of the Revised Code, the superintendent shall expel a student from school for a period of one year for bringing or possessing a firearm to GEMS or onto any other property owned or controlled by the board, except that the superintendent may reduce this requirement on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the policy adopted by the board under section 3313.661 of the Revised Code.

(b) The superintendent may expel a student from school for a period of up to one year for bringing a firearm to an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other school program or activity that is not located at GEMS or on property that is owned or controlled by GEMS. The superintendent may reduce this disciplinary action on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the policy adopted by the board under section 3313.661 of the Revised Code.

(c) The superintendent may expel a student from school for a period of up to one year for bringing a knife to a school by the board, onto any other property owned or controlled by the board, or to an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other program or activity sponsored by the school district or in which the district is a participant, or for possessing a firearm or knife at a school, on any other property owned or controlled by the board, or at an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other school program or activity, which firearm or knife was initially brought onto school board property by another person. The superintendent may reduce this disciplinary action on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the policy adopted by the board under section 3313.661 of the Revised Code.

(d) The superintendent may expel a student from school for a period up to one year for committing an act that is a criminal offense when committed by an adult and that results in serious physical harm to persons as defined in division (A)(5) of section 2901.01 of the Revised Code or serious physical harm to property as defined in division (A)(6) of section 2901.01 of the Revised Code while the student is at school, on any other property owned or controlled by the board, or at an interscholastic competition, an extracurricular event, or any other school program or activity. The superintendent may reduce this disciplinary action on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the policy adopted by the board under section 3313.661 of the Revised Code.

(e) The superintendent may expel a student from school for a period up to one year for making a bomb threat to a school building or to any premises at which a school activity is occurring at the time of the threat. The superintendent may reduce this disciplinary action on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the policy adopted by the board under section 3313.661 of the Revised Code.

(f) Any expulsion provided for above shall extend, as necessary, into the school year following the school year in which the incident that gives rise to the expulsion takes place. As used above, "firearm" has the same meaning as provided pursuant to the "Gun-Free Schools Act," 115 Stat. 1762, 7151.

(B)(2) Notwithstanding the foregoing, the superintendent may reduce the requirement set forth in paragraph B(1)(a) above and the actions in paragraphs B(1)(b), (c), (d) and (e) on a case-by-case basis by taking into consideration the following factors:

(a) The academic record of the student and a record of any extracurricular activities in which the student previously was involved;

(b) The disciplinary record of the student and any available records of the student's prior behavioral problems other than the behavioral problems contained in the disciplinary record;

(c) The social history of the student;

(d) The student's response to the imposition of prior discipline and sanctions imposed for behavioral problems;

(e) Evidence regarding the seriousness of and any aggravating factors related to the offense that is the basis of the resolution seeking permanent exclusion;

(f) Any mitigating circumstances surrounding the offense that gave rise to the request for permanent exclusion;

(g) Evidence regarding the probable danger posed to the health and safety of other students or of school employees by the continued presence of the student in a public school setting;

(h) Evidence regarding the probable disruption of the teaching of any school district's graded course of study by the continued presence of the student in a public school setting;

(i) Evidence regarding the availability of alternative sanctions of a less serious nature than permanent exclusion that would enable the student to remain in a public school setting without posing a significant danger to the health and safety of other students or of school employees and without posing a threat of the disruption of the teaching of any district's graded course of study.

(C) No student shall be expelled unless, prior to the student's expulsion, the superintendent does both of the following:

(1) Gives the student and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian written notice of the intention to expel the student;

(2) Provides the student and the student's parent, guardian, custodian, or representative an opportunity to appear in person before the superintendent or the superintendent's designee to challenge the reasons for the intended expulsion or otherwise to explain the student's actions. The notice required in this division shall include the reasons for the intended expulsion, notification of the opportunity of the student and the student's parent, guardian, custodian, or representative to appear before the superintendent or the superintendent's designee to challenge the reasons for the intended expulsion or otherwise to explain the student's action, and notification of the time and place to appear. The time to appear shall not be earlier than three nor later than five school days after the notice is given, unless the superintendent grants an extension of time at the request of the student or the student's parent, guardian, custodian, or representative. If an extension is granted after giving the original notice, the superintendent shall notify the student and the student's parent, guardian, custodian, or representative of the new time and place to appear. If the proposed expulsion is based on a violation listed in division (A) of section 3313.662 of the Revised Code and if the student is sixteen years of age or older, the notice shall include a statement that the superintendent may seek to permanently exclude the student if the student is convicted of or adjudicated a delinquent child for that violation.

(D) The superintendent shall initiate expulsion proceedings with respect to any student who has committed an act warranting expulsion under GEMS policy regarding expulsion even if the student has withdrawn from school for any reason after the incident that gives rise to the hearing but prior to the hearing or decision to impose the expulsion. If, following the hearing, the student would have been expelled for a period of time had the student still been enrolled in the school, the expulsion shall be imposed for the same length of time as on a student who has not withdrawn from the school.

