



GATEWAY SCHOOL
Middle School Handbook
2008-2009



MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

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The Middle School handbook supplements the Parent/Student Handbook. If an area is not included in the Middle School Handbook please refer to the Parent/Student Handbook.

Introduction

Welcome to the Middle School! We hope your years in 6th, 7th and 8th grade will be both educational and enjoyable. We hope too that you will find topics that interest and inspire you. If you also learn *how* you learn you will be well prepared to excel in high school and beyond.

The Middle School at Gateway is a continuation of the K- 5 program, however, as you mature, your needs as students, and the needs of the program, change. As Middle School students you have certain freedoms and expectations that would not be appropriate for younger students.

Gateway's Middle School program allows you, as students, to influence your own learning, your school community and the community-at-large. Active learning is encouraged, where you are involved in making choices regarding academic research and presentation options. Inquiry or problem-based learning is encouraged, where you seek answers to questions of interest to you within the context of the unit of study. You also help to define appropriate guidelines for individual and community behavior and choice of activities. Your "voice" is developed through class meetings, current event discussions and Student Council leadership positions.

We have put together this Handbook to focus on the structure and expectations of the Middle School. We hope it helps you and your parents understand the Middle School. Let us know what you think!

Percy L. Abram, Ph.D.
Head of School

Gateway School Mission Statement

- To Provide a rich and challenging academic experience
- To Prepare students for future success – in school and beyond
- To Challenge students to give their personal best
- To Develop character, and a commitment to personal, social and environmental responsibility.
- To Inspire a passion for lifelong learning

The Key Features of a Gateway Education

A Rich and Challenging Academic Experience

Gateway's core academic subjects of language arts, math, science, and social studies are enriched and integrated with specialty programs in the arts, life lab science, Spanish language and culture, physical education and technology.

Meaningful, Engaged Learning

Gateway's faculty uses inquiry-based methods to help our students discover and research their own questions. Together they participate in hands-on, minds-on, project-based learning. These teaching practices facilitate in-depth understanding, mastery of concepts and exploration of ideas. Gateway students learn *how* to learn, to research, to reason, to solve problems and to communicate their ideas effectively.

An Emphasis on Communication and Reasoning Skills

Gateway strives to graduate exceptional thinkers and communicators. Our teachers help our students learn to listen carefully and to speak articulately; to read and to think with a critical mind; to write fluently and creatively; to make and defend a logical argument; to explore and apply quantitative ideas in a variety of forms; and to present their work publicly with skill and confidence.

A Passion for Learning

Gateway's approach builds upon children's desire to understand their world and the knowledge that this provides the most effective and long-lasting motivation for achievement. We design our curriculum and teaching methods to support this natural curiosity and, at the same time, meet the child at his or her learning edge. We strive to inspire a passion for learning. We want our 8th grade graduates to be as willing and excited to explore and to create as they were when they came to us in kindergarten!

Character Education

At Gateway, we believe that the purpose of education goes far beyond teaching academics and preparing students for the world of work. We prepare our students to

become responsible, contributing members of the world community. We foster the development of self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-discipline; the ability to cooperate, collaborate and resolve conflicts; a desire to excel, to create, and to contribute; and a commitment to personal, social and environmental responsibility.

Collaborative Learning

Gateway's small class size, small school size and low student/teacher ratio ensures that every student is known and valued by staff, teachers, students, and parents. This entire school community works together to provide a rich and challenging academic experience within a school culture characterized by kindness, mutual respect, and responsibility

Positive Standards of Behavior

All members of the Gateway Community are held to the same standards of behavior in keeping with our key features (see p. 4). There may be minor variations in accordance with the individual's responsibilities, training, and developmental level.

All students in the Middle School are expected to treat adults, peers, and younger students with respect as individuals and as members of a shared community. As older and more experienced members of the student body, middle school students will be, where possible, given responsibilities as student leaders. In their language and actions they will be expected to exemplify the values of Gateway School.

The developmental understandings of children, and the vocabulary adults need to explain behavior, vary with age therefore we cannot establish a school-wide list that will work without including rules too simple or too complex for some ages.

It is intended that all standards for behavior and all specific rules will fit under at least one of three areas of respect - some examples are given but these should not be taken to be exclusive of others.

1. Respect for the community

- **Behavioral standards for actions as a member of a group are as high as for individual acts.** Example: Do not act rudely when in a group, such as an audience, by jeering or other disrespectful comments or gestures.
- **Always act in ways that are safe for others.** Example: Always walk in school buildings and in outside areas where there is congestion (such as the lunch tables and sidewalks.)

