

# **SCHOOL HANDBOOK**

## **2018 - 2019**

### **Gate City Charter School for the Arts**

#### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Gate City Charter School for the Arts is to use an arts-integrated curriculum to educate all interested students in grades K-8, to produce graduates who excel in both academics and the arts and have the knowledge, creativity and inquisitive nature that foster a life-long love of learning.

#### **Guiding Principle**

The arts, in all their media, can be an invaluable tool in the education of our children, building problem-solving skills, enabling students to express unique ideas, fostering critical thinking and enhancing overall learning.

#### **Vision**

The vision of the Gate City Charter School for the Arts is to become a transformative leader in the education of students who will be prepared to successfully advance into the complex economy of the 21st century.

We envision a school where creativity is at the center of all we do. Curriculum will be designed to encourage students to recognize their creative potential and express ideas through music, dance, movement, visual arts, and drama. Students and teachers will be encouraged to ask questions about the world around them, make discoveries and solve problems.

Our arts-integrated model that infuses the arts across the curriculum assists in the definitive development of innovative, flexible, creative people who look at solving complex problems in a unique manner and have the skills necessary to engineer new, transformative, solutions to the challenges that face the future of New Hampshire and the global economic market.

#### **General Information**

##### **Location:**

##### **Gate City Charter School for the Arts**

7 Henry Clay Drive  
Merrimack, NH 03054  
Ph. (603) 943-5273  
Fax (603) 943-5745

##### **Hours of Operation:**

School Office 8:00-3:30  
Kindergarten M, T, TH, F 8:30-2:45, W 8:30-12:45  
Grades 1-8 Instructional Day M, T, TH, F 8:30-3PM, W 8:30-1PM

**Enrollment**

- Contact Information
- Proof of Recent Physical
- Immunization Record
- Medical or Religious Exemption for Immunizations
- Proof of Residency
- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Custody and Restraining Orders
- Re-enrollment
- Withdrawals

**Attendance**

- Absences
- School Work Missed Due to Absence
- Excused Absences
- Unexcused Absences
- Tardiness
- Truancy
- Student Pick-up
- Early Pick-up/Dismissal

**Health & Safety**

- Emergency Drills
- Administration of Medication
- Guidelines for the Administration of Medication during School hours
- Accidents/Incidents
- Illness
- Policies of Good Health
- Outdoor Recess
- Head Lice
- Prevention of Head Lice
- Management of Head Lice
- Nut-restricted Facility
- Anaphylaxis Avoidance Policy
- Ideas for Nut-free Snacks and Lunches

**Academics**

- School Compact
- Grading System
- Testing and Assessments

**Homework**

- Rationale Grade Level Expectations
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Promotion/Retention

**Student Expectations**

- Rights and Responsibilities
- Playground Procedures
- Lunch Procedures
- Bathroom Procedures

**Liability**

- School Property
- Curriculum Materials
- Student Desks and Coat Hook
- Personal Property
- Items Not Allowed at School

**Bullying Policy**

- Discipline

**Dress Code****Internet & Computers**

- Media Use Guidelines
- Personal Electronics
- Telephones and Cell Phones

**Lunch**

- Milk
- Snacks
- Ordering

**Financial Information**

Payment Policy , Methods Of Payment, Refund Policy

Additional School Information

Recording Release, Birthday Celebrations, School Supplies – Wish List, Headphones, Lost And Found , Solicitation

Parent Information

Parent Involvement, Volunteers, Volunteer Assurances, Confidentiality, Reporting Child Abuse

Communication

What Parents Can Expect , What Parents Should Not Expect, When You Should Contact Your Child's Teacher, Information That Should Be Sent To The School Office, Communication That Interferes With Teaching And Learning

Conflict Resolution – Parent Grievance Procedure

Transportation

Student Drop Off, Student Pick Up, Parking

Before And After School Options

# Enrollment

Gate City Charter School for the Arts is a public charter school that received its initial authorization in 2013 from the New Hampshire State Board of Education.

The four primary objectives to the New Hampshire charter school program are:

- Objective 1: Increase the number of high quality charter schools in New Hampshire, particularly those serving educationally disadvantaged students most at risk in rural and urban settings.
- Objective 2: Use federal CSP grant funds to improve student achievement for secondary charter school students and increase graduation rates.
- Objective 3: Support the dissemination of charter schools best practices to other public schools and Local Education Agencies(LEAs).
- Objective 4: Empower charter schools to become strong independent organizations and support charter school efforts to be fiscally responsible.
- Gate City Charter School for the Arts enrolls students of any race, religion, color, gender, physical handicap, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available at our school. Gate City Charter School for the Arts adheres to enrollment procedures outlined in our charter agreement with the State of New Hampshire.
- If, by the enrollment deadline, the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level or building, all registrants will be selected for the available slots through an equitable lottery, except that preferences shall be given to siblings of current students. After the enrollment lottery has been conducted, students will be registered on a waiting list in the order they were received. The Wait List will follow the class each year. Once a student is enrolled through lottery selection or through movement of the Waitlist, that student will remain enrolled from year to year.
- According to charter school laws in the State of New Hampshire, a student may transfer enrollment between a district public school and a charter public school only once during a school year.
- Gate City Charter School for the Arts operates a kindergarten program at no cost to the families. We are excited to have your children as they embark on their first experiences with school. If your child turns five before September 30<sup>th</sup>, your child is eligible to enroll in our kindergarten program.

## **Enrollment Requirements**

Each student who receives a seat at the Gate City Charter School for the Arts based on the outcome of the enrollment lottery or movement through the wait list will be required to complete an enrollment packet.

### **The following information is required as part of the Enrollment Packet: Letter of Intent – Authorization for Records Release**

The *Letter of Intent* form gives Gate City Charter School for the Arts permission to inform your sending school district (the public-school district assigned to your home address) of your enrollment at our school and to obtain all records pertaining to a given student from his or her previous school. Information regarding a student's progress will be shared only with parents, appropriate members of school faculty and staff and any professional consultants retained for the purpose of measuring or improving instructional quality. When statistical information regarding a student's performance is made public, it will be represented in such a way as to avoid the identification of specific individual students.

### **Contact Information**

In the event, we need to reach a parent during the school day, it is vital that we have one or more current telephone numbers on file to contact you. It is the responsibility of the parent to complete the contact information in the enrollment packet, and to update as often as needed that information with the school office.

### **Proof of Recent Physical**

New Hampshire law requires a completed medical exam by a licensed practitioner prior to entrance into the public-school system. Upon enrolling in the Gate City Charter School for the Arts, each student must provide proof of a recent (within the 12 months prior to the first day of school) physical from the child's health care provider.

### **Immunization Record**

New Hampshire law requires that children be up to date on their immunizations to attend school. Documented proof from a licensed practitioner or immunization clinic of required vaccinations is needed for students entering Gate City Charter School for the Arts.

Please refer to [www.dhhs.state.nh.us](http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us), or call your family's healthcare provider, for a list of vaccinations required for school enrollment.

### **Medical or Religious Exemption for Immunizations**

In certain instances, a parent or legal guardian may request medical or religious exemption from immunization requirements. Proof of exemption must be provided as part of the enrollment process at Gate City Charter School for the Arts.

An immunization exemption form is available through the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services:

<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/exemptions.htm>

During an outbreak of a communicable disease for which immunization is required, children exempted shall not attend the school threatened by the communicable disease during the period of time determined by the Department of Health and Human Services.

**If you have questions about immunizations or medical or religious exemptions, please call the NH Immunization Program at (800) 852-3345, ext. 4482.**

## **Proof of Residency**

Gate City Charter School for the Arts is a public charter school operating under RSA 194-B and is a free public school open to any New Hampshire resident. One of the following is required as part of the enrollment process to provide proof of New Hampshire residency:

- Mortgage Statement and One Current Utility Bill (Showing Name and Address)
- Two Current Utility Bills (Showing Name and Address)
- Current Rent Receipt or Lease Agreement
- Social Services Papers (Homeless Shelter Verification)
- Court Placement (Copy of Decree)
- Welfare Card
- Voter Registration Card

If you are unable to provide proof of residency for any reason, such as you are living as a guest in a home owned by a person whose name all utilities are under, you may ask the homeowner to sign a "Notice of New Hampshire Residency" form, available from the school office.

