Family Handbook

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Basic Philosophies

Mission Statement

Gowensville Christian School exists to partner with Christian parents seeking an education that sets a high standard of individualized excellence founded on Biblical truth.

Vision

We exist to partner with Christian parents seeking an education that sets a high standard of individualized excellence founded on Biblical truth. Our vision for each student is that they grow into young men and women who bear fruit in every good work and grow in the knowledge of the Lord our God (Col. 1:9-14).

Statement of Faith

The statements below reflect the basics of our beliefs. We also find ourselves in large agreement with the Baptist Faith & Message 2000, the “Nashville Statement” on biblical sexuality and the “Dallas Statement” on social justice. Parents and students are encouraged to research these additional statements.

1. God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things and is the Source of all Truth.

2. God is Sovereign and maintains control over His entire universe. He is omnipotent. omnipresent, and omniscient. In all things, He is limited by nothing other than His own nature and character.

3. The one living and true God exists eternally in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

4. God has revealed Himself in a general way in His world and universe, and in a specific way in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. These Scriptures are made up of 66 books, from Genesis to Revelation, the authority of which depends not upon the testimony of any man or church and are all to be received as the Word of God.

5. The Bible is the inspired Word of God, the only inerrant and infallible rule of faith and practice.

6. We believe in the deity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in His sinlessness, in His miracles, in His vicarious atonement by the shedding of His blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His return in power and glory.

7. All individuals are lost in sin apart from Jesus Christ, and the only way of salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ, enabled by the Holy Spirit.

8. Salvation is by God's grace alone, and Christ's vicarious atonement on the cross secured our salvation.

9. We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically and mentally challenged, and every stage or condition from conception through natural death. As believers, we are called to defend, protect, and value all human life.

10. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders and sexes together reflect the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex, physically, in language, or any other way, is the rejection of the image of God within that person and cannot be supported.

11. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25)

12. We believe that any form of sexual immorality is contrary to the Bible's teaching, is sinful, and offensive to God.

13. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are not condoned and are not in accord with Scripture or our beliefs.

14. We believe Christianity to be a faith of enlightenment and intelligence. All sound learning, therefore, is part of our Christian heritage. In Christian education, there is a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. The freedom of a teacher or curriculum in any Christian institution is limited by the preeminence of Christ, the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

15. We believe that membership in a local church is the plain teaching of Scripture and that the regular gathering of his people is on the first day of the week, Sunday. Gowensville Christian School will not schedule school events on Sundays and asks that all those enrolling in the school commit to a local body of believers.

Code of Conduct

Gowensville Christian students are expected to:

1. Honor God, their parents, their instructors, and their fellow students according to biblical principles of conduct.

2. Act respectfully to all students, teachers, staff, and administration. Disrespect in words and/or actions will be dealt with immediately. These disrespectful actions include, but are not limited to, talking when the teacher is teaching, being disruptive in class, and failing to follow classroom expectations. Inappropriate language is not acceptable. Bullying, harassment, intimidation of other students or staff, on campus, on social media and/or off-campus, will not be tolerated and could result in disciplinary action, as further outlined on page 19 of the Handbook.

3. Know and comply with the GCS dress code; see page 20. Failure to comply with the GCS dress code may result in students being asked to call their parents for appropriate clothing. A large GCS T-shirt is also available to put on over inappropriate clothing.

4. Arrive on time and be prepared to participate in class each day.

5. **Students are expected to come prepared for class.** Late assignment policies will be established by the course instructor in the class syllabus. We recommend and support the general policy that any work that is not with the student in class on the due date is considered late and may be turned in the following week for half credit. Assignments more than one week late may receive a grade of zero. Similarly, if students are absent due to **illness or being out of town**, please know that it is your responsibility to submit all missed work within two weeks of the date assigned. **Please notify teachers of planned absences in advance whenever possible.**

6. Be honest and original in all assignments. Plagiarism or cheating of any kind is not tolerated, and students will receive a zero on the assignment.

7. Cell phones, tablets, smart watches, or electronic devices are **not** to be used at any time on campus without permission. Inappropriate or disruptive use of these items will result in disciplinary action. Teachers may send students to leave their phones/electronics safely in the front office if they become a classroom distraction, where parents can pick them up. Cell phones/electronics may be brought to school, but must remain in backpacks and turned completely off throughout the day

8. No knives, guns, or anything that might bring harm to another person is allowed on campus.

Admission

Nondiscrimination Statement

Gowensville Christian School will admit a student provided, in the opinion of the school administration, the student can benefit from the academic program and activities planned by the school administration. GCS admits students of any gender, race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or other protected characteristic applicable to a religious-based institution. It does not discriminate and shall not tolerate discrimination based on gender, race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or other protected characteristic applicable to a religious-based institution in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, athletics, and other school-administered programs. All prospective and current students and families must agree with Gowensville Christian School's mission statement, and they must be willing to conduct their lives in conformity with the school's statement of faith and the school's declaration and agreement to ethical and moral integrity.