2. Respect for the individual

- **All behavior is to be positive and supportive of other individuals.** Example: All words and actions are to show positive care and interest in others. Words and actions that "put down", even when masked as a joke, are not to be used. Rude language that will offend others may not be used.
- **All people should follow the same standards for sharing space with others.** Examples: Hold open doors for people who can't open them themselves (carrying books, for example). Look where you are walking so you don't bump into others. Walk around

conversations not through the middle of them. Make sure you don't block a passage or doorway when having a conversation. Keep clear of other people's space and property unless invited, respect their request to leave them alone

3. *Respect for the environment*

- **All actions must show awareness of and concern for our environment.** Example: All property must be kept clean and free of unnecessary marks or writing.
- **Equipment should be used for its intended purpose and in the correct way.** Example: Wait until you receive specific instructions for using a computer, camera or other piece of school equipment. Follow the rules for use of the playground equipment.
- The building and grounds should be kept clean. Students should actively practice waste avoidance in all activities and recycle any waste whenever possible. Paper and other waste material should only be put in the proper waste or recycling container. **Gum should not be chewed on the school property, on the sidewalks or during school sponsored activities on or off school property (including field trips.)**

Major Rules

- **We take seriously our commitment to promoting a supportive community that shows respect for the individual and the building of community.** Therefore we work to provide a safe and supportive environment for all members of the Gateway community. Behavior that threatens that environment will be treated seriously. No violent or abusive behavior towards others will be accepted. Students may not threaten others with language, body or with an object used as a weapon. If an individual's actions endanger our community he or she will be responded to appropriately. This can include suspension or dismissal.
- **We take seriously also the character attributes of ethical behavior and responsibility.** No student should possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol. Students may not self-medicate with either prescription or non-prescription medications. Students who break these guidelines may be suspended or dismissed. Gateway reserves the right to respond to actions by students when not under the supervision of the school if the actions are deemed to have a deleterious impact on the school community.

Students should strive to perform their best within the framework established by the School. Students who **cheat or plagiarize** will be subject to penalties including suspension. Continued acts may result in dismissal.

It is hoped that all students will understand the reasons for our Standards of Behavior and Major Rules and will voluntarily conform to these expectations. However if a student fails to follow the guidelines and disrupts the learning of the group, action will be taken to control the situation and encourage behavioral change.

Academics

Gateway School wants to help Middle School students be well prepared to accept personal responsibility for the completion of their work in High School and College. Therefore we have established the following procedures for deadlines, late and incomplete work.

Deadlines for Student Work

- ◆ Students need to take deadlines seriously. This is an important habit to firmly establish before entry into high school. Students who meet deadlines will be supported and will not be penalized by finding that less organized or conscientious students are allowed to slide past deadlines without penalty.
- ◆ Teachers will not pursue students to remind them that homework, or other assignments, are due, unless as part of an official accommodation plan. Students who do not return work on time will be expected to complete the assignment and will receive a grade reduction.

Late Work

Work that is not completed on schedule will need to be completed to be assessed. Unless excused due to illness or another acceptable reason, late work will be penalized at a minimum rate of 5% per day (25% per 5 days.) Teachers may apply a higher penalty after informing the student and her/his parents.

Incomplete Work

Incomplete work will be so marked. It is expected that all incomplete work will be completed, unless excused by the teacher. An "Incomplete" score will be given on progress reports and semester evaluations if: a large project or numerous assignments are outstanding at the end of a semester; or if a student would not receive a passing score without the missing assignments; or if special student accommodations have been made.

A student will have four weeks to complete work in a course where an "Incomplete" score has been given. Incomplete scores, due to excused absences, are eligible to receive full credit. Those that involve unexcused absences or delays will receive a reduced score. Teachers are expected to give clear notice to parents prior to the end of a semester that work is incomplete. If notice has been given, assignments that are not turned in will be given a value of 0.

Guidelines for Academic Work

For teachers to help students do their best we have to know what work has been done by the student alone, and what has been done with the assistance of a parent or tutor. Therefore when a student receives assistance, parents should inform the teacher – otherwise incorrect expectations will be established and the student will be less likely to get the support needed in class where most assessed work is expected to occur.

A common expectation for format and approach to research and report writing will be established for the Middle School grades and will be communicated to students and parents.

Grade Promotion and Graduation

In order to start a transition to the forms of grading used in High Schools, Middle School students are scored on a percentage basis. As some students do not communicate school information to their parents, formal notification letters are sent from the Middle School Coordinator, notifying parents one month prior to the end of each semester if a course score is below the passing level. Students who do not meet the passing grade, or who do not satisfactorily complete a probationary period, may not be allowed to pass to the next grade or, in Grade 8, to receive a **Graduation Diploma**. **Please note that, to graduate, a student must meet the requirements in ALL areas of the curriculum.** This will be modified appropriately when a student has a special modification plan.