## **Copy of Birth Certificate**

Only a parent or legal guardian may enroll a child at the Gate City Charter School for the Arts. One of the following is required as part of the enrollment process:

- Copy of the child's birth certificate
- Copy of court decree declaring custodial rights
- Copy of adoption paperwork

## **Custody and Restraining Orders**

In cases where custody/visitation affects Gate City Charter School for the Arts, the school will follow the most recent court order on file with Gate City Charter School for the Arts. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent or of guardians having joint custody to provide Gate City Charter School for the Arts with the most recent court order.

## **Re-enrollment**

To secure your child's enrollment at Gate City Charter School for the Arts for the next school year, we ask parents to officially complete the Intent to Return process. Intent to Return forms will be sent home sometime in March/April.

## **Withdrawals**

Parents may withdraw at any time. At the time of withdrawal parents will be asked to complete an official withdrawal form and will arrange the return of all school books, materials, and outstanding fees. However, if a parent verbally withdraws and does not submit any written documentation, a student will still be considered withdrawn and the family will receive an acknowledgement of the withdrawal and an invoice for outstanding fees via registered mail. In all cases student records will only be released via fax to the school district into which the student is transferring.

## **Attendance**

A strong correlation exists between academic success and regular school attendance. School attendance is ultimately the responsibility of the student and his/her parents. Students should remain out of school only when necessary since much of the classroom activity cannot be replicated; the benefit of discussion and participation is lost to those who are absent. Consistent and prompt attendance at school is imperative. While we understand that students do occasionally become ill and have appointments that might interfere with the school schedule, it is important, especially in the highly collaborative nature of our program, to attend consistently. In the event your student must miss school, please notify the school ahead of time by contacting the School Office at (603) 943-5273.

## **Absences**

Absence is defined as a student's non-attendance in his/her assigned classroom during an assigned period.

When your child must be absent from school:

- Call the School Office before 8:30 AM on the day of absence

Upon returning to school:

- Send a written note to the School Office for the student's file the day the student returns to school

If the school office does not receive an explanation of the absence within 3 days, the absence will be marked as "unexcused."

We ask that you please let the School Office know in writing ahead of time if your child will be out of school for an extended period.

Due to the nature of transportation to/from public charter schools in New Hampshire, when Gate City Charter School for the Arts is open on days of inclement weather (snow, ice), and a parent is uncomfortable driving in such weather road conditions, the absence for that student will be excused.

## **School Work Missed Due to Absence**

Upon returning to school after an absence, the student must request from the classroom teacher all missed assignments for the student to complete. Making up work missed is vital to a student's continued academic progress. Teachers are not able to provide work ahead of an anticipated absence. Work will be accumulated and provided for make-up after the absence period.

## **Excused Absences**

Excused absences may include:

- Personal illness
- Quarantine under the direction of a certified healthcare provider or health officer
- Personal medical, dental, or optometrist appointment (school may require verification)
- Funeral services for a member of immediate family
- Personal court appearance (requires verification)
- Religious services, retreat or holidays
- To obtain required immunizations

At the discretion of administration and with prior notification, there may be other just causes which can be authorized as an excused absence or tardy.

## **Unexcused Absences**

Absences that may have the knowledge or approval of the parent, but not the school, are considered unexcused. Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Babysitting, taking care of other family members
- Personal problems
- Out-of-town travel for unexcused reasons
- Car trouble-transportation difficulties
- Immediate family illness of a non-emergency nature
- Staying home due to a late awakening
- Unavailability of appropriate clothing
- Excessive absences without doctor verification



## Tardiness

Tardiness is viewed as a disruption to the classroom environment. Arriving late to class (after 8:40 AM) not only deprives the child of their opportunity to learn (as required by federal law), but it also disrupts the education of other students. All tardy students must report to the School Office **before** attending class. Students arriving after 12 PM are considered an unexcused absence and will not be admitted. In cases of excessive tardies (6 or more), a meeting will be held with the parent and school administration and homeroom teacher to develop a plan to improve punctuality. Instances of tardiness will accumulate and be counted towards absentee record.

Due to the nature of transportation to/from public charter schools in New Hampshire, tardiness related to inclement weather may be excused:

- Snow
- Ice
- Heavy rain

## Truancy

Defined by ten (10) half days of unexcused absence. Unexcused absences could be deemed truancy after administrative review. Six (6) or more unexcused absences or tardies will start an Administrative Review Process. Families will be notified that the student's attendance records reflect truancy under the law and if immediate corrections are not made further action will be taken.

### If truancy continues, further action may include:

- Request a meeting with parents and student
- Requiring missed work and time to be made up
- Loss of privilege
- If situation persists contacting DCYF
- In severe cases, suspension, and or expulsion may result.
- Students absent more than 20 days may be considered a drop-out

## Student Pick-Up

- **Pick-up:** On-time (refer to Hours of Operation).
- **Running Late:** Call the Office 603-943-5273
- **Variance to Usual Routine:** Call the Office with change in routine (i.e. not taking bus, different person picking-up, early dismissal).

We understand that emergencies arise and that traffic can be challenging or hectic although, we do expect all children to be picked up on-time. When your child is picked up late, our staff is required to remain working therefore, there is a late fee. A parent who is not here by 3:10 PM will be considered late and a \$1.00 per minute fee will be charged.

## **Early Pick-Up/Dismissal**

Every instructional minute is valuable to your child's educational success. We ask that early pick-up be limited to emergencies and doctor appointments only.

- Note must be submitted to office prior
- Pick-up person MUST be listed in student file (be prepared to show valid ID)
- Pick-up from Office only
- Dismissal Book must be updated and at that time student will be called to the office. We will not call student in advance.

## **Health and Safety**

Students' safety is the school's foremost responsibility during school hours. It is imperative that pertinent medical documents of any child with specific health related needs are on file in order for our school to provide the most appropriate accommodations.

In case of illness or injury during the school day, students should inform the classroom teacher and, then, report to the School Office. In the event that a student is injured or too ill to remain in school, the parent or emergency contact persons listed will be notified. Please be vigilant in keeping the school's record for your child up-to-date. It is critical that the school is notified immediately of any changes in a student's name, address, telephone number, legal guardian, and any other information provided at the time of registration for the safety of your child. Such changes should be communicated in writing.

## **Emergency Drills**

We have emergency drills often to teach students the safest, quickest route to exit the school building. Whenever a class leaves a room for any emergency, students remain with their teachers at all times. Please do not expect to pick up your child until the emergency drill has been completed.

In the event of an actual emergency, you will be contacted by officials as to when and how to pick up your child.

## **Administration of Medication**

In order for a student to receive medication while at school, a parent and the family's physician must complete a Medication Administration form. This form is available on our web site or through the school office. This procedure is applied to both prescription medication and over-the-counter medication.

All medication must be checked in with the School Office personnel and must bear a pharmacist's label with the recommended dosage. Students are not permitted to have

prescription or over-the-counter (OTC) medications in their possession, unless a 504 Plan has been established to allow the student to self-carry medication. It is imperative that procedures in the administration of medication be carefully followed to ensure the safety of our students and the legal protection of our employees.

### **Guidelines for the Administration of Medication During School**

Only medication with a doctor's order will be administered to students. If a child is taking a prescription medication on a regular basis because of a diagnosed medical condition, written diagnosis and authorization from a licensed healthcare provider is required.