Admission

Any family that would like to enroll their student in Gowensville Christian School must:

- **Submit an Application**
  - Read the Admissions & Enrollment Requirements, and after prayerfully considering if GCS is the best fit for your family, submit an online application with a non-refundable $25 application fee per student.
- **Student Records Request**
  - In the application, student records will be requested. Please upload documentation of previous schools attended, grade levels completed, and any other school records. Include any formal educational testing, classroom accommodations, and/or IEP information here as well.
  - If homeschooled, parents must upload a transcript of curriculum/grade-level completion and include a student writing sample. For any questions regarding qualifying records/sample work, please email office@gowensvillechristianschool.com.
- **Family Interview**
  - If you are a new prospective family, an administrator will set up a meeting with you to discuss the remainder of the admissions process, hear from you about your relationship with the Lord, and share more about GCS.
- **Admissions Committee**
  - Once we have completed each of these steps, your application will be reviewed by the admissions committee to determine eligibility on a first-come, first-served basis. You will be notified with either an offer of enrollment, placement on a waiting list, or be notified that GCS is unable to offer acceptance.
- If your student is offered acceptance, you will receive an enrollment packet, which will include a link to submit a non-refundable $175 registration fee ($150 if submitted before April 15th). If this fee is not paid, your student will not be considered registered with our school.

Applications are accepted throughout the current school year and are processed on an “as available” basis. Applications must be accompanied by the appropriate application fee.

Withdrawal Policy

We base our budget and teacher salaries on enrollment. Your financial commitment is critical to planning for and meeting these costs. Once a student begins classes, parents are responsible for the financial obligation of the entire semester.

Re-Registration of Current Students for the Following Academic Year

Currently enrolled student families will receive an invitation to early, discounted registration for the following academic school year in advance of applications opening to the general public each spring. Currently enrolled students must be in good financial, academic, and disciplinary standing as described in Gowensville Christian School policies and culture. Students who are under any form of probation, either academically or disciplinarily, or who are not in good financial standing, may need to reapply alongside the general public.

Conflict of Interest

If at any time during enrollment a student or family finds themselves out of harmony or sympathy, or in discord or disagreement with the GCS Statement of Faith and Conduct, philosophy, standards, or administration of the school, they will immediately make that fact known to the Director. They further agree to voluntarily withdraw from GCS, or be subject to dismissal, if the discord, disagreement, or lack of harmony continues.

General Information

Attendance Policy

For your student to gain the most in school, he/she must be in regular attendance. If your student is absent due to illness or being out of town, please know that it is their responsibility to submit all missed work to the instructor as outlined in their class syllabi. Work submitted after two weeks may not be accepted at the discretion of the course instructor as outlined in the class syllabi, and the student may receive a zero for the assignments. No make-up work will be accepted at the end of the semester. Please notify teachers of planned absences in advance whenever possible. For middle and high school students, if attendance becomes an issue, attendance on Fridays will become required instead of optional. Note: Students and Parents should never consider absence as an opportunity to postpone an assignment's due date.

Finances

Registration Fees: This non-refundable fee covers administrative costs associated with enrollment.

For Returning Students:	
Renewal Registration Fee if paid before March 1st	$125
Fee if paid before April 15	$150
Fee if paid after April 15	$175
For New Students:	
Fee if paid before April 15	$150
Fee if paid after April 15	$175

Tuition:

Tuition per student**:** $5,000.00 for the year / $500 a month payment. You may pay by cash, check, ACH transfer, or credit card.

Tuition is divided over 10 months (August to May). We require the first three months of tuition up front. All monthly tuition payments begin in November and are due by the **10th of each month**.

A $30.00 late fee will be assessed if tuition is not received by the 10th of the month. An additional $30.00 late fee will be added each consecutive week tuition payment is not received. ACH is available.

Once a student begins classes, parents are responsible for the financial obligation of the entire semester. This includes all subjects.

A full month's tuition will be charged regardless of the number of days attended during the month.

Accounts must be at a zero balance on or before the last day of school. If an account is in arrears at the close of school, or if any fees or charges are due, report cards will not be issued, nor records released. Re-enrollment for the following year will not be possible until the account or fees are paid in full.

Payment Policy: *We require full commitment of the first three months of tuition up front.* This payment will be due by Meet the Teacher or the first day of school in August. Monthly tuition payments will then begin in November, with the payment due by November 10th and on the 10th of each subsequent month.
There will be a 3% fee if paying by credit card.
There will be a $20 return check fee on any checks that are returned for any reason.

General Policies and Information

Child Protection Policy

Gowensville Christian School seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for students who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect students at GCS from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

1. **Staff selection** - All employees and all persons who desire to work with the children in our programs and activities will be screened. At minimum this will involve a written application, personal interview, reference checks and criminal background checks.

2. **Open door policy** - Classroom doors should remain open unless there is an uncovered window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room unless during a formal emergency lockdown or drill site-wide. Windows should never be covered.

3. **Bathroom policy** - For the protection of all, workers should *never* be in a closed bathroom stall with a student.

4. **Training** - GCS will provide training on this child protection policy to all new employees and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

Student Reporting to a Trusted Adult Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students know how to report concerns, incidents, or events to a trusted adult in a safe, confidential, and Christ-centered manner. As a Christian school, we are committed to fostering an environment rooted in biblical truth, grace, accountability, and care, where every student is valued as created in the image of God.

Definition of a Trusted Adult

A **trusted adult** is any school-approved individual who demonstrates Christian character and whom a student feels comfortable approaching, including but not limited to:

- Teachers
- School administrators
- Pastor
- Other staff members designated by the school

All trusted adults are expected to respond with compassion, discretion, and prayerful care.