Gateway's Grading System

The grading system at Gateway is based on the following factors:

1. The established exit goals require greater effort and learning in order to be successful in each succeeding grade. Therefore the percentage required to pass each grade will remain constant.
2. Gateway's student population falls within the upper thirty percent of the national population and, therefore, the percentages awarded will be calculated to more closely reflect an independent school norm than a national norm. This will allow for a greater spread for upper level students to reflect variations in achievement more easily.
3. To be considered able to pass to the next grade at Gateway a student should be achieving a minimum 65% on the Gateway (Independent School) norms. Students falling between 65% and 69% will be considered on academic probation and may be required to complete satisfactory summer work in the appropriate area of study. If the student, in the faculty's estimation, falls too far below to be remediated a re-enrollment contract may be withheld.
4. Course descriptions and exit goals can be requested to accompany transcripts for students leaving Gateway.

* If it is felt that the student who falls too far below passing can be maintained in the classroom without harm to him/her self or to the class a modified program can be considered following an appropriate STST process.

If a percentage score is below the passing level at the end of the school year 6th and 7th grade students will work during the summer to either catch-up with the course content, or make-up missing work. Students having trouble handling the work expectations will enter into an STST process and possibly be moved to an accommodated or modified program.

8th grade students who receive less than a passing percentage will receive a certificate of attendance. The Head of School will work with a family to see if a plan to complete the missing requirements can be developed and successfully completed. When completed, a graduation certificate will be awarded.

The Community Service requirement must be satisfied and a student should show satisfactory commitment to, and behavior in support of, the Key Features of Gateway.

Specific Points:

1. Graduation requires demonstrating the required level of success in all subject areas: Core, Math, Science, Spanish, P.E. and Electives.
2. Students need to be in a recognized 504 program to be allowed to meet the requirements with accommodations. Please note that accommodations are provided to allow a student to show a satisfactory knowledge and skill acquisition equivalent to the other students.
3. Students who cannot meet the academic expectations may, if qualifying for an I.E.P. (individual educational program), be allowed to omit some sections of the program – for example be exempted from Spanish – and receive a graduation diploma in keeping with Federal A.D.A. requirements. This will only be possible if the student concerned can learn at Gateway without an undue strain on the community and resources.
4. With the prior approval of the Head of School a student may provide an alternative program for physical education and be eligible for graduation.

Books & Supplies

At the beginning of the school year, students receive textbooks and will be given supplies and additional books as needed throughout the year. Books are to be returned to the school in the same condition as when received. Students will be charged for replacement costs of lost or damaged books.

Cell Phone Usage

As there is limited phone availability at the School, students, with parental permission, may bring a cell-phone to school. The limits of calling are to be set between the parent and the child.

- The phone must be switched off during class periods.
- The phone cannot be used during class time (even if you've said you're going to the bathroom) unless the supervising teacher has given permission, specific to that call.
- Students may not lend their cell phone to another student.
- The variety of functions available for cell phones continues to increase. Any use of a cell phone that the supervising adult feels is inappropriate must stop. Text messaging during class is not allowed. Taking photographs without the express permission of the person or people being photographed is not allowed at any time.

If any of these rules are ignored the first offense will receive a warning and the second will remove the privilege for the remainder of the school year.

Students without a cell phone may, with a teacher's permission, use the office, or classroom, phone for emergency calls.

Communications

Students are responsible for giving fliers or letters from the school to their parents and for informing parents about relevant items posted at <http://www.gatewaysc.org>. Parents who supply the school with a current email address will receive monthly curriculum letters, project assignment sheets, and special event/field trip information.

Community Service

Purpose for Gateway Middle School Community Service

Gateway believes that developing both an understanding of the need for community service, as well as the habit of community service, is important in the growth of citizens in an open and democratic society. Therefore, a requirement for Community Service is built into the Middle School program.

Community Service requirements should meet the following criteria.

Criteria:

1. Be work that relieves an adult of a task that has to be done.
2. Work is done well enough that it does not have to be redone.
3. Work is done without requiring extra supervisory time.
4. If the work does not relieve an adult of a required task it should have been a task previously identified as desirable and clearly improves the quality of the activity for the clients (whether they be fellow students or members of the wider community.)