- The primary responsibility for the administration of medication rests with the parent, student and medical professional.
- Medication shall be administered during school hours only if determined by the family's physician to be absolutely necessary on an ongoing basis.
- The parent and family doctor shall sign a Medication Administration form, which is to be kept on file at the school.
- Designated staff shall keep records of medication administered at the school.
- All medication will be kept in a secure and appropriate storage location and administered per physician's instructions by designated staff.
- Designated staff shall return all surplus medication to the parent upon completion of the regimen or prior to the end of the school year.
- Designated staff shall establish emergency procedures for specific medical conditions that require an immediate response (i.e. allergies, asthma, and diabetes).

### **Accidents/Incidents**

- All Gate City Charter School for the Arts faculty and staff will be trained in First Aid and CPR.
- Should a student receive minor injury, bumps, cuts or scrapes while at school, the staff of the Gate City Charter School for the Arts will administer first aid. First aid includes washing of minor scrapes or cuts with soap and water, application of Band-Aids, and application of a cold pack. A staff member will inform the parent/guardian of any such injury.
- In the event of serious injury, such as a cut that may require stitches or a fall resulting in head trauma or a broken bone, the parent/guardian or emergency contact will be called immediately and asked to seek medical treatment for the student.
- In the event of a life-threatening injury, a staff member of the Gate City Charter School for the Arts will seek emergency medical treatment. The injured child will be transported via ambulance to the nearest emergency treatment facility. The parent(s) are responsible for payment of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and ambulance transportation services and the parent(s) are responsible for the payment of emergency care treatment. Payment will be arranged between the parent(s) and the hospital and any insurance coverage that applies. The Gate

City Charter School for the Arts and its employees or volunteers are not responsible for payment of emergency medical care. A staff member will notify the parent/guardian immediately following a 911 call.

- All injuries that occur during school hours will be recorded on a written Accident/Injury Report, which will be kept in a log by the Administrator for data and analysis purposes, for the prevention of future accidents/injuries.

## **Illness**

The following guidelines should be followed for the management of student illness:

- Students should be healthy enough to participate in all classroom activities in order to attend school.
- If you keep your child home because of illness, we ask that you call the school office before 8:30 AM to report the absence. By calling, we will know that your child is home safe and resting, we can mark the absence as excused, and we can monitor trends in outbreaks of certain illness.
- A written note explaining the reason for the absence should be sent to school with the child upon his/her return.
- In cases of prolonged absences (lasting longer than five days), a note from a licensed healthcare provider will be required when the child returns to school.
- It is advisable that your child stay home if s/he has a persistent sore throat, undiagnosed rash, fever, vomiting, or uncontrollable diarrhea.
- A student should be free of illness related fever and vomiting for a minimum of 24 hours without the use of medication to control such symptoms before returning to school.
- Should a child become ill during school hours, the School Administration will contact the parent(s) to pick up the child. If the parent(s) cannot be contacted within one hour of the child becoming ill, the emergency contact will be notified. The child will only be released to an adult listed in the student's file as an Emergency Contact.

## **Policies of Good Health**

Each student should have a healthy breakfast each morning. If you have difficulty providing a breakfast meal for your child at home, please speak with the Director of Operations about community resources available for family food assistance.

Additionally, students should wear suitable clothing appropriate for the weather, maintain clean personal hygiene, and sufficient amount of sleep each night.

## **Outdoor Recess**

All children will be required to participate in all outdoor activities, including recess, unless a written excuse from a physician is provided.

## **Head Lice**

Any time children come together, particularly when interacting with each other in school groups, head lice cases commonly increase. Direct, physical, head-to-head contact is the usual method of transmission. Lice do not jump, fly or swim. They are, however, good crawlers. Head lice are not known to transmit disease and are not considered a serious medical condition. They are, however, considered an extreme nuisance.

Gate City Charter School for the Arts is committed to maximizing students' academic performance and physical wellbeing in a healthy and safe environment. The Academy of Pediatrics as well as the NH Department of Education do NOT support a no-nit policy or mass screenings. Gate City Charter School for the Arts has chosen to mirror our policy on this evidence based practice, supporting student attendance and academic performance. There is no research data that demonstrates that enforced exclusion policies or mass screenings are effective in reducing the transmission of lice. However, in some cases, exclusion shall be at the discretion of the Director of Operations.

Recognizing that head lice are an extreme nuisance to families, we can all work together to increase prevention.

## **Prevention of Head Lice**

While some cases of head lice are unavoidable, there are steps that can be taken to reduce the possibility of transmission:

Check regularly - Treat Quickly: Check your child's head weekly for lice or nits. Check daily if there are known active cases in your child's school.

Encourage your child to not share personal items, such as combs, brushes, hats, headbands, barrettes, helmets, and pillows

Tie back loose/long hair

## **Management of Head Lice**

If you find head lice on your child, please call the school office to notify us and treat the infestation immediately. Contact your child's health care provider for advice and recommendations on treatment.

Remember: Check Regularly – Treat Quickly

The Administrator will inform the school community of cases of active head lice in order that all families can be diligent in checking their own children. Notification will be confidential.

## **Nut-Restricted Facility – Anaphylaxis Avoidance Policy**

Food allergies can be life threatening. Gate City Charter School for the Arts is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all its students, including students with food allergies.

**Gate City Charter School for the Arts is a nut-restricted environment. We ask that no peanuts or tree nuts be brought into our school. Food sent in for snack, lunch, or any school event should be carefully checked to make sure they are peanut-free and tree nut-free.**

Children with allergies to peanuts and/or tree nuts can have an allergic reaction through contact, airborne, and/or ingestion. A reaction can occur by touching a nut (contact), having the allergen enter through inhalation (airborne) and/or by eating a food item that contains nut, even trace amounts (ingestion). Some children with nut allergies will have an allergic reaction through ingestion only, while others will include a reaction by contact, airborne and/or ingestion

Allergic reactions can range from mild to severe to life threatening (anaphylaxis). Mild reactions can include a skin reaction like hives, redness or swelling, upset stomach and wheezing. A severe to life threatening allergic reaction can range from difficulty breathing, to shock and loss of consciousness. **A life-threatening reaction is defined as anaphylaxis, which means a serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death.**

Trace amounts of nuts can exist in any food or on any surface. For this reason, it is not possible to consider any environment completely safe and nut-free for a child with a life-threatening nut allergy. **Parents of a child with a nut allergy should meet with the School Administration to create a plan, in conjunction with written instructions from the child's physician, for managing your child's nut allergy during the school day. Prevention is the key element to any allergy management plan.**

**Food should never be shared with a food-allergic child, unless the parent has been notified and given approval of the food selection. Cross contamination can pose an unidentified risk.**

All our teachers and staff will be trained in First Aid, CPR, signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis, and will receive training on how to administer an Epi-Pen. Children with peanut and/or tree nut allergies who have been prescribed an Epi-Pen by a physician, should have access to the Epi-Pen at all times during the school day because an anaphylactic reaction is often rapid in onset and is life-threatening.

**For Families who do not live with daily food allergies, we appreciate your cooperation and understanding in helping us to keep all our students safe.** The sacrifice of not having nuts or nut products in school is a small one to make compared to the consequences a child with severe allergies could face.

**How can I explain to my child that nuts aren't allowed in the school, especially when he/ she likes to eat peanut butter?**

Empathy and compassion are the key elements here. Help your child understand that while some allergies can be a nuisance with low level reactions (i.e. stuffed-up noses and sneezing) students who suffer from peanut and/or tree nut allergies can have very dangerous, even life-threatening reactions. Explain to your child that by not bringing nut products to school, he/she is helping take care of, keep safe, and even protect these students with nut allergies. Children will feel proud to be able to help out in this way.

**Please read the labels of prepared products to ensure they are free of peanut and tree nuts.**

Labels that read "Produced on equipment that also produces nuts" or "Produced in a facility that also processes nuts" are okay to send to school.