What Students Are Encouraged to Report

Students are encouraged to report any situation that causes them concern, discomfort, fear, or confusion, including:

- Bullying, harassment, or intimidation (in person or online)
- Threats or acts of violence
- Abuse or neglect
- Sexual misconduct or inappropriate behavior
- Discrimination or unkind behavior inconsistent with Christian values
- Mental, emotional, or spiritual health concerns (their own or a peer's)
- Any behavior or situation that does not honor God or respect others

Students are reminded that asking for help is a sign of wisdom and courage, not weakness.

How Students Can Report

Students may report concerns in any of the following ways:

1. **In Person:** Speak directly to a trusted adult at school.
2. **Written Report:** Submit a written note or complete a school-provided incident report form.
3. **Digital Reporting:** Send an email
4. **Through a Peer or Parent:** Ask a trusted friend or parent to help communicate the concern to an adult.

Students may report concerns for themselves or on behalf of another student.

Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

- Reports will be handled with care, respect, and prayerful consideration.
- Information will be shared only with those who need to know to ensure student safety and well-being.
- All faculty and staff are mandatory reporters and are required by law to report certain disclosures, including abuse, neglect, or threats of harm, to appropriate authorities.
- Students will be informed when confidentiality cannot be maintained due to safety, legal, or moral obligations.

Response and Follow-Up

- All reports will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.
- The trusted adult receiving the report will document the concern and notify appropriate school leadership.
- The school will respond in a manner consistent with biblical principles, school policy, and applicable law.
- Support may include prayer, counseling, restorative conversations, disciplinary action, or referrals to outside resources as appropriate.

Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually by school leadership to ensure faithfulness to the school's mission, compliance with applicable laws, and alignment with best practices.

Contacting Teacher and Parent-Teacher Conferences

Teachers' preferred form of contact will be included in the class syllabus. If you have any concerns or need to speak with your student's teacher, please contact them in the manner they prefer. Parent-Teacher conferences will be held on an as-needed basis. At GCS, we encourage early intervention and constructive, open communication to ensure the best experience and support for our students, their families and our educators. Our staff aims to partner with parents, so we invite open communication between our parents and educators.

Dangerous Weapons

To provide a safe environment for the students and staff, the possession of dangerous weapons is always prohibited on school grounds or at any school-sponsored event. No knives, guns, or anything that might bring harm to another person is allowed on campus.
Any student in possession of a weapon in violation of this policy may be placed under emergency suspension from school, pending an investigation of the incident by the appropriate school or legal authorities. Students who violate this policy may be subjected to disciplinary measures, including suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from school. Students violating this policy may also be reported to law enforcement authorities.

Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco

Students are prohibited from using, being under the influence of, possessing, furnishing, distributing, tobacco, e-cigs, alcohol, illegal or illicit drugs, drug paraphernalia, prescription medicine without a prescription, or other mood-altering substances while at school or at any school-sponsored event.
Violation of this policy may result in the imposition of disciplinary measures, which may include suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from school. Students violating this policy may also be reported to law enforcement authorities.

Electronic Devices and Personal Items

GCS will not be responsible for cell phones, tablets, smart watches, electronic devices, and/or personal items brought to school that are lost or stolen. Cell phones, tablets, smart watches, electronic devices, and/or personal items are not to be used at any time on campus without

permission. Inappropriate or disruptive use of these items will result in disciplinary action. Teachers may send students to leave their phones/electronics safely in the front office if they become a classroom distraction, where parents can pick them up. Cell phones/electronics may be brought to school but must remain in backpacks and be turned completely off throughout the day.

Acceptable Use of Technology

Gowensville Christian School recognizes technology as an important tool for education, communication, and school operations. All technology used in connection with GCS—including school-owned devices, personal devices used on campus, internet access, email, messaging, social media, and educational software—should be used responsibly, respectfully, and in a manner consistent with the mission, values, and standards of the school. Students and staff are expected to:

- Use technology primarily for appropriate educational, instructional, administrative, or school-related purposes.
- Treat others with respect in all digital communications and interactions.
- Access only content that is appropriate, lawful, and consistent with GCS standards.
- Protect passwords, accounts, personal information, and confidential school information.
- Respect the privacy and intellectual property of others, including copyrights, photographs, videos, and written materials.
- Refrain from using technology to bully, harass, threaten, embarrass, deceive, or otherwise harm another person.
- Refrain from accessing, creating, sharing, or storing inappropriate, offensive, explicit, or illegal material.
- Refrain from using technology in a manner that disrupts the learning environment, school operations, or the reputation of GCS.
- Follow all teacher, administrator, and school policies regarding the use of devices, internet access, and technology.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): The use of artificial intelligence tools must follow teacher and school guidelines. Students may not submit AI-generated work as their own when such use has not been permitted. Staff and students should use discretion when entering information into AI tools and should never enter confidential, private, or personally identifying information about another individual. GCS reserves the right to restrict or revoke technology privileges and to take appropriate disciplinary or administrative action when technology is used inappropriately or in violation of school policies. Where permitted by law and school policy, GCS may review activity conducted on school-owned devices, accounts, networks, or systems.

Evacuation and Other Emergency Policies

The school will conduct regular drills to prepare the students for efficient emergency classroom evacuation. Evacuation routes and emergency policies are posted in each classroom. These policies and plans are in a separate document and can be accessed upon request.

Field Trips

Field trips can be used to teach material in a hands-on, educational way. These trips would be part of the school day and align with the curriculum. Permission slips and any payment must be turned in before the field trip. If the trip requires chaperones, parents will need to complete a background check, at their expense, before the trip as well. We expect our students to behave in the same manner on these trips as they would at school. They are a reflection of Christ as well as our school.