Community Service Parameters for getting credit (grades 7 & 8)

- ◆ To get credit the work cannot be done to fulfill academic requirements or receive academic credit or extra credit.
- ◆ To get credit the work should be done to support some sector of the community, either school or wider community.
- ◆ To get credit the activity must be unpaid and for a not-for-profit organization.
- ◆ To get credit the activity must take place out of class time. (This may be during lunch/recess, before or after school or over the weekend or vacation days.)
- ◆ To get credit the activity must have been pre-approved by the Community Service coordinator.
- ◆ To get credit the activity must have been completed and the Community Service coordinator must receive a form from the teacher, or organization, benefiting from the service and signed by the site supervisor.
- ◆ Credit will not be given for music or sport practice time or for competitive activities on the part of the student. (A musician can be given credit for a public performance in a not-for-profit setting but not for rehearsal time. A swimmer cannot get credit for competing in a meet but can for the time s/he spends manning the snack table or timing other heats.)

Community Service is required in all Middle School grades.

Grade Six activities will be chosen and worked on as a class and may be in school or off site. The hours may vary from year to year, depending on the project chosen.

Grade Seven students will choose projects individually but must be on the school site. A cumulative total of **25 hours** is required.

Grade Eight students will choose projects individually and may work either on site or off site. A cumulative total of **30 hours** is required.

Computer & Internet Use

Gateway's approach to learning integrates the use of technology into curriculum in an innovative way. The use of computers, the Internet as a research tool, presentation software and other tools are introduced in a developmentally appropriate way as the grades progress.

Students are responsible for their behavior on the computer and in staying within the guidelines set and agreed upon.

1. Gateway School computers are for teaching and learning only.
2. Students may never be on a computer or laptop without an employee, or an adult volunteer delegated by a Gateway employee, in supervision of the student. No one may give permission for a student to be on a computer in a room that is not supervised frequently. Preferably the responsible adult should be present in the room at all times.
3. The adult who is in supervision is responsible to look at the behavior of the students on computers and to be aware of what is on the screen of the computers. When behavior or content appears questionable the supervisor is responsible to investigate. Students do not have privacy when on computers – whether the school's property or their own.
4. Do not deface a Gateway School computer in any way; this includes but is not limited to adhering stickers, writing on, and engraving. Any student caught defacing a Gateway School computer will be held financially responsible for any damage.
5. If there is any physical damage, including accidental or normal wear and tear, it must be reported to the IT director within 24 hours.
6. If there is any issue with the operating system or installed software, it must be reported to the IT director within 24 hours.
7. Gateway School computers/laptops may never leave the classroom without the express permission of a teacher, and, if taken outside the classroom may not be left in an unsecure location (left unattended) or where there is a likelihood of physical damage.
8. Gateway School computers are loaded with standard, licensed software. Any additional software installed must first be approved by the IT director or Computer Teacher and must be properly licensed.
9. Appropriate computer use:
 - a. Chatting: students may not use any chat or collaborative software or participate in online chat while at Gateway School without the express permission of a teacher.
 - b. Audio: Because it can be very distracting, computer volume should always be off unless headphones are being used or it is part of a presentation.

- c. Games: Games should never be played unless specifically approved by a teacher or if the game is provided by Gateway School as a learning tool.
- d. Network access: Students may not access any information on a non-public server. Students may not monitor network activity or attempt to damage the network. Students may not change school information or portray themselves as another person over the Internet.
- e. Data: Students are responsible for their own data. Gateway School may at any time erase all data from a machine in order to reinstall software that has become damaged so it is recommended that students use a flash drive or e-mail their documents to themselves as a backup.
- f. Downloading: Students may only download materials related to their schoolwork. Downloading of inappropriate materials, music, and video games is not allowed. Use of peer-to-peer downloading software and downloading material under copy write is strictly prohibited.
- g. E-mail: E-mail at Gateway School is for communication of school information. Personal conversations should not be conducted on Gateway School computers. All correspondence sent from a Gateway School computer should be courteous and appropriate. Bulk e-mails, including chain letters, advertisements or any other unsolicited distribution of mail are not allowed at Gateway School.
- h. Internet:
The rules for access to the Internet vary with the grade. Grade 6 must ask permission to go on the Internet and state where they are going and why. Students in Grades 7 and 8 are allowed to net surf in compliance with correct usage conditions, as explained here or by the computer room supervisor. No students may be on the Net without understanding the procedure to follow if the wrong screen appears. (Turn off the monitor. Raise hand for supervisor.) When called, the supervisor finds out from the student what has happened and escapes from that site. Students who, deliberately or accidentally, arrive at a wrong site and do not follow the above procedure, lose computer use for the next three days. Responses for repeated offence(s) are not currently fixed, but will be resolved in an appropriate manner. The Head of School should be told of each offence dealt with by the adult supervisor. The Head of School will then be able to track and respond to multiple offences. If a pop-up that is inappropriate appears the supervisor must note it and ensure that the Computer Coordinator is informed so that the site is contacted. Coordinator must contact the site and log the complaint.