**Labels that read "Contains peanuts or tree nuts" or "May contain nuts" should not be sent to school.**

**Ideas for Nut-Free Snacks and Lunches**

Fresh Vegetables Fresh Fruit Raisins  
Applesauce Yogurt  
Cottage Cheese  
Jell-O  
Bagel with cream cheese  
Tortilla Chip with Salsa  
Graham Crackers Popcorn  
Goldfish Crackers  
Cheese-It  
Cereal  
Animal Crackers Pretzels  
Saltine Crackers Homemade Muffins  
Pizza  
Soup (Lentil, Chicken-Noodle,  
Vegetable, etc)

Beans  
Sunbutter  
Soybutter  
Bread  
Pita  
Deli Meat  
Hard-boiled Egg  
Hummus  
Pasta or rice salad  
Meatloaf  
Tuna  
Fish  
Chicken or Fish Nuggets

## Academics

Gate City Charter School for the Arts offers an instructional approach grounded in innovative teaching pedagogy. It is student centered, encourages parent involvement, and integrates the arts into a standards-based instruction to ensure each student has the opportunity for success.

## School Compact

**The Staff of Gate City Charter School for the Arts agrees to:**

- Provide high quality curriculum and instruction
- Teach the arts in meaningful ways
- Teach through the Arts
- Describe and explain learning goals and objectives
- Provide feedback on student progress and provide opportunities for parent/teacher/student conferences
- Emphasize community building
- Use positive and affirming language and communication

**The Parents of Gate City Charter School for the Arts, agree to:**

- Ensure regular and punctual attendance
- Communicate with teachers about the needs of my child
- Use positive and affirming language and communication
- Attend school events, such as the Ice Cream Social, Parent Information Night, and School Performances
- Participate in the *Friends of Gate City Charter School for the Arts*, and volunteer in the school as my time allows

**The Students of Gate City Charter School for the Arts, agree to:**

- Always do my best
- Come to school prepared to learn
- Ask questions
- Use positive and kind language
- Show respect for myself, my classmates, and my school

## Grading System

Teachers use a variety of ongoing, developmentally appropriate methods to measure student progress. Such assessments include mid-module assessments, end-of-module assessments, benchmark assessment (reading accuracy and fluency), projects, authentic performance, reports, class participation and other assignments. Report cards are issued at the end of each term (three times a year). Report cards are aligned to the standards, and the following marking system is used:



## **Approaches to Learning Indicators**

- 4** - Student Exceeds Grade Level Expectations
- 3** - Student Consistently Meets Grade Level Expectations
- 2** - Student Sometimes Meets Grade Level Expectations
- 1** - Student Does Not Yet Meet Grade Level Expectations

## **Testing and Assessments**

### **The goals of assessment at Gate City Charter School for the Arts are:**

- To inform the development of goals in the lesson planning process
- To inform students, parents and teachers to the level of understanding and mastery of curriculum standards, and to show the progress that a student makes
- To measure the effectiveness of the techniques used by the teacher • to measure the success of the school as a whole

Multiple forms of assessment will be used to determine students' understanding and achievement, including:

### **Formative Assessment**

- Observations and anecdotal notes (of students by teachers AND of teachers by each other/administration)
- Portfolios
- Self-assessment checklists (for teachers and students)
- Mid-module assessments
- Benchmark assessment (reading accuracy and fluency)

### **Summative Assessment**

- Authentic performance
- End-of-module assessments
- Standardized testing (iReady, enVisionmath, Fountas & Pinnell, Wit & Wisdom)
- Criteria for assessment, qualitative indicators and depth of accomplishment, will be defined using rubrics.

## **Homework Rationale**

The home-school connection is beneficial to a student's academic success. Many studies show that students should spend time outside of school in unstructured activities such as developing peer relationships, exploring personal interests, taking up a hobby, and developing passion for extracurricular interests. In evaluating the research, it is important to find the approach to homework that will best support our students in their journey toward excelling in both academics and the arts and supporting habits that will foster a lifelong love of learning.

## **Grade Level Expectations**

### **K-2**

In grades K-2, students will not be assigned formal, evaluative homework. They will benefit from:

- Reading together every day. Choose books that are of interest to your child.
- Writing in all aspects of family life: making shopping lists, keeping a journal, writing letters to each other, writing stories your child dictates.
- Discussing prices while shopping, cooking together to explore measurement and science, counting together as you move through your family routines (e.g. how many plates/forks will we need to accommodate everyone for dinner?).
- Parents may be asked to work with their K-2 students at home to make-up class work missed due to extended absences from school.

### **3-4**

Building on the expectations in K-2, students in third and fourth grades will benefit from:

- Regular practice in reciting and memorizing multiplication, division, addition, and subtraction facts. This may be accomplished through flash cards or math games.
- Conversations with adults about topics of mutual interest, such as planning a family vacation, sharing family history, wondering about real and imagined faraway places.
- Researching and/or gathering materials to prepare for their in-class projects.
- Students in grades 3-4 may be asked to make-up class work missed due to extended absences from school.

### **5-8**

The rigor of the curriculum at GCCSA requires teachers to engage students in all assignments, both in class and at home. As students in grades 5-8 can sustain longer in-class discussions, produce more in-depth integrated arts projects, and persevere with assigned collaborative studies, less class time may be available for independent practice, selected research and review, and/or the preparation of materials or texts for on-going class work. For these reasons, students in grades 5-8 will be taught good study habits, research skills, time management, and how to annotate texts, with the understanding that teachers may assign such work to be done outside of class time. Building on the expectations in grades K-4, students in grades 5-8 will benefit from the following:

- Copying all assignments into your agenda, carefully recording due dates and important information.
- Asking your teacher for clarification on an assignment when needed
- Sharing your agenda with your parent(s)/guardian(s) and having it signed nightly.
- Maintaining effort and quality in completing assignments.
- Bringing the assignment to school when it is due.
- Being responsible for getting assignments when absent from school.

- Be responsible for bringing home, taking care of, and returning any borrowed resource materials.
- In grades 5-8, students are responsible for typing some assignments, therefore additional keyboarding practice is encouraged to build proficiency.

We ask parents in grades 5-8 to commit to the following as a model of lifelong learning:

- Provide your student with the time and space to complete homework.
- Check and sign-off on the agenda daily.
- Promote a positive attitude toward schoolwork.
- Engage in conversations about assignments, supporting your student's self-efficacy.
- Communicate with your student's teacher when there are questions or concerns about an assignment.

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Formal conferences are regularly scheduled twice during the school year, in November and in April. Conferences provide parents an opportunity to meet with their child's teachers to discuss their child's progress or any concerns the parent may have. While there are two times a year that formal conferences are scheduled, a parent/guardian may request a meeting with their child's teacher any time during the school year at a mutually agreed upon time.

## **Promotion/Retention**

All students are expected to achieve at least grade level proficiency in order to merit promotion to the next grade. Recommendation for retention is only made after careful evaluation of student performance in conjunction with parents and the classroom teacher. All aspects of the child's development are considered; emotional, social and academic development impact the decision. Parents can request retention, but should discuss their specific concerns with the teacher and administrator.

## **Student Expectations, Rights, and Responsibilities**

Our goal at Gate City Charter School for the Arts is to create a positive, caring atmosphere where all students and adults feel valued and respected. We strive to have a safe and creative environment where students and staff feel enthusiastic about learning and sharing ideas. We want our students to not only be educated academically, but also be prepared for the future by learning teamwork, communication skills, and acceptance of others. We want students to feel positive about themselves through their choices and accomplishments. Most importantly, we want our students to develop self-discipline skills.