Flex-day Fridays

Gowensville Christian School's hybrid schedule allows for four days of in-person instructional classroom time (Mondays-Thursdays 8 am-2pm for 7th-12th grade and 8am-1pm for 3rd-6th) and a flex day on Friday where campus will be open from 8am-noon. Friday is a unique opportunity for 7th-12th grade students to practice effective time-management in completing the assignments given during their courses or investing their time in off-campus opportunities. GCS and GCS parents will often emphasize to students that this flexible schedule is a privilege to be earned. Flex-day Friday attendance will be mandatory for 3rd-6th grade all year and mandatory for 7th-8th grade and new 9th-12th grade students for a set time frame agreed upon by the recommendation of the school and the student's parents. When a 7th-12th grade GCS student demonstrates responsible maturity in the completion of classroom assignments, they may submit an application to use their time on Fridays off-campus. Their applications will be approved pending agreement between GCS administration and the student's parents.
It will be highly recommended that families new to GCS require 9th-12th grade students to attend Flex-day Fridays for a set time frame until they also transition to the unique flexibility but rigor of the GCS course requirements. Parents and students in 9th-12th grade may submit applications to exempt Friday attendance at any point. Applications requesting exemption from Flex-Friday attendance are available upon request in the front office. If at any point a GCS student's academic success struggles, this exemption privilege will be removed, and attendance on Flex-Fridays will again become mandatory.

Flex-day Fridays on Campus

Campus will be open on Fridays from 8am-noon. Students in 7th-12th grades will have the opportunity to study and complete assignments from the week in a study-hall-style atmosphere. Educators will be available to proctor make-up tests/quizzes/assignments or provide basic tutoring support. Students who are done with assignments may quietly socialize as space is available to do so without distracting others. This social time is a privilege and can be restricted at the discretion of the staff on-campus. Class time on Fridays for 3rd -6th grade students will be structured by the teacher based on class needs. They may have the opportunity to catch up on and complete work from the week, get help in areas they may be struggling, as well as spend time with their classmates doing experiments, playing games, and socializing. All students are expected to make efficient use of this time and treat the staff, campus, and facility with respect. All drop-off/pick-up, security, conduct, cell phone, dress code, and other policies apply.

Force Majeure

Parents agree that GCS will not be liable for any failure or delay in the performance of its duties or obligations to the extent such failure or delay is caused by a force majeure or an event beyond the school's reasonable control. This includes, but is not limited to, a fire, flood, act of God, war, government action, act of terrorism, epidemic, pandemic, natural disaster, or other major upheaval which renders performance impractical, illegal, impossible, or otherwise inadvisable. In such an event, GCS's duties and obligations shall be suspended until the school, in its sole discretion, determines that it may safely and ably resume performance. GCS will provide notification of such a suspension in a reasonable time and by a reasonable method. During such a suspension, parents are expected to make all payments due to the school, and there will be no refund of tuition, fees, or other payments previously made. As an alternative to suspending performance, GCS may elect to operate on a distance-learning basis, may choose to extend its school year, and/or may adopt an alternative schedule to complete its school year curriculum.

Grading System

The reporting process is designed to convey the development and growth of each student based upon the following standards. Our expectation is that GCS students maintain C's or better in all core classes. See the Academic Probation section when a student's grades drop below 70 in two or more core classes.

GPA Calculations for High School classes are based on SC's Uniform Grading Policy

Numerical Average	Letter Grade	College Prep Weight	Honors Weight	AP/Dual Credit Weight
90-100	A	4.0-5.0	4.5-5.5	5.0-6.0
80-89	B	3.0-3.9	3.5-4.4	4.0-4.9
70-79	C	2.0-2.9	2.5-3.4	3.0-3.9
60-69	D	1.0	1.0	1.0
0-59	F	0	0	0

Progress reports will be issued in the middle of each semester. Report cards will be issued at the end of each semester.
Parents may monitor their student's progress online or on the PraxiSchool app. Details and login information will be provided at the beginning of the course semester.

High School College Bound Graduation Requirements

English ……..4 credits
Math……..……4 credits
Science…….….3 credits
Humanities……4 credits
Physical Education…….…1 credit
Health/Nutrition……....1 credit
Personal Finance……1 credit
Computer Science……...1 credit
Foreign Language……...3 credits
Total *22 units

**in addition to individualized elective requirements totaling at least 24 units AND 20 hours of community service per high school year attending GCS*

High School Trade Bound Graduation Requirements

English ……..4 credits
Math……..……4 credits
Science…….….3 credits
Humanities……4 credits
Physical Education…….…1 credit
Health/Nutrition……....1 credit
Personal Finance……1 credit
Computer Science……...1 credit
Foreign Language……...2 credits
Total *21 units

**in addition to individualized elective requirements totaling at least 24 units AND 20 hours of community service per high school year attending GCS*

Harassment, Bullying, and Cyberbullying Policy

GCS's policy is to provide an academic environment that honors the Lord in all interactions with one another. This environment should be free from harassment – whether based on gender, race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, veteran status, disability, or other protected characteristic applicable to a religious-based institution. Harassment of any type, including physical, sexual, verbal, or electronic, will not be tolerated. This policy applies to the actions of faculty, staff, volunteers, and students. Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination or expulsion. Parents will be notified when an incident involving their student is brought to the attention of the GCS staff. Instances where there is sufficient evidence that a crime has been committed will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children/students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying, whether physical, verbal, or indirect, is unacceptable behavior and

will not be tolerated at GCS. Any teacher or student who believes this policy has been violated by another person should immediately report the violation to the administration.
All forms of harassment in cyberspace, often called cyberbullying, are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at GCS. Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassment, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful email, instant, or text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs). Students who feel they have been the recipient of such misuses of technology at school should immediately report the incident to their teacher and/or an administrator.