Students in Grade 6 may not answer email in school. They may download homework that they have attached to an email to themselves, but the supervisor needs to be present. Students in Grades 7 and 8 may use email from school if all necessary schoolwork has been completed. Email usage that does not conform to Gateway standards for content and style may cause this privilege to be revoked.

General game playing and chat rooms are not permitted. If they have been pre-approved, some games may be played if educationally and developmentally appropriate and supervised. Chat rooms may only be entered if they have been specifically created to meet course requirements or to pursue specific curricula needs and have been pre-approved by the relevant teacher.

10. Personal laptops:

- a. Personal laptops are subject to the Gateway School Computer Policy.
- b. Use of a personal laptop by any student other than the owner must be approved by the parent of the owner.
- c. Gateway staff will assist in connecting personal laptops to our Network and set up access to one Gateway School printer, provided the personal laptop has up to date anti-virus software installed (anti-virus software required for PC's only)
- d. Gateway School staff cannot be responsible for any maintenance or repairs on personal laptops.
- e. Personal laptops are the responsibility of the owner and Gateway School cannot assume any responsibility for the security or maintenance of private laptop. Losses due to physical and/or software damage are the sole responsibility of the laptop owner.

Detention

Detention will be held twice a week at lunchtimes for middle school students. Detention will be assigned for repeated minor rule-breaking, continual late work, or other infractions. Teachers may use their discretion in assigning detention. Students are responsible for knowing when and where they are assigned for detention. Any student who fails to show up for detention, or who is repeatedly assigned to detention, will meet with the Head of School to determine a solution to the behavior.

Dress Code

Standards:

- Clothing should enable the student, and his/her peers to learn without distraction – this may exclude extreme fashions.
- At times student fashion choices, even if relatively mainstream, may not be allowed. Pants that are not well anchored and expose the body or slip down, tops that have no straps are examples of inappropriate clothing for school. Students will be required to remedy the situation in order to remain in school.
- Clothing, and personal adornments, should be safe and appropriate to the activity.
- The clothing should reflect the Gateway values of Respect and Community. There should be no offensive words on clothing, or words supporting illegal or inappropriate behaviors.
- Hats and other head coverings may be worn unless a teacher requests otherwise.
- Clothing should be clean and well cared for. (The same standards are applied to personal hygiene and hair care.)

Elective Classes

Students in the middle school participate in an elective program that offers selections each quarter in the arts & sciences or sports. Class size is often limited, with 8th graders receiving priority. Specific classes change depending upon student interest. Past classes have included Acting for the Camera, Printmaking, Ceramics, Lego Robotics, Flash Animation, Rock Climbing, Kickboxing, and Hip-Hop Dance.

End of Day Dismissal

Since Middle School students may have the last period of the day in a room other than the student's homeroom, or not with the homeroom teacher, students are to return to the homeroom. On returning to their homeroom the students must sit down in order to be checked in by the teacher. **Only after all students have returned** will they will get messages, do their jobs and be able to go to lockers and leave.

Food Consumption & Recycling

Gateway holds our stewardship of the environment as a Core Value. Students are encouraged to eat healthily. Most of the year lunch and snacks will be eaten outdoors and therefore it is important for students to be careful in preventing litter. People who do not do so may be assigned cleaning or other stewardship responsibilities on the campus.

- Food may only be eaten in the designated areas.
- Sodas and candies may only be consumed at recess and lunch.
- NO GUM may be eaten at school or on a school-sponsored activity.
- Glass containers should not be used for any food or beverage brought to school.
- Students must clean up their eating area and recycle waste.

Graduation

Eighth Grade graduation occurs on the last afternoon of school before the summer break. This is a special time for all our graduates and all members of the families and friends are welcome to come and celebrate with us. School organized events for the Eighth Grade end with the graduation ceremony. If families wish to organize a group party afterwards they are most welcome to do so. If the party is on school grounds the parents are responsible to coordinate with, and get approval from, the administration. The parents are solely responsible for all clean up after their party.

Halloween Costume Guidelines

Costumes brought to school for the traditional Halloween parade should be suitable for walking in; not violent or scary for younger viewers; appropriate apparel for a school event.

Homework Club

Teachers and administrators take this added duty to offer support to the students and want it to be part of the "self-advocating" approach that we develop for students as they prepare for high school.