## Behavior Guidelines

In any school setting (classrooms, cafeteria, hallways, learning media center, buses, playground, etc.) or at any school-related function, we expect all students to:

- Display behaviors that show respect for other students, adults and property
- Cooperate with others
- Be honest
- Follow all safety rules
- Respect the rights of others to feel emotionally and physically safe
- Behavior that results in physical contact is not allowed

## Fostering Self-Discipline

Fundamental to Gate City Charter School for the Arts mission is empowering students to be caring, competent, responsible citizens who value learning as a lifelong process. Toward this end, we treat our students as individuals, worthy of respect and capable of making good choices.

With respect to discipline we have two distinct aims: (1) to help create and maintain a safe and positive learning environment for all students and (2) to teach and develop self-discipline within each student. Both aims are synergistically related in that each promotes the other. Although correcting misbehavior is often necessary and appropriate, the goal of developing self-discipline is kept in the forefront. This understanding is critical for all involved in effective discipline. The following practices are imbedded in our daily interactions with our students with the objective of upholding our mission.

***We strive to show unconditional care, respect and support.*** Young children and adolescents are more likely to respect, listen to, and act like the adults they care about and respect. By demonstrating warmth and respect, educators act as models and provide the support that students need to learn from their mistakes

***We strive to recognize individual differences in our students.*** Children differ in countless ways including their natural capacity for self-discipline. Students have different temperaments and personalities and some require more supervision, guidance, and patience than others. Through these practices, we work to encourage students who rely on external controls to monitor their behavior to develop intrinsic controls to develop thoughtful and responsible citizenship.

***We strive to involve students in decision-making.*** Research indicates that schools have fewer behavior problems when they have students who think that the school rules are clear, and fair. Student perception of fairness is most high when they participate in the development of school or classroom expectations and agree to them. Although agreement is not always possible, attempts to obtain agreement will improve students' adherence to reasonable rules.

***We strive to model the qualities we want students to possess as adolescents and adults.*** Learning to solve problems and behave appropriately is reinforced when adults model effective thinking skills and related emotions (e.g. empathy, pride, regulation of anger).

***We strive to infuse instruction and discussion of social and emotional competencies throughout the curriculum.***

Throughout the days of school, there are many opportunities in various curriculum areas and class meetings to discuss social and ethical issues and to develop strategies to solve social and ethical problems.

***We emphasize responsibility for one's own actions.*** Whenever possible we encourage students to problem solve how to “fix” their mistakes, including emotional upsets and damage of property. Adults advise the students, when necessary, and help strategize appropriate steps to prevent similar mistakes. Monitoring behavior is a shared process, again highlighting the importance of self-discipline.

## **Correcting Misbehavior**

All children make mistakes – it is part of the natural learning process – we are supposed to learn from our mistakes and not repeat them in the future. To accomplish this learning, it is important for all to emphasize how misbehavior negatively affects others and the importance of acting responsibly.

As noted above, we emphasize each child taking responsibility for his/her mis-steps – as is developmentally appropriate. Each situation is examined individually – in light of the temperaments of the child(ren) involved, the severity of the specific event, its one-time or repeat occurrence, and the ability of the child(ren) to participate in problem solving the situation.

The adults witnessing or learning of the incident may make a decision to engage in discussion with the child at that moment, or refer the child(ren) to their teacher and/or the administration for processing of the incident. There are many factors involved in this referral decision as there are many factors involved in making the decision to notify and/or involve parents (or, in some cases, the police) in the investigative and corrective phases.

**In closing,** we believe that all families want what is best for their child. Working as a team to foster the many attributes that contribute to self-regulation is the goal. The practices above can easily be adapted to the home, then all constituencies are working together to promote caring, competent, responsible citizens.

## **Playground Procedures**

Students are to:

- Stay in the designated play areas
- Follow directions of the playground supervisors
- Use equipment appropriately
- Show respect for playground supervisors at all times
- Play fair and respect one another
- Be safe
- Be in control and use only appropriate and acceptable language
- Keep hands and feet to yourself at all times
- Avoid playing dangerous games at all grade levels

## **Lunch Procedures**

Students are to:

- Follow directions of the lunch supervisors
- Stay seated at all times; raise hand for permission to leave tables
- Talk in a quiet voice to those sitting at your table; use appropriate and kind language
- Eat your own lunch
- Help to clean up

## **Bathroom Procedures**

The teacher will explain the bathroom procedure for each grade level when using the restroom during class times. Along with teacher explained procedure, all students are expected to:

- Go directly to the restroom and return to classroom or lunchroom in a timely manner.
- Keep the restroom area clean by flushing toilets and throwing trash into the trash bin.
- Be kind to our resources; Use only one pump of hand soap and one paper towel per visit.  
Respect others.
- Report any problems in the restrooms to the teacher immediately.

## **Liability School Property**

Students are expected to respect and care for school property, working together to care for our school community. Students who deface or otherwise damage any school and/or personal property may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Curriculum Materials**

Curriculum materials are provided to students as a resource to facilitate the arts-integrated mission of our school. Curriculum materials must be returned in good condition to avoid incurring damage charges. Students must return the same materials and/or books that they were assigned or be charged the value of the missing materials and/or book. Families are also responsible for paying for lost library books.

## **Student Desks and Coat Hooks**

Gate City Charter School for the Arts is the owner and has control over student desks and coat hooks, which are provided as a convenience to students for storage of personal items. School officials may inspect desks, or request that a student reveal the contents of his/her backpack, without notice and without consent whenever reasonable suspicion exists that the student has violated a school rule and/or the law; or that the health, safety or welfare of students or staff may be in danger.

## **Personal Property**

Students should not bring large amounts of money and/or other valuables to school. The school assumes no responsibility or liability for stolen, lost, or damaged personal property.

## **Items Not Allowed at School**

The following items, and others like them, generally cause injury or create annoying or dangerous situations and are, therefore, not allowed at school:

- Skateboards or roller blades
- Guns (any variety, including toy guns)
- Knives, or other weapons (real or toy)
- Caps, lighters, fireworks, matches
- Razor Blades
- Darts
- Animals/Pets (other than classroom pets approved by Administration and the Department of Health)
- Laser pens

The above list is not exhaustive or comprehensive. Other items that place our students or staff members at risk or have potential for interrupting the educational process are not permitted. Students who bring the above-mentioned items to school will be subject to disciplinary action. These items may be confiscated and kept for parent/guardian pick-up. If a student brings any type of weapon to school, or makes the threat of serious harm to others, the police will be notified.

## **Bullying Policy**

The Gate City Charter School for the Arts believes all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The school and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

Gate City Charter School will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not intimidate or harass another student through words or actions.

Such behaviors includes but are not limited to:

- Direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving.
- Verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling.
- Social isolation or manipulation.

Students will also be expected to not engage in or exhibit any activity that:

- Adversely affects the educational activities of other students.

- Adversely affects the teacher's ability to teach.
- Adversely affects the orderly operation of the school.

This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during the lunch/recess period and during a school-sponsored activity.

Students who exhibit indicated behavior are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and possibly expulsion.

Gate City Charter School expects students and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to the Director. Any staff who witnesses such acts may take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. The incident will be investigated and the school shall respond accordingly to the situation to ensure the safety of the school community.

The school will also work to provide materials in bullying prevention to the staff and students. We strive to cultivate acceptance and understanding in all students and staff in order to build the school's capacity to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment. Teachers will discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and assure them they need not endure any form of bullying.

## **Discipline**

The Gate City Charter School for the Arts Discipline Procedure Code is meant to inform students, parents and staff of the standards of behavior that we have established at GCCS, and the consequences for violation of these standards. The consequences listed are typical but are not meant to cover every situation that may arise.



The goal of the discipline code is to assist the student in developing responsibility, self-discipline, and good decision making. Our goal is to guide students to take actions which remedy the mistake and prevent them from occurring in the future.

The following is a description of the rules, infractions, and an indication of the types of consequences students might expect from the staff. The administration reserves the right to modify the consequences when the individual situation warrants such action or as required under State of New Hampshire or Federal Laws.