(E) If a student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process taking place either within a classroom or elsewhere on the school premises, the superintendent or Dean may remove a student from curricular activities or from the school premises, and a teacher may remove a student from curricular activities under the teacher's supervision, without the notice and hearing requirements set forth above. As soon as practicable after making such a removal, the teacher shall submit in writing to the Dean the reasons for such removal. If a student is removed under this division from a curricular activity or from the school premises, written notice of the hearing and of the reason for the removal shall be given to the student as soon as practicable prior to the hearing, which shall be held within three school days from the time the initial removal is ordered. The hearing shall be held in accordance with the above unless it is probable that the student may be subject to expulsion, in which case a hearing in accordance with division (B) of this section shall be held, except that the hearing shall be held within three school days of the initial removal. The individual who ordered, caused, or requested the removal to be made shall be present at the hearing. If the superintendent or the Dean reinstates a student in a curricular activity under the teacher's supervision prior to the hearing following a removal under this division, the teacher, upon request, shall be given in writing the reasons for such reinstatement.

(F) The superintendent or principal, within one school day after the time of a student's expulsion or suspension, shall notify in writing the parent, guardian, or custodian of the student and the treasurer of the board of education of the expulsion or suspension. The notice shall include the reasons for the expulsion or suspension, notification of the right of the student or the student's parent, guardian, or custodian to appeal the expulsion or suspension to the board or to its designee, to be represented in all appeal proceedings, to be granted a hearing before the board or its designee in order to be heard against the suspension or expulsion, and to request that the hearing be held in executive session, notification that the expulsion may be subject to extension pursuant to division (F) of this section if the student is sixteen years of age or older, and notification that the superintendent may seek the student's permanent exclusion if the suspension or expulsion was based on a violation listed in division (A) of section 3313.662 of the Revised Code that was committed



when the child was sixteen years of age or older and if the student is convicted of or adjudicated a delinquent child for that violation. In accordance with the policy adopted by the board of education under section 3313.661 of the Revised Code, the notice provided under this division shall specify the manner and date by which the student or the student's parent, guardian, or custodian shall notify the board of the student's, parent's, guardian's, or custodian's intent to appeal the expulsion or suspension to the board or its designee. Any superintendent expelling a student under this section for more than twenty school days or for any period of time if the expulsion will extend into the following semester or school year shall, in the notice required under this division, provide the student and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian with information about services or programs offered by public and private agencies that work toward improving those aspects of the student's attitudes and behavior that contributed to the incident that gave rise to the student's expulsion. The information shall include the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the appropriate public and private agencies.

(G) A student or the student's parent, guardian, or custodian may appeal the student's expulsion by the superintendent or suspension by the Dean to the board or its designee. If the student or the student's parent, guardian, or custodian intends to appeal the expulsion or suspension to the board or its designee, the student or the student's parent, guardian, or custodian shall notify the board in the manner and by the date specified in the notice provided for above. The student or the student's parent, guardian, or custodian may be represented in all appeal proceedings and shall be granted a hearing before the board or its designee in order to be heard against the suspension or expulsion. At the request of the student or of the student's parent, guardian, custodian, or attorney, the board or its designee, may affirm the order of suspension or expulsion, reinstate the student, or otherwise reverse, vacate, or modify the order of suspension or expulsion. The board or its designee shall make a verbatim record of hearings held under this division (E). The decisions of the board or its designee may be appealed under Chapter 2506 of the Revised Code. This section shall not be construed to require notice and hearing in accordance with the above in the case of normal disciplinary procedures in which a student is removed from a curricular activity for a period of less than one school day and is not subject to suspension or expulsion.

(H)(1) If a student is expelled for committing any violation listed in division (A) of section 3313.662 of the Revised Code and the student was sixteen years of age or older at the time of committing the violation, if a complaint, indictment, or information is filed alleging that the student is a delinquent child based upon the commission of the violation or the student is prosecuted as an adult for the commission of the violation, and if the resultant juvenile court or criminal proceeding is pending at the time that the expulsion terminates, the superintendent of schools that expelled the student may file a motion with the court in which the proceeding is pending requesting an order extending the expulsion for the lesser of an additional eighty days or the number of school days remaining in the school year. Upon the filing of the motion, the court immediately shall schedule a hearing and give written notice of the time, date, and location of the hearing to the superintendent and to the student and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian. At the hearing, the court shall determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that the student committed the alleged violation that is the basis of the expulsion and, upon determining that reasonable cause to believe the student committed the violation does exist, shall grant the required extension.

(2) If a student has been convicted of or adjudicated a delinquent child for a violation listed in division (A) of section 3313.662 of the Revised Code for an act that was committed when the child was sixteen years of age or older, if the student has been expelled pursuant to division (B) of this section for that violation, and if the board of education of the school district of the school from which the student was expelled has adopted a resolution seeking the student's permanent exclusion, the superintendent may file a motion with the court that convicted the student or adjudicated the student a delinquent child requesting an order to extend the expulsion until an adjudication order or other determination regarding permanent exclusion is issued by the superintendent of public instruction pursuant to section 3301.121 and division (D) of section 3313.662 of the Revised Code. Upon the filing of the motion, the court immediately shall schedule a hearing and give written notice of the time, date, and location of the hearing to the superintendent of the school district, the student, and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian. At the hearing, the court shall determine

whether there is reasonable cause to believe the student's continued attendance in the public school system may endanger the health and safety of other students or school employees and, upon making that determination, shall grant the requested extension.