This is an option for students, and is not a requirement, though teachers may recommend attendance to individuals. Parents may require attendance by their children but teachers are there to help, not to enforce attendance. If a student comes but is disruptive to the learning of other students that student may be asked to leave. Teachers will not pursue students to remind

them to attend Homework Club. The supervising teacher will close the classroom if no student is in the room by 3:20p.m. Homework Club will be offered various days of the week depending on the quarter and the teacher.

Lockers

Lockers and locks are provided for students in Grades 7 and 8 within the Middle School area. 6th Grade lockers are beside the 6th Grade building. The School will retain a master list of the codes. The lockers remain school property and may be opened by teachers for inspection or to get books for an absent student. The individual student is responsible for maintaining the security of personal property by not sharing the locker combination. The locker is large enough to take a backpack and sweatshirt or jacket. Large backpacks with wheels or frames may not fit. Neither food nor open beverages may be kept in lockers overnight. Students are required to keep their lockers clean and there will be periodic locker inspections.

Medications

Parents must take the responsibility for making sure their child comes to school each day feeling healthy and well-rested. Please do not send a child to school with a fever. If a child becomes ill while at school, the office will notify parents who should pick up their child as quickly as possible. Before the office can give a child aspirin or other medication, the school must have a written release and specific instructions from the parents.

Students are not to self-medicate with either prescription or non-prescription medications. If a medication such as an inhaler or epi-pen is needed, your student may keep it with them but we also request you leave an additional dose, clearly labeled with the front office. Be sure to note this on their emergency card as well. If a parent gives permission for aspirin (for example) to be given on request, information will also be put on the emergency card in the School office to avoid repeat calls having to be made to parents.

When a new medication is being given the first dose should always be given at home to check for side effects.

In case of serious emergency the school will call the emergency numbers on the student emergency form. If unable to reach any of those listed, the school will take the child by ambulance to the nearest hospital emergency room and continue attempts to reach the emergency contacts.

CONTAGIOUS CONDITIONS

The control of contagious diseases, as well as head lice infestations, depends in large part on parental cooperation. Parents must keep children at home when ill or contagious so that they do not expose others. Please notify the school immediately if your child has contracted lice or a contagious disease.

Personal Possessions

Gateway recommends that students not bring electronic devices to school. Damage or loss of such property is not the responsibility of the school. The school prohibits students from

bringing knives or dangerous objects to school. Personal possessions being used inappropriately or that create a disturbance may be taken by a teacher, to be returned at the end of the school day. In the case of continuing problems the possession may be confiscated for a longer period.

Physical Education & Athletics Guidelines

Students should dress appropriately for PE. Safe footwear is especially important – no flip-flops. If a student cannot participate due to an injury or illness, a parent note must be provided as an excuse.

Gateway has an after school sports program, which currently includes flag football, basketball and volleyball. Depending upon the number of students wishing to play, field space and other factors the range of grades included and the number involved may change annually. While the intent of the teams is to be competitive all students who wish to play will be welcome to join to team and will play in each game. This may limit playing time and we cannot guarantee that all players will play equal amounts of time. In order to be eligible to play in a game students must be in attendance during the school day and meet the expectations listed below. Students who are absent during the school day will not be allowed to play in a game that same afternoon.

Expectations for athletes:

- A positive attitude
- Consistent participation at practices and games
- All school work acceptable and submitted on time
- Satisfactory citizenship on and off the school campus

Plagiarism and Cheating

We need to educate students as to the appropriate and inappropriate uses of research material. It seems clear that just talking about plagiarism doesn't explain the complexity of the issue.

1. Our goals in having research done by students are:
 - a. For students to develop the ability to find information from a variety of sources.
 - b. For students to be active in taking notes from resource sites rather than wholesale copying of a whole article.
 - c. For students to assess what sources are reliable and which are not.
 - d. For students to select, compare and contrast, information from different sources.
 - e. For students to apply their skill in separating supported fact from opinion.
 - f. For students to integrate the results of their research into a uniquely personal report.
 - g. For students to know how, and how much, to quote and to know the format by which to do it. This format needs to be coordinated and consistent through the grades.
2. We intend it to be clear to students that:
 - a. They may not integrate excerpts from other people's writing in their reports without quotations and acknowledgement.
 - b. They may not lift an entire report, or large segments from research sources, and present it as their personal work.
 - c. It is unsatisfactory to present excerpts from other people's work, even with acknowledgement, unless there is a personally developed section which shows active

consideration, on the student's part, of the information found in the research. This section should evaluate the quality of the material, critique it, offer comparisons and contrasts and so forth.