**LEVEL ONE** rule violations are those which impede orderly classroom procedures or interfere with the normal operations of the school. The consequences for these behaviors are usually assigned by the individual staff member, but sometimes they require the intervention of support personnel.

Examples of such infractions are, but not limited to:

1. Being late or unprepared for class
2. Minor violations
3. Disruption, inattention
4. Inappropriate language
5. Drug/violence promoting conversation
6. Rude behavior
7. Wandering
8. Inappropriate display of affection

Disciplinary action could include, but is not limited to:

1. Informal warning
2. Formal warning
3. Phone call home
4. Personal apology
5. Break/morning detention
6. Individual processing with a teacher outside of class time
7. Lunch detention
8. Removal from activity/class
9. Letter of apology
10. Personal Growth Reflection
11. Make up time
12. Classroom meeting and problem solving
13. Behavior improvement plan

**LEVEL TWO** misbehaviors tend to disrupt the climate of the school. Included are misbehaviors which do not represent a direct threat to the health and safety of others, but which are serious enough to require corrective action on the part of administrative personnel.

Examples of infractions include but are not limited to:

1. Repeated violations of Level 1 rules
2. Physical roughness
3. Being in an unauthorized area
4. Cutting a class/activity
5. Being disrespectful or insubordinate to any staff member
6. Inappropriate clothing
7. Forgery
8. Refusal to participate
9. Inappropriate public displays of affection

Disciplinary action could include, but is not limited to:

1. Development of a behavior plan
2. Lunch detention
3. Phone call home and /or parent conference
4. Mediation with teacher
5. Removal from activity/class
6. Restitution
7. Personal Growth Reflection
8. School Service Project
9. In-school suspension
10. 1-3 day out of school suspension
11. Expulsion

**LEVEL THREE** misconduct is directed against persons or property which seriously endangers the health and safety of others.

Example of infractions are but not limited to:

1. Repeated violations of Level 2 rules
2. Endangerment to self or others
3. Causing purposeful injury to others
4. Fighting
5. Bullying
6. Vulgar and defiant language
7. Vandalism
8. Possession of material which may be injurious to others
9. Stealing
10. Threatening others
11. Sexual activity
12. Student skipping school

Disciplinary action could include but not limited to:

1. Restitution
2. Loss of privileges
3. In-school suspension
4. 1-3 day out of school suspension and parent conference
5. 3-5 day out of school suspension and parent conference
6. Police involvement
7. Probationary placement at GCCS
8. Referral for expulsion

**LEVEL FOUR** infractions are illegal and/or violate school policy.

Examples of violations include but are not limited to:

1. Repeated violations of Level 3 rules
2. Smoking or possession of tobacco or tobacco related products
3. Possession, use or being under the influence of alcohol, other drugs, or look alike substances
4. Reasonable suspicion of possession, use, or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or look alike substances
5. Selling or distributing alcohol, drugs or look alike substances
6. Vaping
7. Possession of knives, guns, or other dangerous weapons as defined in RSA 193-D
8. Violent assault on another student or adult
9. False fire alarm
10. Bullying
11. Use of firecrackers, smoke bombs, or other explosive devices

Disciplinary action could include but not limited to:

1. Detentions
2. Implementation of harassment policy if applicable
3. Out-of-school suspension
4. Referral to law enforcement officials
5. Referral to Director for 5-10 day suspension
6. Participation in Drug/Alcohol assessment
7. Restitution
8. Probationary placement at GCCS
9. Expulsion

## **Dress Code**

Research has shown that student dress and appearance affects student attitudes and conduct. The purpose of the Dress Code is to foster good dress and grooming habits in students, prevent disruption of the classroom atmosphere, enhance classroom decorum, eliminate disturbances among other students in attendance and minimize distraction of other students so as not to interfere with the education process. All students are expected to attend school in clean, neat, and appropriate student attire.

- All clothing must be sufficient to conceal undergarments.
- Hats and hoods are not permitted in the classrooms.
- Clothing with inappropriate logos or emblems is not allowed.
- Length of shorts, skirts, skorts, and dresses must be within the bounds of decency (the “fingertip rule” is considered a good guidance point)
- Straps on sun-dresses should be approximately 1” wide; “spaghetti” straps are not appropriate for school dress.
- Swimsuits and bedtime attire are not appropriate school dress on a daily basis
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Flip-flops are not allowed for safety purposes.

**\* Final decision on appropriate attire lies in the school administration and/or designee(s).**

## **Internet & Computers**

Gate City Charter School for the Arts provides computers and Internet access for use by its staff and students. The primary goal of computers and the Internet is to support the regular classroom resources and student research related to academic studies. Internet access at the school is not to be used for recreational ‘surfing’ or communicating.

Access is a privilege, not a right, and with it comes responsibility. Students are expected to adhere to the school’s mission statement, philosophy and regulations while on school computer networks, just as they are in classrooms or school buildings.

To maintain system integrity and ensure responsible use of systems for academic purposes, Gate City Charter School for the Arts uses Internet filters. School faculty and administrators will also re- view files and request search histories of websites visited. Information and files stored on school computers and servers are not private. Gate City Charter School for the Arts has no control over the nature or content of information from other computer systems and disclaims any responsibility to exercise such control. Information via the Internet is public and often uncensored and students may come in contact with materials that are controversial or inaccurate. Gate City Charter School for the Arts is also not responsible for the appropriateness or accuracy of information retrieved from the Internet.

## **Media Use Guidelines**

- Do not send, access, download or display offensive messages or pictures
- Do not use obscene language
- Do not reveal personally identifying information about yourself to others
- Do not violate copyright laws or regulations
- No 'hacking' or other disruptive activities
- Do not share passwords
- Do not damage computers, network or system
- Do not access files or work of others
- Do not load any files, software, or apps onto any computer without teacher authorization
- Do not use school computers or the school network for political campaigning
- Do not use electronic technologies to knowingly or recklessly post, transmit or distribute false or defamatory information about a person or organization, or to harass another person, or to engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks
- Do not use electronic technologies to engage in any illegal act or violate any local, state, or federal laws
- Do not post private or confidential information about another individual, student, teacher, or employee on social networks
- Any violations of these rules or other standards of computer etiquette will result in revocation of Internet access. This notification is the only warning a student will receive. Serious violations may result in suspension or expulsion.

## **Personal Electronics**

- Students may want to use their personal electronic device while at school. This may be allowed, under certain conditions. Personal electronics include cell phones, tablets, e-readers, music players, gaming devices, laptops, computers, smart watches, and digital cameras.
- The Gate City Charter School for the Arts is not responsible for a student's personal electronics device and the School carries no responsibility or liability for the personal effects of its students.
- Use of personal electronic devices to connect to the Internet during school hours and on the school campus shall be subject to the same rules and responsibilities of our Media Use Guidelines.

**The following are acceptable use procedures for students with personal electronic devices:**

- The student who possesses a personal electronic device shall be solely
- Cell phones and other personal electronic devices may be used before and after school hours. At the start of the school day, cell phones must be turned off and placed inside the student's school bag/backpack. The cell phone must remain in the bag throughout the school day. Parents and students who need to contact each other during the school day may do so through the school office,
- in regard to our communication procedure.
- Tablets, e-readers, laptop computers, music players, and digital cameras may only be used for educational purposes with the permission of the classroom teacher at the time permitted by the classroom teacher.
- Students shall not use personal electronic devices on school property or at a school-sponsored activity to access and/or view internet websites that are otherwise blocked to students at school. Blocked sites include, but are not limited to social networking sites.
- Student use of personal electronic devices that disrupt the instructional day may result in disciplinary action and/or confiscation of the personal electronic device. When a personal electronic device is confiscated, it shall only be released and/or returned to the student's parent/legal guardian. It is the student's parent/legal guardian's responsibility to retrieve the device according to school procedures.