(I) The failure of the superintendent or the board of education to provide the information regarding the possibility of permanent exclusion in the notice required above is not jurisdictional, and the failure shall not affect the validity of any suspension or expulsion procedure that is conducted in accordance with this section or the validity of a permanent exclusion procedure that is conducted in accordance with sections 3301.121 and 3313.662 of the Revised Code.

(J) With regard to suspensions and expulsions provided for above, the above shall apply to any student, whether or not the student is enrolled in the district, attending or otherwise participating in any curricular program provided in a school operated by the board or provided on any other property owned or controlled by the board.

(K) Whenever a student is expelled under this section, the expulsion shall result in removal of the student from the student's regular school setting. However, during the period of the expulsion, the board of education of the school district that expelled the student or any board of education admitting the student during that expulsion period may provide educational services to the student in an alternative setting.

(L)(1) Notwithstanding sections 3109.51 to 3109.80, 3313.64, and 3313.65 of the Revised Code, after offering an opportunity for a hearing, may temporarily deny admittance to any student if one of the following applies:

(a) The student has been suspended from the schools of another district and the period of suspension has not expired;

(b) The student has been expelled from the schools of another district and the period of the expulsion has not expired. If a student is temporarily denied admission, the student shall be admitted to school in accordance with sections 3109.51 to 3109.80, 3313.64, or 3313.65 of the Revised Code no later than upon expiration of the suspension or expulsion period, as applicable.

(2) Notwithstanding sections 3109.51 to 3109.80, 3313.64, and 3313.65 of the Revised Code, after offering an opportunity for a hearing, may temporarily deny admittance to any student if the student has been expelled or otherwise removed for disciplinary purposes from a public school in another state and the period of expulsion or removal has not expired. If a student is temporarily denied admission, the student shall be admitted to school in accordance with sections 3109.51 to 3109.80, 3313.64, or 3313.65 of the Revised Code no later than the earlier of the following:

(a) Upon expiration of the expulsion or removal period imposed by the out-of-state school;

(b) Upon expiration of a period established by the district, beginning with the date of expulsion or removal from the out-of-state school, that is no greater than the period of expulsion that the student would have received under the policy adopted by the district under section 3313.661 of the Revised Code had the offense that gave rise to the expulsion or removal by the out-of-state school been committed while the student was enrolled in the district.

#### **Permanent Exclusion Pursuant to Section 3313.662 of the Revised Code**

(A) The superintendent of public instruction, pursuant to section 3313.662 and the adjudication procedures of section 3301.121 of the Revised Code, may issue an adjudication order that permanently excludes a student from attending any of the public schools of this state if the student is convicted of, or adjudicated a delinquent child for, committing, when the student was sixteen years of age or older, an act that would be a criminal offense if committed by an adult and if the act is any of the following:

- (1) A violation of section 2923.122 of the Revised Code;
  - (2) A violation of section 2923.12 of the Revised Code, of a substantially similar municipal ordinance, or of section 2925.03 of the Revised Code that was committed on property owned or controlled by, or at an activity held under the auspices of the board;
  - (3) A violation of section 2925.11 of the Revised Code, other than a violation of that section that would be a minor drug possession offense, that was committed on property owned or controlled by, or at an activity held under the auspices of the board;
  - (4) A violation of section 2903.01, 2903.02, 2903.03, 2903.04, 2903.11, 2903.12, 2907.02, or 2907.05 or of former section 2907.12 of the Revised Code that was committed on property owned or controlled by, or at an activity held under the auspices of the board, if the victim at the time of the commission of the act was an employee of the board;
  - (5) Complicity in any violation described in division (A)(1), (2), (3), or (4) of this section that was alleged to have been committed in the manner described in division (A)(1), (2), (3), or (4) of this section, regardless of whether the act of complicity was committed on property owned or controlled by, or at an activity held under the auspices of the board.
- (B) A student may be suspended or expelled in accordance with section 3313.66 of the Revised Code prior to being permanently excluded from public school attendance under this section and section 3301.121 of the Revised Code.
- (C)(1) If the superintendent obtains or receives proof that the student has been convicted of committing when the student was sixteen years of age or older a violation listed above or adjudicated a delinquent child for the commission when the student was sixteen years of age or older of a violation listed above, the superintendent may issue to the board a request that the student be permanently excluded from public school attendance, if both of the following apply:
- (a) After obtaining or receiving proof of the conviction or adjudication, the superintendent or the superintendent's designee determines that the student's continued attendance in school may endanger the health and safety of other students or school employees and gives the student and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian written notice that the superintendent intends to recommend to the board that the board adopt a resolution requesting the superintendent of public instruction to permanently exclude the student from public school attendance.
  - (b) The superintendent or the superintendent's designee forwards to the board the superintendent's written recommendation that includes the determinations the superintendent or designee made and a copy of the proof the superintendent received showing that the student has been convicted of or adjudicated a delinquent child from a violation listed above that was committed when the student was sixteen years of age or older.
- (2) Within fourteen days after receipt of a recommendation from the superintendent a student be permanently excluded from public school attendance, the board, after review and consideration of all of the following available information, may adopt a resolution requesting the superintendent of public instruction to permanently exclude the student who is the subject of the recommendation from public school attendance:
- (a) The academic record of the student and a record of any extracurricular activities in which the student previously was involved;
  - (b) The disciplinary record of the student and any available records of the student's prior behavioral problems other than the behavioral problems contained in the disciplinary record;
  - (c) The social history of the student;