Homework

Gowensville Christian School provides a unique hybrid-model which does not include a traditional number of classroom/instructional minutes.

7th-12th Grade Upper School: Therefore, homework assignments will be an important priority in the time management of GCS students. Attendance and efficient use of time on Flex-day Fridays are the best way to provide students with the time and instructional support needed to get homework assignments completed well and on time. If a student's grades are impacted by incomplete or missing homework assignments, Friday attendance will no longer be optional for 7th-12th grade students.

3rd-6th Grade Lower School: Therefore, study and reading assignments at home will be an important priority for families of 3rd-6th grade students. Students will have a homework folder to store any classroom work that was not completed and for weekly teacher communications.

Insurance Coverage

GCS parents understand and acknowledge that each family assumes the responsibility of the costs due to injuries to their children incurred at the school, on the school grounds, or other school-sponsored activities.

Liability and Dispute Resolution

Persons/organizations understand and agree that neither the school, nor its trustees, representatives, employees, partners, and agents may be held liable in any way for an occurrence in connection with the activity which may result in injury, harm, or other damages to the undersigned or members/visitors of their events, invited or not. Persons/organizations using school facilities agree that they alone shall be responsible for any property damage, personal injury, or death that may occur during use of the premises, appliances/fixtures therein, or on field trips.
As part of the consideration for enrollment, those enrolling release the school, its trustees, employees, agents, and representatives from any claim for damages, injury, or death which may occur while participating in any school activity. They further agree to save and hold harmless the entities from any claim arising out of or participation in any form or fashion in the activity.

Parents will be responsible for financial compensation due to damage or theft caused by their students/guests, at the discretion and judgment of the school.

Lost and Found

Parents are expected to label all coats, jackets, clothing, lunch boxes, supplies, and personal property. This expedites the search for the rightful owner of any lost item. Inquire at the school office for the location of the lost and found. Unclaimed items will be periodically donated to a local charity. GCS is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Lost Textbooks

Textbooks are loaned from the school on a per-year basis. Should a student lose a book or return it in an unusable condition, the replacement cost of the book will be charged to the student's account.

Parental Responsibilities

Parents play a vital role in the school by contributing their time, talent, enthusiasm, experiences, and resources in a variety of ways. Parents' help and support are greatly appreciated. It is for these reasons we ask the parents of GCS students to:

- Support the school and staff with your prayers, cooperation, and financial faithfulness.
- Set a Godly example in your home, in church attendance, and in involvement in service.
- Train your children in areas of respect, obedience, responsibility, orderliness, punctuality, and positive attitudes.
- Provide adequate and nutritious meals (including breakfast), ample sleep, and rest for your child.
- Participate in your child's education, both at home and at school, by volunteering to help when you are available.
- Promote GCS in your community, church, and circle of friends.
- Always support the policies and discipline of the school. Address concerns through proper channels and never in the presence of children/students.

Personal Spiritual Counseling

Because we take a personal interest in the student, there will be a continued effort from the teachers and administration to encourage and guide the student in spiritual, academic, and personal matters. Pastoral staff may be available to counsel students at the recommendation of the administration and at the desire of parents.

Photo Rights

All families give the right to GCS to have their picture and/or likeness used in school publications. Families in objection to this policy must notify GCS in written form no later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year.

Pledges

As part of the daily "opening exercises", we salute and pledge to the American flag, the Christian flag, and the Bible and participate in cooperative prayer. Patriotic and Christian songs may be sung. Students are expected to stand at attention and participate in each pledge. Please help your student learn the words to the following pledges.

AMERICAN FLAG: *I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands; one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*

CHRISTIAN FLAG: *I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag, and to the Savior for which it stands; one Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again with life and liberty to all who believe.*

BIBLE: *I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God.*

Printing

Students are expected to take responsibility for printing their own paperwork, projects, reports, and other assignments **in advance**. If you are unable to print at home or at the library, you may email your document to the appropriate office for printing with a minimum of ONE school-day's notice. Printing on the due-date is NOT available:

Upper School: cmarsh@gowensvillechristianschool.com
Lower School: apowersgcs@gmail.com

Printing fees are as follows:

- Black and white: $0.05 per page
- Color: $0.10 per page

Safety and Security

Gowensville Christian School's front door, and all other doors, will remain locked at all times. Approved visitors will be buzzed in by the front office. For security purposes, all school visitors must check in at the front desk and have a visitor's badge to be allowed in the school hallways before school and during school hours. Visitors without badges will be asked to go to the front desk for a badge.

Access to areas used by GCS is normally limited to one outside door in the FLC and one outside door in the Brick building. These doors remain locked and are closely monitored by the administration and by video cameras. When special programs are scheduled, other entrances are opened, but traffic in GCS areas is under increased surveillance.

Classrooms are equipped with doors that lock to provide additional security for the occupants in an emergency. Procedures have been established to properly respond to emergencies.

School Closings–Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather or other disaster, school closures will be reported on the standard GCS communication system as well as on the home page of the school website and via social media.