## **Telephones and Cell Phones**

Phone calls can disrupt the learning process during the school day. Students are not permitted to use the school phones to make calls or receive any calls, unless in association with a student's 504 Plan. Students will not be called to the telephone to receive a call, except in emergencies. Student use of cell phones is not permitted during school hours. If students come to school with cell phones, we ask they are turned off and kept in the student's backpack until the end of school. If student use of a cell phone interferes with instruction, routines, or creates a problem at school, the teacher or school administrator reserves the right to confiscate the phone. In this case, a parent will be notified and the phone may be picked up by the parent in the Director's office.

## **Lunch**

- Lunch is available to order on a monthly basis. Students may pre-order lunch from the menu at the beginning of the month. All order forms and payment must be submitted by the deadline. Lunch is provided by *Only Catering* Monday thru Thursday. Pizza is offered by a local pizza restaurant on Fridays. Lunch must be pre-ordered each month by the deadline printed on the form.

- Students may pack a lunch from home each day. We do not have a refrigerator or microwave for student use, so please plan accordingly. Use ice packs to keep lunches cold or a Thermos or hot pack to keep hot lunches warm.
- If you need assistance providing meals for your child(ren), please contact the administration for information regarding local community service organizations that can be of assistance to your family.

## **Milk**

Milk will be available for purchase at \$0.50 a carton. White milk and chocolate milk are available.

## **Snacks**

Students should bring a snack that will sustain them between meals. We ask that these snacks are nutritional in nature. Junk foods, candy, and soda are discouraged at the school. The school has non-perishable snack items for sale at \$0.50 a snack.

## **Financial Information**

The school (GCCS) charges parents and guardians for hot lunch program, field trips, after school programs and other activities at the school where external suppliers charge the school for goods or services. Parents and guardians are charged on a cost recovery basis, with the intent that the activity is cost-neutral to the school.

## **Payment Policy**

Our school payment policy is that these activities must be paid for, in full, in advance of the scheduled activity. Specific payment deadlines will be noted on the activity's applicable registration and announcement forms. **Students whose payment that has not been received by this time will not take part in the activity.** If parents or guardians are unable to make payment by the set date, arrangements for a payment plan must be made with the GCCS Administrator before then.

## **Methods of Payment**

**Preferred methods of payment are by check (made payable to: Gate City Charter School for the Arts or GCCS).**

Cash payments are accepted at the office, but not preferred.

Check payments returned by our financial institution (bounced checks) will be subject to a \$30 fee.

## **Refund Policy**

Our school refund policy is that parent and guardian payments for school activities and excursions will not be refunded. In exceptional circumstances, partial or complete refunds may be granted upon contacting the Administrator.

## **Additional School Information Recording Release**

Photos, video and recordings may be taken of our school program and of students for promotional or educational use. They may appear on our web site, on our social media page, and in the Press (newspapers, television). Parents have the right to refuse. All parents must sign a recording release each school year, which will be kept in the student's file.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

- A birthday is a time to celebrate the individual child. Each classroom teacher will determine a special way to recognize a child on his/her birthday.
- Parents are invited to visit the classroom and read to the class the birthday child's favorite book or lead the class in a special activity of your choosing (art project, science experiment, music, dance, etc). Please arrange your class visit ahead of time with the teacher.
- With initiatives that promote health and wellness; cupcakes, cake, or candy of any kind will not be allowed for birthday celebrations. Those special treats will be reserved for occasional school-wide celebrations. We ask that birthday recognition not focus on food, but focus on the birthday child.

## **School Supplies – Wish List**

Gate City Charter School for the Arts will supply basic classroom supplies: paper, writing utensils, art supplies, etc. We will gladly accept donations from our published Wish List. The Wish List is available on our web site and through the school office. Individual classroom teachers also have supply requests. The teacher will include classroom requests in the weekly *News Blast*.

## **Headphones**

- Gate City Charter School for the Arts will provide headphones for use in the computer lab. These headphones are necessary for successful participation in standardized testing requirements, such as the SBAC. The headphones will be assigned to a computer and shared amongst all student users.
- If you would prefer to provide a set of headphones for your child's dedicated use, please send in headphones (compatible with a standard mini jack – 3.5 mm or 1/8" plug) in a Ziploc bag, with both the headphones and the bag labeled with your child's name. We will store the headphones in the computer lab and your child will have access to his/her own headphones when using the computer.

## **Lost and Found**

- The lost and found will be located in the school's Gathering Room. Items not claimed after 30 days may be donated to a charity in need.
- Labeling all personal belongings is one way to make sure items are returned to the rightful owner. We very much appreciate when a student's outerwear, winter



hat, gloves/mittens, shoes, boots, lunchbox, lunch storage containers, and backpack, etc are labeled with the child's name.

## **Solicitation**

Solicitation of or by any student, parent, or staff member or other person on school property for any cause except those authorized by the Administrator and/or designee(s) is strictly prohibited.

## **Parent Information**

### **Parent Involvement**

- Our school's philosophy and mission embraces parents as partners in education. Parent participation is encouraged. We deeply appreciate all the assistance provided by our community of parents and invite anyone interested to join our much-needed force of volunteers. This home and school partnership is integral to student success.
- All volunteers are required to request classroom visits for volunteer purposes ahead of time with the classroom teacher. Parents are required to sign in at the main office and wear a visitor badge. Parents must also sign out when they leave the building. Your cooperation in this procedure will help us to track volunteer hours, and also keep us in compliance with fire and safety regulations.
- Parents should note that time volunteering in the school are not times for parent/teacher conferences. Such conferences require teacher preparation and should be scheduled with teachers at a mutually agreed upon time.

## **Volunteers**

We appreciate the time and talents of our volunteers! The commitment of our volunteers is essential to growing our mission and helping to build a strong public charter school community. We expect volunteers to participate in activities they are signed up for at predetermined times. Volunteering in the school should not be used as an opportunity to make unscheduled visits to your child's classes or to have time for unplanned meetings with teachers or administrators.

The *Friends of Gate City Charter School for the Arts* is our volunteer committee comprised of parents, grandparents, teachers, and community volunteers and overseen by our Board of Trustees. This group is responsible for organizing school community events and fundraisers. Examples of events run by the *Friends* are School Dance, 5K Paint and Run, Paint Parties, Playground Improvement Committee, and more.

As well, there are many other ways for volunteers to be involved in our school community:

- Office Tasks (Mailings, Photocopying, etc)
- Lunch Volunteers

- Classroom Volunteer (Assisting the Teacher in Preparing Curriculum Materials)
- Reading Volunteer (Read to a Class or Small Group of Children)
- Guest Artist
- Soliciting and collecting in-kind donations from our Wish List
- Building Maintenance (painting, cleaning, small repairs, etc)
- Fundraising

## **Volunteer Assurances**

- All volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application and a Volunteer
- Volunteers giving more than 5 hours of their time in any given month must complete a satisfactory criminal background check as facilitated by the NH State Police. Instructions for completing this background check are available in the school office. No volunteer will be left alone with one child unless the satisfactory criminal background check has been completed.
- Volunteers must sign-in at the school office. The Volunteer Log helps us know who is in the building in case of an emergency, and assists us in keeping track of volunteer hours.
- All volunteers must wear a badge (name tag provided by the school) while volunteering at an event.
- Your participation is vital to the success of the Gate City Charters School for the Arts. If you have volunteered to participate in an event and are unable to follow through with that commitment, we ask that you speak as soon as possible with the Volunteer Coordinator, the Chair of the *Friends of the Gate City Charter School for the Arts*, or Administrator in order that we can find your replacement.
- If you become ill and are not able to participate in an event, we ask that you contact the Event Coordinator, the Chair of the *Friends of the Gate City Charter School for the Arts*, or Administrator in order that we can find your replacement to ensure the success of the event.