- (d) The student's response to the imposition of prior discipline and sanctions imposed for behavioral problems;
- (e) Evidence regarding the seriousness of and any aggravating factors related to the offense that is the basis of the resolution seeking permanent exclusion;
- (f) Any mitigating circumstances surrounding the offense that gave rise to the request for permanent exclusion;
- (g) Evidence regarding the probable danger posed to the health and safety of other students or of school employees by the continued presence of the student in a public school setting;
- (h) Evidence regarding the probable disruption of the teaching of any school district's graded course of study by the continued presence of the student in a public school setting;
- (i) Evidence regarding the availability of alternative sanctions of a less serious nature than permanent exclusion that would enable the student to remain in a public school setting without posing a significant danger to the health and safety of other students or of school employees and without posing a threat of the disruption of the teaching of any district's graded course of study.

#### **Community Service**

Notwithstanding the foregoing, and except for an expulsion imposed pursuant to paragraph (B)(1)(a) above, the superintendent may require a student to perform community service in conjunction with a suspension or expulsion, except for an expulsion and may impose a community service requirement beyond the end of the school year in lieu of applying the suspension or expulsion into the following year.

*Appendix B: Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy*  
(Amended & approved by the GEMS Board 2/5/18)

**GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE POLICY**

The Graham Elementary & Middle School is committed to providing students with a safe, secure and supportive classroom and school environment, conducive to academic learning, experiential learning, and the development of healthy human relationships. It is the policy of the School to maintain a safe and supportive learning and working environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including bullying, and physical or emotional harm. This policy specifically includes discrimination, harassment, or bullying related, but not limited to, race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, handicap, age, sexual orientation, religion or limited English skills. It also includes acts that may not relate to any particular characteristic. No student of the school shall be subjected to discrimination, harassment or bullying. No school personnel of the school shall be subjected to discrimination or harassment. This policy applies to conduct during or relating to school or school-sponsored activities, on or off school property, on any Columbus City School bus or any bus utilized on behalf of the school's academic or experiential program and to conduct that occurs away from school that has the effect of interfering with a safe and secure school environment conducive to academic learning, experiential learning, and/or the development of healthy human relationships. This policy does not preclude the application of any provisions of State law that apply to student and teacher behavior; nor does this policy apply to speech that is otherwise protected under the state or federal constitution.

1. Within his/her area of supervision, each administrator is responsible for promoting understanding, acceptance, and assuring compliance with State and Federal laws, Board policy, and procedures governing discrimination, harassment and/or bullying.
2. The School acts to investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or non-verbal, of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying; and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, other school personnel, or those whose actions have the effect of interfering with a safe and secure school environment.
3. Under the School policy, any student or staff member may bring a complaint against any member of the school community, a customer, vendor or contractor believed to have violated the policy.
4. The School will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against (or attempts to retaliate against) any person who reports alleged discrimination, harassment, bullying, or violence; files a complaint of harassment, testifies, assists or participates in any investigation, hearing or proceeding related to such discrimination, harassment, bullying or violence. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of threat, intimidation, reprisal or discrimination.

**Notice and Training**

Notice of this policy will be circulated to all departments of the School and incorporated in staff and student handbooks and be available in the school office. All school staff, including any others who, at the school request have responsibility for students, will be provided yearly training to recognize and respond to discrimination, harassment, and/or bullying incidents.

**Procedures**

Any person who alleges discrimination, harassment and/or bullying by a staff member or student in the School may use the procedure detailed in the School's Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, Anti-Bullying Complaint Procedure. Filing a complaint or otherwise reporting discrimination, harassment and/or bullying will not reflect upon the individual's status, nor will it affect future employment, grades or work

assignments. The right of confidentiality, for both the accuser and the accused, will be respected consistent with the School's legal obligations; with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct; and with the necessity to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

### **Consequences**

A substantiated charge against a student in the School shall subject that student to disciplinary action consistent with the Student Code of Conduct, which may include suspension or expulsion. A substantiated charge against a staff member in the School shall subject that staff member to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. A first time offense of discrimination or harassment may be a dischargeable offense. Allegations of criminal misconduct will be reported to law enforcement, and suspected child abuse will be reported to Child Protection Services. Any supervisor or employee who violates this policy by allowing the conduct to go unaddressed will be disciplined. Such discipline may include reprimands, suspensions and/or removal.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

#### **Nondiscrimination**

The School, in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, handicap or age in any of its policies, procedures or practices; nor does the School discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, religion or limited English skills. This nondiscrimination policy covers student access to courses and programs, student policies and their application, and participation in and benefits of any activity in the School. The School will take any measures necessary to effectuate the requirements of these acts.

#### **Anti-Harassment**

It is a violation of this policy for any student, teacher, administrator, other school personnel, or those in a school building or attending a school function to harass a student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel through conduct or communication verbally or in writing by any medium. Harassment can be of a sexual nature, or regarding race, color, national origin, limited English skills, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, or having the effect of intentionally to hurt, frighten, threaten, or intimidate. A single incident may be sufficient for disciplinary action.