Cheating

While we often allow, encourage, or require learning to be a co-operative activity, we do not expect the work product, on which an individual is assessed, to be done with the help of others unless there is specific direction from the teacher. Quizzes and tests are used to assess what has been understood and what still needs to be learned. Test results that do not reflect the individual's knowledge are of little use. Test, quizzes, written compositions and research projects may also be assigned a "grade" but attempts to get a better percentage by cheating undermine the relationship between the student and the school and will be taken seriously. Repeated transgressions will be a major concern.

School Response to Plagiarism and Cheating

The response to incidents of plagiarism and cheating will be somewhat dependent on the age of the child and the circumstances. However, if the occurrence of plagiarism or cheating results – in the teachers' assessment – in it being impossible to either trust the child to the necessary degree or assess the child's progress then it is likely that the child will be asked to leave the school.

Resolving Conflicts

All students at Gateway School are expected to work to resolve conflicts with fairness, active listening, and without recourse to violence. This means listening carefully to what each person feels and wants, and thinking of a way to solve the problem that works with everyone. The initiating of conflict and a refusal to work at resolving conflicts will be serious breaches of the Gateway expectations.

School Attendance

The spirit of the absence policy is to promote the idea that every school day is important and provides students with a new opportunity to grow, learn, and engage with the curriculum and their community. Our teachers believe that each day, regardless of a student's grade, is critical to a child's education and that what takes place in the classroom cannot be duplicated merely by re-reading the textbook or workbook, reviewing a peer's notes from class, or completing an assignment from home. Therefore, we expect that all students will attend every class every day.

We understand that on occasion, it will be necessary for a student to miss a class or even a day of school. Parents can support both the student and the school by giving careful consideration to the impact a child's absence has on him or her and the class, and by promptly communicating with the school about the time and date of the student's absence.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Typically, student illness, death in the family, a family emergency, religious holidays, and school-related activities are considered excused absences. Absences for other reasons (e.g. family vacations, attending professional sporting events, personal convenience, or extending

school holidays) will most likely be considered unexcused. While appointments with your child's physician and/or dentist will be considered excused absences, we urge you to make appointments after school or when school is not in session in order to minimize the disruption on the class and the impact on your child's learning.

If you know in advance that your child will be absent, please call the Main Office as soon as possible so that your child's teacher may plan accordingly. In general, students with excused absences will be afforded the same number of days as the absence to submit missed work and/or to make up a test. Students should make arrangements with their teachers the day they return to develop a plan for missed work. In the event of an extended absence, parents and children should be in communication with the teacher either via email or through the class pages to keep up with assignments and projects.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Typically, absences for personal convenience or due to family trips and vacations that extend beyond school holidays will be deemed unexcused. Unexcused absences have an affect on the student's learning and may possibly affect his or her grade in the class. Teachers will not be required to accept missed work from students whose absence is unexcused, nor will the teacher be responsible for catching students up with work or the pace of the class. It is the student's responsibility to ensure he or she meets all upcoming deadlines and is apprised of the topics that were covered in his or her absence.

If a student is absent (excused or unexcused) for more than 20% of a school year he or she runs the risk of not being promoted to the next grade. The Head of School will meet with students who are frequently absent from school and their parents to discuss the reasons for the absences. The family and the school will develop a plan to improve the student's attendance record and performance when absences begin to adversely affect the student's learning and the classroom environment. The family and the Head of School will create a contract that stipulates the school's expectations for attendance. The student and his/her parent(s) will sign an acknowledgement form agreeing to abide by the terms of the contract. A student's failure to honor the terms of the agreement may result in removal from the school community.

TARDY STATEMENT

Students who regularly arrive late to school or to class are at a disadvantage and can potentially disrupt the learning that is taking place in the classroom. If a student arrives at school more than 5 minutes tardy, he or she must report to the Main Office to sign in. Tardy is defined as arriving after 8:30 for grades 5 - 8.

In the middle school, students who arrive late to school or to class risk losing the right to participate in activities during recess, lunch, and after school. Students who are routinely late to school will meet with the Head of School to discuss the reasons for the tardies. The student and the Head of School will create a contract that stipulates and explains the school's expectations for promptness. The student and her parent(s) will sign an acknowledgement form agreeing to abide by the terms of the contract. A student's failure to honor the terms of the agreement will result in immediate parental notification and the loss of student privileges, as determined by the Head of School. Repeated violations may result in suspension and/or removal from the school community.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Gateway School is obliged and committed to preventing sexual harassment from occurring to students. Sexual harassment is defined as "unwanted sexual advances, or visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature."