## **Confidentiality**

- Volunteers must comply with all Gate City Charter School for the Arts policies and procedures. Over the course of your time as a volunteer, you may observe or be presented with confidential information concerning a student or staff member. All staff and student information is confidential. Volunteers agree to not disclose such confidential information to other parties. If a volunteer has concerns about anything concerning a student or staff member, they are to discuss those concerns in private with the Administrator.

## **Reporting Child Abuse**

- NH Law requires any person who suspects that a child under age 18 has been abused or neglected to report that suspicion immediately to DCYF.

- If, while volunteering or participating in Gate City Charter School for the Arts events, you have concern over the safety and welfare of a child, please immediately speak to a member of School Administration.
- School administration has the obligation to document and report your concerns. That being said, under NH law, you have the right and responsibility to directly contact DCYF, should you feel the need.

If a child tells you that he or she has been hurt or you are concerned that a child may be the victim of any type of abuse or neglect, you must call the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) Central Intake Unit at:

Telephone: (800) 894-5533

8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday - Friday

- Call your local police department with urgent child abuse or neglect reports during DCYF non-work hours (between 4:30 PM and 8:00 AM or on weekends and holidays).
- Proof of abuse and neglect is not required to make a report.
- Reports of abuse and neglect concerns are confidential and can be anonymous. If you have asked that your name not be disclosed, please know that DCYF will make every effort to remove your name from all DCYF records of the report and investigation. However, if the case ever goes to court, a judge may request identifying information.

## **Communication**

- Communication between home and school is important and contributes to student success.
- Classroom teachers make every effort to communicate regularly about curriculum and classroom happenings. Your child's teacher will explain to you their preferred method of communication.
- Often, parents have information about their child that they would like to discuss with their child's teacher. Communication between parents and school staff should be professional and polite. Parents and teachers may communicate via scheduled conference, phone call, email, or written notes.

The following guidelines set the standard for communication between parents and teachers.

### **What parents CAN expect:**

- Parent communications (email, notes, phone calls) responded to within a reasonable time
- Requests for appointments responded to or scheduled within a reasonable time
- Parent to be notified about single serious issue or ongoing problem

- Two formal conferences per year, other meetings and calls within reason

### **What parents SHOULD NOT expect:**

- Teachers returning a call after work hours
- Answering email in the evening/weekends
- Access to teacher's private phone number or email

Please be mindful of the volume of email that teachers receive on a daily basis, and be sensitive about monopolizing the teachers' time. An email request should require a response of, at most, four sentences. For questions and concerns of greater length, please schedule a conference with the teacher.

### **When you should contact your child's teacher:**

- Changes in family situation (divorce, new baby, move)
- Medical issues that arise or change
- Safety issues, change in behavior at home
- Family emergencies, sleepless nights
- Ongoing and pervasive problems/concerns at school or home
- When you can't keep a scheduled appointment
- Questions about something that occurred during the school day

### **Information that should be sent to the School Office:**

Appointments, early pick up, playdates, change in pick up routine (send a written note to the teacher, call school office)

### **Communication that interferes with teaching and learning:**

- Showing up at the classroom during the teacher's prep time before school or during the school day without an appointment
- Discussing an issue with the teacher at dismissal. Teachers need to account for the safe pick up of each student at the end of the school day. If you have a concern, please schedule a conference or phone call with your child's teacher.
- Speaking to the teacher disrespectfully or angrily, especially in front of your child or other students.
- Gossiping to other parents rather than discussing issues directly with staff members.

## **Conflict Resolution – Parent Grievance Procedure**

The *Gate City Charter School for the Arts* encourages all concerns and complaints to be resolved at the lowest level possible. The following is a process to follow in seeking resolution to your concerns:

### **Step I**

Send a written request to the Classroom Teacher and schedule a formal meeting to discuss your concerns. In your request for a meeting, please state your concerns in order that a meeting agenda can be established.

### **Step II**

If, after meeting with the Classroom Teacher, your concerns have not been resolved, the Parent may invoke the grievance procedure by sending a written request for a formal meeting to the Administrator. In your request, please detail the following:

- Basis for your grievance
- Name the specific policy, rule, or law believed to have been violated
- Specify the relief being sought

The following additional guidelines shall be observed in Step I:

- No grievance will be heard unless it has been filed in writing within ninety (90) calendar days after the act or condition giving rise to the grievance and such filing must state with particularity the basis for the grievance, the policy regulation and/or procedure, rule or law believed to have been violated, and the remedy sought.
- The Director shall grant a conference within five (5) school days following receipt of the re-quest. The Director will state in writing his/her position on the question to the parent or guardian within five (5) school days following the conference.
- Only the parent, guardian, or someone acting in loco parentis shall be permitted to join or represent a student in the conference with the Director.

### **Step III**

- If the grievance is not resolved at Step II, the Parent may appeal the Director's decision in writing to the Board of Trustees, via the Chair. The following additional guidelines shall be observed:
- The appeal must be made within five (5) days following receipt of the Director's written response (Step I above).
- The Board or its designee shall review the grievance within five (5) school days following receipt of the appeal. If the Board or its designee determines that additional time is needed to develop the factual record, the grievance may be put on hold for fifteen (15) additional days (or longer if by mutual agreement) to allow time for investigation.
- A written response shall be made to the Parent and the Administrator from the Board of Trustees or its designee within ten (10) days following the review.
- If after following the Grievance Procedure the parent does not find the outcome to be sufficient, the complaint may be submitted in writing to the New Hampshire Commissioner of Education.

# Transportation

## Student Drop Off:

- Parent drivers are to enter the parking lot from the Henry Clay Drive entrance (opposite the YMCA main entrance) and proceed to the far left of the parking lot and drive up to our main entrance along the side of the building. Students may enter the building and go to their classrooms beginning at 8:20 AM.
- Please pull into the carpool lane, parallel to the building, nearest our main entrance. Students will exit the vehicle and walk immediately inside the school. Once the children have safely exited the vehicle, please pull away and drive safely. WAIT FOR THE CARS IN FRONT OF YOU TO DRIVE AWAY BEFORE YOU MAKE YOUR EXIT. DO NOT PASS CARS IN THE CARPOOL LANE.
- Please be quick, efficient and safe about departing children from your vehicle. If you need extra time to unload, or if you would like to escort your kindergartener or another student the building, park in a designated parking spot.

## Student Pick Up:

At the end of the school day, please drive around the building and park in the rear parking lot nearest your kindergarten door and cafeteria. We ask that you park in a designated parking space, exit your vehicle and walk up to meet your child's teacher. For everyone's safety there is no basketball playing allowed in the playground and parking lot areas after school. We need to assure the safety of children and adults at all times.

## Parking:

- Gate City Charter School for the Arts parents, volunteers, and visitors are to park in the far back parking area, nearest the kindergarten room/cafe/tergia/playground. From there, you should walk to the Main Entrance of the building to enter the school and sign in at the Main Office.
- Should a person need wheelchair access to the building and cannot manipulate through the Main Entrance, a School Employee will open access to the school via the Front Entrance of the building (the door facing Henry Clay Drive), nearest the elevator.

## EXIT ONLY

from this side of the parking lot

## ENTER ONLY

Henry Clay Drive side of parking lot

## **Before and After School Care Options**

- Gate City Charter School for the Arts will offer a variety of enrichment classes after school. A schedule of after school activities and fees will be sent home with each student.
- Before and After School Care is available through the following organizations. For information about their program offerings, please contact each organization directly.

### **Boys and Girls Club of Greater Nashua**

Bus transportation to and from our school is provided. [http://www .bgcn.com](http://www.bgcn.com)

One Positive Place

Nashua, NH 03060

603.883.0523

### **Merrimack YMCA** [nmymca.org](http://nmymca.org)

Kindergarten extension program is offered. YMCA staff are available to walk children across the street.

6 Henry Clay Drive

Merrimack, NH 03054

603.881.7778

### **Minds in Motion**

Transportation is available.

317 West Hollis Street

Nashua, NH 03060

603.883.1036