School Office and Visitors

The school reception areas are open on school days, Monday - Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Financial payments may be dropped off at any of those times to one of our Administrators or paid online.

- The school day cannot be continually interrupted by deliveries or messages for students. All messages and items will be delivered during the lunch break or at the end of the day, unless they are of an emergency nature.
- Students must be responsible for coming to school prepared with the necessary materials and instructions for afternoon pick-up.
- Pick-up arrangements for students must be communicated to the front desk with a note or email sent from home. If arrangements are made after a student is at school, the office must be notified of changes before noon when possible.
    - Upper School: cmarsh@gowensvillechristianschool.com
    - Lower School: apowersgcs@gmail.com
- For security purposes, all school visitors must check in at the front desk and have a visitor badge to be allowed in the school hallways before school and during school hours. Visitors who have been sent by parents to pick up students because of sickness, doctor's appointments, etc., should report to the school office and wait until the student is excused from class. Visitors without badges will be asked to go to the front desk for a badge.

Searches and Seizures

The school has a substantial interest in maintaining security and a safe, drug-free learning environment at school and school-related activities. The school may conduct searches and seize items found that violate the school policy. The searches may be with or without reasonable suspicion, random, or unannounced. Searches will be conducted by school officials or local police authorities, and specially trained weapon and narcotics dogs may be used.

Sibling Hour

As the Lower School (3rd-6th) student dismissal is at 1 pm, a courtesy Sibling Hour is provided for students with Upper School (7th-12th) siblings who do not dismiss until 2 pm. This hour is a privilege provided to support the schedules of parents and prevent the need for two pick-up times only an hour apart. If student behavior during this time slot becomes an issue, the parent(s) will be notified and the privilege of remaining for this hour may be removed.

Student Health Policies and Medication

GCS strongly values the health and wellness of students, faculty, and staff. GCS parents understand and acknowledge that if their student is showing clear signs of viral illness, parents will keep their student home. These symptoms include but may not be limited to: fever, vomiting/diarrhea, rash, or indication of a contagious skin condition.

In regards to a community illness outbreak, GCS aims for a common-sense response based on prompt and clear communication with parents and families. GCS strongly values the parent/individual’s right to decide on attendance versus quarantine based on their personal comfort level and assessment of immune risk if exposed to a contagion. GCS policy is NOT to

prevent any student who has NO symptoms of illness from school attendance. GCS also strongly values open communication and will promptly make families aware of any on-campus exposure and any additional policy specific to the community outbreak.

A medical form is to be completed yearly for each student in Praxi and kept on file in the front office. Please notify the office during the school year to update your student's information. Whenever your student is unable to attend school due to illness, the parent shall email based upon grade level to::

- Upper School - cmarsh@gowensvillechristianschool.com
- Lower School - apowersgcs@gmail.com

By 8:45 am, report the absence and the nature of the illness. Medication needs will be coordinated on an individual basis between parents and Gowensville Christian School before the school semester begins or as needed throughout the semester. All records will be on file with the school administrative office. At no time may a student give medication to another student. If medication is given to another student, disciplinary action will be taken.

Dispensing and Storage of Prescription and Non-Prescription Medications

Gowensville Christian School seeks to provide a safe environment for students while recognizing that some students may require medication during the school day. Medication will be handled in a manner that protects student safety, privacy, and accountability.

Medication Authorization

Prescription and non-prescription medications may only be administered or dispensed by designated school personnel when appropriate authorization has been provided by the parent or legal guardian and, when required, a licensed healthcare provider. The school may require written instructions regarding the medication, dosage, frequency, and duration of use. All medication must be provided to the school in its original, properly labeled container. Prescription medication must have the student's name and prescription information clearly indicated on the pharmacy label. Medication should not be brought to school in an unlabeled container, plastic bag, or other unapproved container.

Storage of Medication

Unless specifically authorized otherwise, medications will be stored in a secure, designated location that is not accessible to students. Medications will be kept according to the storage instructions provided by the manufacturer or prescribing healthcare provider. Refrigerated medications will be stored appropriately when refrigeration is required. Students should not have access to prescription or non-prescription medication during the school day unless the school has specifically authorized the student to self-carry and/or self-administer the medication.

Administration and Dispensing

Designated school personnel will follow the written instructions provided by the parent/guardian and healthcare provider when administering or dispensing medication. School personnel will not alter the prescribed dosage or provide medication in a manner inconsistent with the written authorization. Non-prescription medications, including common over-the-counter medications, will only be provided when authorized by the parent or legal guardian and in accordance with school procedures.

Emergency Medications and Self-Administration

Certain students may need immediate access to emergency medication, such as an inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector. When appropriate documentation and authorization are provided, the school may permit a student to carry and self-administer emergency medication in accordance with the student's healthcare provider's instructions and school policy.

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing the school with current medication, authorization forms, healthcare instructions, and replacement medication before existing medication expires or is depleted.

Medication Records

School personnel will maintain appropriate records of medications administered or dispensed during the school day, including the date, time, medication, dosage, and person administering or dispensing the medication, as applicable.

Changes and Discontinuation

Parents/guardians must notify the school promptly of any change in medication, dosage, administration instructions, or discontinuation of medication. The school should not rely on verbal instructions alone for changes to an established medication authorization when written documentation is required.

Expired or Unused Medication

Parents/guardians are responsible for retrieving unused or discontinued medication from the school. Medication that is expired, discontinued, or left at school at the end of the school year will be handled and disposed of according to school procedures and applicable requirements.