#### **Harassment:**

1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic or work environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's academic or employment opportunities.

#### **Racial or Color Harassment:**

Racial or color harassment can include unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at the characteristics of a person's race or color, such as nicknames emphasizing stereotypes, racial slurs, comments on manner of speaking and negative references to racial customs.

#### **National Origin and Limited English Skills Harassment:**

Harassment on the basis of national origin is unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at the characteristics of a person's national origin and/or limited English skills, such as negative comments regarding surnames, manner of speaking, customs, language or ethnic slurs.

**Gender (sexual) Harassment:**

Any unwelcome sexual attention or behavior. Sexual harassment is determined by the effect on the receiver, not the intent of the harasser. Sexual harassment occurs when:

1. an individual is subject to unwelcome sexual behavior or advances and submission is made a term or condition of a person's employment or advancement or of a student's participation or advancement in school programs or activities;
2. decisions affecting employees or students are based on submission to or rejection of such sexual behavior or,
3. a hostile, intimidating, uncomfortable, offensive or nonproductive work or learning environment is created by any type of unwelcome sexual behavior.
4. Gender (sexual) harassment may include but is not limited to the following:
  - a. verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature
  - b. pressure for sexual activity
  - c. repeated remarks with sexual or demeaning implications
  - d. unwelcome touching
  - e. sexual jokes
  - f. sexual materials, posters, etc.
  - g. sexually suggestive gestures or looks
  - h. name-calling of a sexual nature
  - i. sexual rumors
  - j. sexual assault
5. Gender (sexual) harassment may occur
  - a. student to student
  - b. staff to student
  - c. student to staff
  - d. staff to staff
  - e. male to male
  - f. female to female
  - g. male to female
  - h. female to male

**Disability Harassment:**

Disabled person means any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. Disability harassment includes harassment based on a person's disabling mental or physical condition and includes any unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at the characteristics of a person's disabling condition, such as imitating manner of speech or movement or interference with necessary equipment.

**Age Harassment:**

Harassment on the basis of age is unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at the characteristics of a person's age, such as name calling.

**Sexual Orientation Harassment:**

Harassment on the basis of sexual orientation is unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at the characteristics of a person's sexual orientation, such as negative name calling and imitating mannerisms.

**Religious Harassment:**

Religious harassment consists of physical or verbal conduct which is related to an individual's religion.

**Bullying:**

Bullying may occur when a student or group of students intentionally keeps hurting, frightening, threatening or excluding another student, or participates in organizing others to do so. Bullying may be verbal, written by any medium, relational, or be a physical behavior over some duration. Bullying impacts in the following ways:

1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic or school environment;
2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or school performance;
3. has the effect of damaging an individual's emotional or social well being; or
4. otherwise adversely affects an individual's academic or schooling opportunities.

Bullying incidents may include but are not limited to the following:

1. physical violence or assaults (hitting, kicking, pushing)
2. threats, taunts and intimidation through words and/or gestures
3. extortion, damage or stealing of money and/or possessions
4. sexual (unwanted physical contact, attention, comments, images)
5. homophobic (focusing on sexuality or sexual preference)
6. name-calling and/or put-downs
7. spreading rumors or gossip, or purposefully reporting false information
8. using electronic devices to circulate gossip and rumors, sending abusive, harassing or threatening e-mail, instant messages or other cyber-bullying.

**Harassment, intimidation or bullying also includes violence within a dating relationship.**

**Complaint Procedure**

Complaints filed pursuant to this policy shall receive prompt and equitable resolution. Documentation of follow-through and resolution in all circumstances will be maintained.

**Complaints alleging a student as offender**

1. A student's parent/guardian may file a complaint on the student's behalf. A complaint, filed in good faith, alleging a violation of the School's Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying policy against a student may be brought to the following officials:
  - a. any staff member that the student, or parent of the student chooses,
  - b. school Dean, or
  - c. Superintendent
2. School personnel should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, humiliating or intimidating another student/school personnel, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of harassment or bullying. A staff member either receiving a complaint, observing a violation, or substantiating a complaint of violation of the Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying policy must intervene, and must document the complaint on the appropriate incident report. The report is forwarded within one school day to the building administrator who will investigate in a timely manner as required by law. Victims have the right to representation at their own expense.
3. Communication with parents, subject to state and federal student records laws, of both the victim and perpetrator will occur. Continued reports on a particular student may involve parents in the development of further interventions or actions. A substantiated charge against a student in the School shall subject that student to disciplinary action consistent with the Student Code of Conduct, which may include suspension or expulsion. Participation in interventions does not supersede the possibility of disciplinary action.



4. Any employee who violates this policy by allowing the conduct to go unaddressed will be disciplined. Such discipline may include reprimands, suspensions and/or removal.
5. Semiannually a written summary of verified incidents will be provided to the Board of Education, and will be posted on the School web page.