This definition includes many forms of offensive behavior and includes gender-based harassment of a person. The following is a partial list:

- Unwanted sexual advances
- Offering benefits in exchange for sexual favors
- The making of threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances
- Visual conduct: leering, making sexual gestures, displaying of sexually suggestive objectives or pictures, cartoons or posters
- Verbal conduct: making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs or jokes
- Verbal sexual advances or propositions
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations.

An act of harassment, by itself, is an unlawful act. Gateway School administration will take immediate and appropriate actions once it receives a complaint. A report will be made and fully investigated within 48 hours. If proven, there will be prompt action taken. Harassment may include peer interactions as well as adult to child or older to younger child.

Snack Sale Fundraisers

Snack Sales should be in support of the curriculum or the Core Values of Gateway School. If a class, or student council, wishes to run a snack sale to provide funds for a community service project it needs approval of the administration, a supervising teacher, and to meet the specific policy guidelines.

Student Council

One way in which middle school students show leadership in the school community is through the Student Council. The officers of the Student Council will be elected from the Seventh and Eighth Grades, with Sixth through Eighth Grade students voting.

Activities. There will be one middle school dance for all three grades that will be organized by the Student Council, if other dances are desired students must find parent sponsorship and non-school funding and get administrative approval. There may be additional dances for Middle School students offered by other local schools. Gateway School will not sponsor, or recommend, dances at which students older than Eighth Grade will be included. The Student Council will also sponsor and organize an evening of Atomic Bowling.

Student Progress Reports, Evaluations and Conferences

For students in the middle school, parent-teacher-student conferences are scheduled in the fall and winter, but may be scheduled at other times as needed. The faculty prepares progress reports twice a year, and more detailed semester evaluations twice a year.

- Fall goal setting conference— early in the school year. *This is intended to include goals suggested by teachers, parents AND the student. Here is a chance for you to increase your challenge to yourself in areas that you see as important.*
 - Fall Progress Report – mailed mid semester
 - First semester conference & written evaluation – end of first semester. *The evaluations will be mailed home at least a week before the conference to allow time for parents to review the information and schedule conference with the appropriate teachers.*
 - Spring Progress Report—mailed mid semester
 - Second semester written evaluation--mailed in late June
- For specific dates please check the annual calendar.

Student and Teacher Support Team (STST)

Mission. The mission of the Gateway STST is to develop a team approach to support individual students and their teachers so that students will reach their potential. It is intended that students who need to be offered an enriched curriculum are included in this program, as well as students who need to have academic levels reduced from the standard expectations. The STST is expected to meet concerning behavioral, social and emotional needs as well as academic issues.

Structure. The activation of a team may be requested by a teacher, parent, student or administrator. The team may include teachers, the resource specialist, the school psychologist, an administrator, the child's parents, and significant others working with the child.

Program Accommodations and Modifications

If the STST thinks it appropriate and, with the parents explicit approval, the School may change some aspects of the program to meet the needs of a child. These changes will fit within one of the two following categories:

Accommodation. The student continues to meet the grade level expectations but requires some special allowance or support in order to do so. (Examples of these would be: using a tape recorder or making an oral presentation rather than a written one; using spell check or a calculator; completing fewer examples; working with a tutor.)

Modification. There is a change from the grade expectations to meet the needs of a specific student. (The modification may be either a lowering or a raising of the expectations.)

If the parents do not agree with the STST recommendations, the issue of the school's ability to work with that student will be reviewed. Accommodations and Modifications will only be implemented if it can be done without adversely affecting the classroom operation and the learning needs of the other students.

Student Aides and Tutors

Shadow Aides

When, due to a student's specific learning needs, Gateway School requires an individual aide be hired by the parent in order for the student to be enrolled or re-enrolled in the school the aide must be hired through an agency that meets Gateway's criteria. This may not be necessary if the parent signs a binding legal document accepting responsibility for fulfilling all state and federal obligations and indemnifying Gateway against any potential costs that might occur as a result of that aide working at Gateway.

Tutors

Gateway will not require tutoring of students as a condition for enrollment. **Decisions concerning the offering of an enrollment contract are based on the student meeting Gateway's academic and behavioral benchmarks.** At times, teachers or administrators may recommend tutoring as, possibly, the best way for a student to meet required goals or benchmarks. However, the final decision, as to how the parents will help their child reach the necessary standards, lies with the parents.

As a convenience to families, teachers may allow tutoring to take place during the school day during times when the teacher feels that a student may be exempted from class without a significant loss to the individual or the group. If this is not possible tutoring will have to take place out of school hours.

Questions?

If you have questions about anything in this handbook, please speak to a faculty member or the Head of School, Percy Abram at: percy.abram@gatewaysc.org