Student Responsibility

Students are expected to follow all school rules regarding medication. Sharing, selling, trading, possessing, or distributing prescription or non-prescription medication to another student is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. Gowensville Christian School reserves the right to establish additional procedures regarding medication administration, storage, documentation, emergency medications, and student self-administration as necessary to protect the health and safety of students and staff.

Traffic and Transportation

Please visit the GCS website to view a map for morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up for Lower & Upper school.. Please use this route daily to ensure the ease of traffic flow and safety. Parking lots are also designated on this map. Please use the appropriate spaces when visiting GCS.

Drop-off

Under no circumstances should any student be dropped off before 7:30 a.m. Parents should make certain GCS staff are on duty and supervising the child before driving away.
The drop off area will be monitored until 8:05 a.m. After 8:05 a.m. students should be dropped off inside the front office entrance for Lower or Upper school.

Pick-up

Each parent will be issued 2 visor cards with the family's name. Cards should be given only to persons authorized to pick up students. Parents should call the school office if a visor replacement or additional card is needed.

On occasions when a student will not be picked up by parents or the normal designated person(s), a note/email must be sent to the school office permitting the student to ride with someone else. For safety purposes, students are not permitted to ride with someone without prior notification. The designated person should have proper identification ready to show. Parents are encouraged to send these notes first thing in the morning as often as possible. In the event alternate plans must be made after the student has arrived at school, the school office

should be notified before noon. After noon, it will be necessary for the alternate pickup person to come inside for a permit before returning to the car line.
Please direct these notes to:

- Upper School - cmarsh@gowensvillechristianschool.com
- Lower School - apowersgcs@gmail.com

Late Pick-up Fee
While we can extend grace to extenuating circumstances, students should be picked up on time each day. We will give two grace days for being late to pick up your student(s). After these two times, a late pickup fee will be charged. This fee will be a $30 fee for every 15 minutes you are late.

Student Drivers
Students driving to school are given permission to do so under the following conditions:

- A vehicle permission slip shall be signed by the parent(s) at the beginning of each school year.
- Students shall not go back into the parking lot after exiting the vehicle without Administrative permission once school begins.
- Parental permission from both parents is required for student drivers to transport other students in vehicles both on and off school grounds.
- Safe driving habits shall be maintained at all times on the school property. The speed limit on the school property is 10 miles per hour. Any safety violation, including “peeling out,” on the school property may result in a suspension or revocation of parking and driving privileges.
- Vehicles with bumper stickers, decals, or car tags deemed inappropriate by the administration shall not be allowed.
- GCS assumes no liability for damages to any vehicle or for any materials left connected to these vehicles which are damaged by acts of vandalism, accidents, thefts, storms, etc.
- An administrator, director, or designee is authorized to search, including the use of drug or weapon smelling dogs, any student’s vehicle and any property in the student’s possession while on school premises, or at school activities, for possession by the student of any item which is illegal or prohibited by school rules, or for property believed to have been stolen from another student, an employee or the school.

The decision to search must be based upon a reasonable suspicion that the student to be searched has committed a violation of school rules, and evidence of the violation may likely be discovered in the search. Before conducting the search, all the circumstances surrounding the case will be considered, including: (a) the student’s age, history, and record in school; (b) the seriousness of the suspected violation; (c) the importance of making a search without delay and further investigation; and (d) the specificity and source of the information used as justification for the search.

Drivers who have siblings who attend GCS, shall personally escort them to their vehicle at the end of the school day. This also applies to vehicle riders with a parent permission form on record in the office. At no time should any student, other than a driver or escorted rider, be walking through the school parking lot at the beginning or end of the school day.

Discipline Policies and Information

Behavior Guidelines

Behavioral issues will be reviewed by the Director and/or the Assistant Director on a case-by-case basis to determine whether the violation is major or minor. Major behavioral violations will result in probation, suspension, or expulsion from GCS. The penalties are severe because the types of behavior are antagonistic to the basic purpose of the school, hurtful and/or harmful to others, and harmful to the school's reputation and its witness to the community. Minor behavioral violations will result in consequences deemed appropriate by the teacher and/or administration.

If behavioral violations of any kind become a pattern, a parent conference will be called, and a clear Disciplinary Plan put into place, which will outline expectations for student behavior and potential consequences if improvement cannot be achieved. If a Disciplinary Plan is put in place for any student, these consequences may mean suspension, dismissal, or the requirement that the family re-apply for the next school instead of receiving the opportunity for early-registration.

GCS Academic Integrity Policy

Be honest and original in all assignments. Plagiarism or cheating of any kind is not tolerated.

Academic integrity at GCS goes beyond supporting the learning process. As a school that aims to build Christian character into our students in all they do, this same character is expected to be exhibited in their academics. This means behavior such as cheating or plagiarism is unacceptable.

Cheating is any action that does not abide by assignment instructions in good faith, resulting in an unfair advantage to a student. This is regardless of the effect it has on any given grade.

Plagiarism is presenting the work or ideas of someone else as your own. Any content (including but not limited to outlines, vocabulary, phrases) that did not originate with the student must be cited from an appropriate academic resource. AI tools generate material that students cannot claim as having originated with them, therefore making it difficult for educators to evaluate a student's grasp of material. AI tools (like Grammarly, ChatGPT, Jasper AI, Rytr, etc.) are not considered by GCS to be appropriate academic resources. Therefore, these tools fall under the category of plagiarism and should not be used or cited for any assignment.