**Complaint alleging school personnel as offender**

1. A complaint filed in good faith alleging discrimination or harassment perpetrated by school personnel may be brought to any of the following officials:
  - a. A building dean or supervisor;
  - b. Superintendent or Executive CEO of Academics and Administration
2. The official to whom the complaint is originally brought will make the dean or supervisor, and the Superintendent and Executive CEO of Academics and Administration aware of the allegations.
3. Available Options - A person bringing a complaint is apprised of all options under policy by the official taking the complaint. These options are described below:
  - a. Informal resolution of the complaint
    - i. with the assistance of the building dean or supervisor,
    - ii. with the assistance of the Superintendent or Executive CEO of Academics and Administration.
  - b. Formal resolution of the complaint
    - i. filed with the building dean or supervisor,
    - ii. filed with the Superintendent or Executive CEO of Academics and Administration.
4. Procedures for Intake of Complaints - The official to whom the complaint is initially brought discusses with the complainant the following relevant considerations:
  - a. The complainant should be informed that:
    - i. A decision to proceed informally does not preclude the filing of a formal complaint at some later time.
    - ii. The filing of an informal complaint is not a prerequisite to a formal complaint.
    - iii. Action on the complaint is necessary. Such action normally will not be taken without informing the complainant in advance of such action.
  - b. The behavior that prompted the complaint.
  - c. The complaint process, including the available options.
  - d. The issues involved in the complaint.
  - e. The necessity of an investigation.
  - f. Possible resolutions of the complaint.
  - g. Protection of the complainant's interests (e.g., confidentiality consistent with the School's legal obligations, truthfulness by both parties; communication of steps taken during the process; protection of complainant and witnesses against retaliatory action).
  - h. Protection of the interests of the alleged offender (e.g. confidentiality consistent with the School's legal obligations; truthfulness by both parties; communication of any formal complaint or informal complaint; opportunity to respond to the complainant's allegations).
  - i. The complainant and the alleged offender are given a copy of the Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy and these Complaint Procedures. Once all of the above information has been discussed, the complainant determines which option to use to resolve the complaint.
5. Matters to be investigated include:
  - a. Whether the specific conduct alleged constitutes a form of discrimination or harassment as defined in the Policy, including the type(s) of alleged conduct; frequency of alleged occurrence; date(s) or time period over which the alleged conduct occurred; location of alleged occurrence(s); whether similar

- complaints have been made by others; and all factual circumstances upon which the complaint is based.
- b. The specific relationship of the alleged offender to the complainant.
  - c. The effect of the alleged offender's conduct on the complainant, including any consequences that may be attributed to the conduct.
  - d. Whether the alleged offender was aware of the complainant's concern regarding the behavior.
  - e. Whether a building dean, supervisor, Superintendent or Executive CEO of Academics and Administration was aware of the complainant's concern, and if so, how he/she became aware of the concern.
  - f. Whether any prior steps were taken to resolve the complaint.
6. Possible outcomes of investigation:
- a. a finding that there is sufficient evidence supporting the alleged violation and corrective action, which could include discipline, will occur;
  - b. a finding that there is insufficient evidence supporting the alleged violation; or
  - c. a negotiated settlement of the complaint. A negotiated settlement of the complaint may be entered at any time during this process. A negotiated settlement must be approved by both parties and by the Superintendent.
  - d. Time period for investigation complaints: Investigations of formal complaints should be concluded within 30 calendar days after they are made. When it is not reasonably possible to conclude the investigation within that amount of time, the Superintendent will notify the complainant and the alleged offender in writing of the delay and reasons for the delay.
  - e. Notice to parties. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Superintendent promptly informs both the complainant and the alleged offender of the outcome and the factual findings.
  - f. Written report of findings. Upon conclusion of the investigation of a formal complaint, the Superintendent prepares a written summary of the findings. If the investigation results in a finding of any discrimination or harassment as defined in the Anti- Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Anti-Bullying Policy, recommendations are made to take prompt and effective action, consistent with the severity of the offense. This report is provided to the appropriate administrative official for implementation.
  - g. A finding may be appealed to the Superintendent, then to the Board. Such appeal will be based on the record and any new information which could not have been previously provided with reasonable diligence.
  - h. Sanctions. A substantiated charge against a staff member shall subject that staff member to disciplinary action which may include reprimands, suspensions with or without pay and/or termination.

### **Presence of Support Persons**

The complainant and/or alleged offender may be accompanied at any interview by a friend, family member, legal representation and/or other individuals of the complainant's or alleged offender's choice.

### **Confidentiality**

To the extent possible, the Superintendent treats as confidential all information received in connection with the filing, investigation, and resolution of complaints except to the extent it is necessary to disclose particulars in the course of the investigation. Parties to a complaint should observe the same standard of discretion and respect for the reputation of all parties involved in the process.

## **Record Keeping**

Any person conducting a formal investigation shall maintain a written record of all witness interviews, consent provided, evidence gathered and the outcomes of the investigation. **A common form for record keeping will be developed and used across all schools under the TGFS name.** Records of investigation will not be maintained in personnel files or student files unless part of formal corrective action. Investigatory records are maintained by the Superintendent in accordance with record retention schedules. Copies of the final report are given to the complainant and the alleged offender.