Actions will be determined to meet either of these categories at the sole discretion of the educators and directors, with consequences up to being expelled.

Academic Probation

At GCS, we strive to assist students in understanding the heart of their heavenly Father and that He disciplines us for our good because of His great love for us (Hebrews 12:8).

Academic Probation for a student may occur when:

- A student's grades fall below a C average in 2 or more of their core classes (English, History/Rhetoric, Bible, Math or Science), or a failing grade in any single class.
- Communication with the student and parents has taken place in multiple modes (Conference, phone, text, or email), expressing concerns and suggesting accommodations or additional growth and support.
- A student's grades continue to remain below a C average in 2 or more of their core classes over a full grading period, or no improvement is shown over a set period of time.

Academic Probation - GCS will invite the student and parents to a parent conference where administration will individualize expectations and collaborate on a personalized improvement plan for the student on Academic Probation. Expectations will include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining a 75% average in all core classes for a full grading period or set time-frame.
- Completion of all assignments, turned in on time.
- Scheduling regular check-ins with parents, students, and administration/teachers

If a MIDDLE SCHOOL student does not meet the Academic Probation standards over a full semester, they will remain on Academic Probation until completion of their 8th-grade year. They will then be required to re-apply before entering 9th grade at GCS with the understanding that they may not be accepted as our academic expectations may not be the best fit.

If a HIGH SCHOOL student does not meet the Academic Probation standards over a full semester, GCS will invite the student and parents to a conference and decide on the efficacy of allowing an additional semester's probation.

Note: Student tuition for that semester is due in full even if the student withdraws mid-semester.

Dress Code

Gowensville Christian School has a standardized dress code. The ultimate goal with our dress code is modesty and professionalism. Since the time spent in class is limited, we would ask that dress code not become an issue. If you arrive at GCS dressed immodestly or inappropriately, your parents will be called to bring appropriate clothes to school. Please adhere to this dress code and sign the requirements stated below:

Students taking Physical Education may change into pre-approved athletic wear during lunchtime.

	Acceptable:	**Not Acceptable:**
Shirts	• Any solid or patterned shirts, t-shirt (small logo approved on the upper left or right chest area **ONLY**) • Sleeveless solid or patterned shirts with at least 2 inch thick straps • Sweaters • Sweatshirts • Hoodies • T-shirts with appropriate print/logos larger than a business card on front and/or on the back are allowed **ONLY** on Fridays	• Clothing that does not fit reasonably or is tight • Logos, slogans, words, or pictures promoting or depicting alcohol, tobacco, drugs, vandalism, bigotry, violence, sexual connotations, or profanity. This includes clothing with phrases or pictures that have double meanings. • Clothing that is revealing or immodest, or tops that expose bare midriff or undergarments • T-shirts, solid or patterned shirts with any print/logo larger than a business card on the front or any print on the back **EXCEPT** on Fridays.
Pants	• Any color traditional pants/jeans - straight, flared, cargo, twill, or denim/twill • Any color capris • Any color shorts, skirts, and dresses of appropriate length. • Any color leggings **ONLY** if worn underneath an appropriate shirt/dress length listed below by grade • **3rd-6th:** Shorts, skirts, and dresses must reach at least to the fingertips. • **7th-12th:** Shorts, skirts, and dresses must reach at least 2 inches above the top of the kneecap.	• Athletic or 'Athleisure' pants/shorts of any type at appropriate length **EXCEPT** on Fridays • Leggings • No frayed holes/tears or edges • No pajamas • Yoga pants • Pants must be worn at the natural waistline, and undergarments are not to be visible.

Shoes, Accessories, Appearance, Hair	● Shoe color and style are at the parents' discretion. ● Proper shoes must be worn at all times (<u>no bare feet allowed</u>) ○ Sneakers ○ Sandals with straps ○ Boots ○ Slip-ons with a back ● Tidy haircuts ● Natural Haircolor - Single or minimal streaks of unnatural color that are not distracting must be **PRE-APPROVED**.	● No slippers, slides, flip flops (sandals, crocs, etc. must have a strap) ● Crocs and similar slip-ons without a back may be worn on Fridays **ONLY** ● Wearing accessories or clothing that could pose a safety threat to oneself or others ● Any make-up or adornment that causes a distraction ● Hair that is distracting or extreme ● Hats or sunglasses worn indoors or incorrectly ● Boys' hair must not brush or surpass a shirt collar in length
Dress Down Fridays	● Students may wear t-shirts on Fridays. ● Athletic pants and shorts of appropriate length and fit must adhere to dress code rules ○ 3rd-6th fingertip ○ 7th-12th 2 inches above the top of the kneecap ● Crocs or other backless slip-on shoes	Please note: ● This is not a time to wear whatever you would like. ● All clothes that are worn during Dress Down Fridays must still abide by dress code modesty guidelines.



2026-2027 FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

A digital version of the Family Handbook can be accessed by visiting the school website.

Student/Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

By signing below, the student and parent agree that they have received (digitally), read, and understand the guidelines and policies outlined in the Family Handbook.
They agree to follow all the guidelines outlined in the Family Handbook.

Please detach the bottom portion of this acknowledgement form and return it to GCS.

2026-2027 FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

By signing below, I acknowledge all of this handbook and consent to have my child under the authority of Gowensville Christian School.

Student Name (Print): _____ Grade Level: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Name (Print): _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____