**LEGAL REFS:** Civil Rights Act, Title VI; 42 USC 2000d et seq., Civil Rights Act, (Amended 1972), Title VII; 42 USC 2000e et seq., Education Amendments of 1972, Title IX; 20 USC 1681, Executive Order 11246, as amended by, Executive Order 11375, Equal Pay Act; 29 USC 206, Rehabilitation Act; 29 USC 794, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; 20 USC 1401 et seq., Age Discrimination in Employment Act; 29 USC 623, Immigration Reform and Control Act; 42 USC 1324a et seq., Americans with Disabilities Act; 42 USC 12112 et seq., Ohio Const. Art. I, Section 2, ORC 3323.01, ORC 3313.666; 3301.22; 3319.321, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 88 Stat.571.20, U.S.C. 1232g, as amended, Chapter 4112, OAC 3301-35-02(A) (1); 3301-35-03(A)

CROSS REFS: ACA, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Gender, ACAA, Sexual Harassment, ACB, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability, GBA, Equal Opportunity Employment, GBO, Verification of Employment Eligibility, IGAB, Human Relations Education, IGBA, Programs for Students with Disabilities, IGBAA, 504 Procedural Safeguards, IGBl, English as a Second Language (Limited English Proficiency), IGBJ, Title I Programs, JB, Equal Educational Opportunities, JFC, Student Conduct (Zero Tolerance), JFCF, Anti-Hazing, Staff Handbooks, Student Handbooks

### *Appendix C: Technology and Information Protection Measures*

Per the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 and the Protecting Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act of 2008, Congress has required all schools to:

- Include a technology protection measure, with specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access
- Allows for the monitoring of online activity by minor
- Protects against access by adults and minors to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors, except in the case of adults engaged in legitimate research The Graham Family of Schools has implemented and will here describe the following measures:
- Individually assigned, password-protected network accounts for tying online activity and technology use (and abuse) to specific individuals
- (Microsoft Active Directory and Apple Open Directory LDAP services)
- Password-protected individual network storage locations for personal information, as well as shared network storage resources restricted by group-specific permissions and policies for the storage of sensitive student information
- (Microsoft Active Directory and Apple Open Directory group policy management)
- Software installed on all end-user terminals utilizing the VNC protocol to allow for the remote monitoring and control of machines on the individual level
- TightVNC, iTalc, Apple Remote Desktop Client - Anti-virus software deployed to every end-user terminal for the detection and isolation of malicious software o Thirty-Seven Four Anti-virus
- Web-filtering technology for allowing or denying web traffic based on individual or group permissions (students vs. staff), and targeting categories of traffic (pornography, gambling, obscene/explicit language), specific addresses and domains, as well as application-specific traffic (Pandora, YouTube, Limewire), for the control of which web applications can and cannot be accessed and are or are not allowed to tie up network bandwidth, as well as allowing for enforcement of separate policies between authenticated and guest users, with traffic logging tied to specific user accounts
- Barracuda Networks Web Filter - Next generation firewall technology for each school site, monitoring and allowing for the restriction of harmful or malicious traffic passing between the internal networks (LANs) and the public Internet (WAN), as well as access logging to the machine and user-level, with active intrusion detection capabilities
- Barracuda Networks NG Firewall
- Beginning with the elementary school, enterprise-class managed wireless networks, separating hidden wireless signals with full LAN access from open wireless signals with access restricted to external Internet traffic for student and guest devices, as well as machine-specific traffic logging
- AeroHive Networks HiveManager and Hive Aps

Additionally, the IT Department of the Graham Family of Schools has enacted the following data protection policies for the security of student and organizational data:

Password guidelines:

- Passwords for all school computer/ network and service accounts should be changed no less frequently than every 90 days
- Passwords should be different for each service/system

- Passwords for users' school accounts should be kept distinct from personal accounts to isolate the staff in the event that a password is compromised

Personal data guidelines:

- Student data, i.e. personal and/or identifying sensitive data of students, should never leave school servers or service provider systems unless specifically requested by the student or the student's legal guardians, or in the course of legitimate educational transfer procedures (transfers, college transcript requests)
- In the event that student data is stored on school laptops or personal storage devices, data should be encrypted or password protected in such a way as to prevent exposure in the event of the device's theft

Distribution of passwords:

- Staff and student account password will not be e-mailed under any circumstances

### **TGFS Information and Communication Technologies Acceptable Use Policy and Guidelines**

To help ensure our students become proficient in the information and communication technologies (ICT) competencies essential for success in a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment and beyond, The Graham Family of Schools provides a variety of resources in support of our instructional and administrative programs. Students and staff may also, at times, use personal information and communication technologies for educational purposes. It is therefore incumbent upon all members of the school community to use technology responsibly, ethically, and with respect for the work of others.

Access to schools' ICT resources is a privilege and not a right. To ensure these resources remain available and in working order, the Graham Family of Schools has established this **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)** and which define the procedures and parameters under which these resources may be used by staff, students, and volunteers. To accommodate future needs and circumstances, the policy and guidelines related to ICT resources will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

So that all users remain informed of our expectations for appropriate usage of ICT resources, TGFS will: 1) ensure all new students and staff receive access credentials to age-appropriate ICT resources during the enrollment or hiring process, as well as on-going training in their safe, responsible, and effective use; and 2) provide orientation annually for students and staff on ICT resources and the district AUP.

In order to initiate and maintain access to ICT resources, all users must submit annually a signed ***Acceptable Use Agreement*** (detailed below), non-adherence of which may result in loss of non- course related access and/or appropriate disciplinary and/or legal action. Violations of the AUP are deemed violations of school behavioral expectations and codes.

#### **Internet Use and ICT Access**

Internet access is available at The Graham Family of Schools for the purposes of educational communication and research and for administrative purposes. The following represent acceptable uses of technology at The Graham Family of Schools:

- Classroom assignments and projects, homework assignments
- Independent learning projects and school activities such as yearbook or newspaper
- Research and curriculum development

- School or district administration Communications via ICT resources are often public in nature and general school rules for behavior and communications apply. It is expected that users will at all times comply with district standards and will act in a responsible and legal manner, in accordance with said standards, as well as with state and federal laws. Professional development opportunities to enhance the technology skills of district personnel will be provided and rules related to the Internet will be included in each school’s student and faculty handbooks. The Graham Family of Schools promotes a learning environment that protects the rights to respect, dignity, safety, and a sense of wellbeing for all members of the community. The expectation of compliance with these principles by community members includes digital communications, such as email, chat sessions, publication of websites and other electronic documents as follows:
  - Use appropriate language in expressing thoughts and perspectives, and refrain from use of language that is obscene, hurtful, threatening, or offensive
  - No posting of information that could disrupt community activities or well being
  - No harassment of others with annoying or hurtful expressions, particularly those discriminating based on characteristics including but not limited to race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation
  - No sending of chain letters or SPAM messages as these are unsolicited, disruptive, and frequently if inadvertently contain viruses or other malware The Administration will take measures to assure the safety and security of students when using email, chat services, and other forms of direct electronic communications; prohibit unauthorized access, including “hacking” and other unlawful activities by minors online; prohibit unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personally identifiable information of students; and to restrict students’ access to online materials deemed harmful to minors.
 

Users are prohibited from attaching personal devices to TGFS hardware (excluding portable memory media such as USB drives) or installing software on any district hardware without prior permission of the IT Department. Users will refrain from downloading large files (constituting files over 4 MB in size) without authorization from a teacher or administrator, and will request the assistance of the helpdesk when authorized.

### **Monitoring and Privacy**

To provide ready access for all users, age-appropriate material, an Internet environment that is safe and appropriate for the maturity level and need of student users, and to proactively secure and maintain increasingly complex ICT systems the district, **as the owner of those resources, reserves the right to monitor and review the use of these ICT resources** and will do so as needed to ensure the systems are being used for district-related educational purposes and to maximize utilization of the systems for such. Therefore, all users and Families must be aware that *users are waiving and should not have any expectation of personal privacy in the use of these ICT resources for their communications or transmission and storage of data. Personal information, however, is not publicly accessible outside of the school network.* Password and encryption systems implemented by the district are designed solely to provide system security from unauthorized users, not to provide privacy to the individual user. This provision applies to all users of the district’s ICT resources, including any incidental personal use permitted in accordance with these regulations. Consequently, all files residing on a Graham Family of Schools network, including personal files, are the property of the district’s governing Board and are subject to random search at any time without the need for reasonable suspicion or evidence of a violation of criminal statutes or school rules.

### **Limitation of Liability**

The Graham Family of Schools makes no guarantee that the function of, or services provided through, its network of ICT resources will be error-free or without defect. The district is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through the system from sources outside the schools. Neither the district, its operators, nor its administrators are responsible for financial obligations or damages arising through the use, authorized or unauthorized, of its ICT network.

## **Publishing Guidelines**

The premise that all individuals are authors and distributors of content is an underlying basis of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. District and school use of ICT resources to distribute intellectual property, images, videos, and information shall be related to school curriculum and instruction, school-authorized activities, and other information relating to school and district goals. It is our intent that such broadcasts and publications be educationally relevant to the goals of the school district while providing for the safety and security of all students and staff.

- All distributed content shall follow the standards for ethical behavior in regard to information and communication technologies by showing respect for the principles of intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights, and the responsible use of the information and communication technologies.
- While certain educational circumstances may allow for the use of copyrighted materials through Fair Use policies, no copyrighted material shall be *distributed* without the express written permission of the copyright owner. In particular, the un-purchased download and sharing of copyrighted music and video files are considered infringement of copyright. Any and all use of copyrighted materials must be properly credited, and plagiarism, as outlined in the Parent/Student Handbook, is prohibited.
- It is understood that all distributed content may be accessible beyond The Graham Family of Schools community and viewed by a global audience. No content shall reveal students identifying information. Content may include names of individuals; however further identifying information, such as names of family members, email addresses, home addresses and phone numbers will remain private.
- Content shall not contain objectionable material or point to objectionable material. The determination of what constitutes objectionable material shall be made on a case- by-case basis, as determined by school administrators. The distribution of content shall follow Copyright Law and Fair Use Guidelines.
- All content representing the school district shall follow district policies and state/federal laws pertaining to content standards, students records, copyright, and technical standards.

**Anyone who is aware of problems with, or misuse of ICT resources, or has a question regarding the proper use of resources, should see a teacher or administrator immediately. Most importantly, the Board and the Administration urge any person who receives any harassing, threatening, intimidating, or other improper message through ICT resources to report it immediately.**

For more information about the use of technology in The Graham Family of Schools, contact the Director of Information Technology at 614-262-1111.

