



# Lower School Family Handbook

3350 W Story Rd  
Irving, TX 75038

Revised July 2024

*The Headmaster of the Academy maintains the right to amend this handbook during the course of the year when it is deemed necessary. If this is the case, the changes will be posted on the Academy's website.*

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## Letter to Families

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Dear Great Hearts Families,

Great Hearts is driven by a desire to instill mankind's noblest and most dignified ideals in the hearts of the students in our charge. We have created practices and policies that enable us to achieve this aim. Only by working together will we help students to form and master the habits that will set them upon the road to greatness, for, as Aristotle observed long ago, it is only by the continual practice of habits that one attains to excellence.

We encourage all parents to read the Family Handbook carefully each year for important updates and changes. As we continue to grow, our logistical, academic, and programmatic features may undergo revisions and refinements to accommodate our circumstances. Thank you for taking the time to review this crucial information.

The vision and common purpose of the Great Hearts Irving Lower School is encapsulated in our school motto, a quotation from the philosopher Socrates: "*Principium philosophiae est admiratio*," which translates to, "The beginning of the love of wisdom is wonder." These are words which we not only believe in wholeheartedly, but which inform every aspect of the culture of our school.

It is a privilege to serve this unique community. Thank you for choosing Great Hearts Irving for the education of your children. In partnership together, we can help form the hearts and minds of our scholars, and it is with great joy that we embark upon this journey alongside you.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marcy Finn".

Marcy Finn  
Headmaster, Lower School  
Great Hearts Irving

## **Our Mission**

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The mission of Great Hearts Irving is to cultivate the minds and hearts of students through the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty.

The Academy graduate has a foundation in the liberal arts of grammar and rhetoric, logic and mathematics, history, natural science, and philosophy. The graduate has also practiced the fine arts of music, poetry, drawing and painting, and drama. The graduate is thus prepared for every career, every course of advanced or specialized study, and every kind of leisure. In short, the Academy graduate is ready to live the lifetime of learning that is possible for a human being.

The Academy will fulfill its mission by the following means:

- Service to a rigorous, core liberal arts curriculum in the Western tradition that is the same for all students,
- Small class size,
- Dedicated, enthusiastic, and intellectually excellent teachers who serve as models of learning and of character,
- Detailed student evaluation, with an emphasis upon written, narrative evaluation of learning rather than upon grades and percentages,
- Regular and meaningful homework assignments, and
- High standards of personal conduct and comportment for students.

Though the curriculum is rigorous, and expectations of students are high, the Academy is not a school only for the best and the brightest. We provide an environment that allows every student who is curious and diligent the opportunity to fulfill his or her potential.

### **Our Charter, Accreditation, and Affiliations**

Great Hearts Irving is a campus of Great Hearts Texas, the holder of an open-enrollment charter issued by the State of Texas and a 501(c)(3) organization.

Great Hearts Texas supports its schools with curriculum, data management, faculty orientation and professional development, human resources services, business management (such as accounting), special education services, and the development of funding and facility opportunities.

Great Hearts Texas is a subsidiary corporation of Great Hearts Academies, a non-profit charter management organization. In 2020–21, Great Hearts operates 22 classical, liberal arts schools in Phoenix, Arizona, 6 in San Antonio, Texas and 2 in the North Texas area.

## Parent Involvement

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The primary way that parents are involved in the school is by supporting their child in his or her journey through the Academy. Parents will want to have an established plan for listening to and then encouraging their students when they are working hard. Likewise, parents may want to communicate frequently with their son's or daughter's teachers so the parents can develop an understanding of the Academy's expectations of how preparatory-level, liberal arts studies form habits of learning. Parents should contact the teachers to share important information on how their child approaches the curriculum at home and if he or she is experiencing difficulty. Academy students invest a great deal in their education, and thus teachers and parents should be united in their support of the students and one another.

The teachers of the Academy are honored by the great trust that parents have placed in them. This trust between the parents and the school must be maintained by ongoing communication and mutual understanding of the "big picture": what an Academy education will offer young people in the long run. It can be difficult for both young people and adults to maintain a focus on the long-term benefits that a liberal education offers. Likewise, students—especially younger students—may not fully sense the extent of their own intellectual and moral growth over time. When students are applying themselves on a particular part of their journey, they will look to their parents and their teachers for reaffirmation that their investment is yielding positive gains. As such, mutual trust between parents and teachers is essential in persuading students that we have an achievable plan in place for them that is also in their best interest.

## **Material Support of the Academy: Time, Treasure, and Talent**

The Academy provides an outstanding educational offering. The Academy is a state-funded public school, but the state funding formula does not provide for all of our needs in terms of providing a truly outstanding education. To meet these needs and to build a strong Community of Learners, the Academy counts on the support of its parents through stewardship of time, talent, and treasure.

### **Time:**

Volunteerism is encouraged. Without this practical manifestation of your belief in the value and quality of our school, we could not exist. Each parent should consider volunteering to assist on campus and through membership in the Parent Service Organization. (See below.)

### **Treasure:**

The Academy welcomes and encourages financial support from families at a level their budget allows through donations and fundraising. The Academy is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) corporation; as such, donations may be tax-deductible.

### **Talent:**

The Academy will benefit greatly from the unique talents of its community. Whether through volunteer time spent on campus, or by contributing your professional expertise, your talents are a vital addition to the success of our school.

## **Parent Service Organization**

The Parent Service Organization is a service organization within the Academy. All parents and guardians of students at the Academy are members of the Parent Service Organization. The purpose of the Parent Service Organization is to serve the school's students and teachers through coordinating and assisting programs and activities that are critical to their success. Involvement in the Parent Service Organization is structured according to service committees, with each committee devoted to a specific area of school life. At the beginning of each school year, Great Hearts will host a meeting for the PSO. At that meeting, individuals who are interested can sign up for different volunteer opportunities.

## **Fingerprinting**

Great Hearts has a policy that school volunteers who work alone with students shall be fingerprinted and have a criminal background check conducted by the Texas Department of Public Safety and the FBI. Great Hearts will contact all volunteers that are selected to assist with duties that require fingerprinting. Volunteers assisting in the school office in the presence of school employees are not required to be fingerprinted. In special cases, office volunteers may be asked to sign a FERPA confidentiality agreement in order to assist with student files.

## **Surveys and Activities**

Students will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent(s);
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship;
6. Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents;
8. Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

Parents will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis or evaluation.

## **“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities**

Parents have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for their child's participation in:

1. Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding;
2. School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information;
3. Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the Academy in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law.

## **Accommodations for Children of Military Families**

Children of military families will be provided flexibility regarding certain Academy requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements;
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement;
- Eligibility requirements for participating in extracurricular activities; and
- Graduation requirements.

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent, including a step-parent or legal guardian who has been called to active duty for, is on leave from, or is returning from a deployment of at least four months, will be excused by the school. The Academy will permit no more than five excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the

absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

### **Biological Sex and Gender Policy**

Great Hearts is responsible for ensuring the safety of all students during the school day and during school activities. This includes providing for the physical privacy rights of students. Great Hearts is further responsible for maintaining order, decorum and discipline during school. Great Hearts is further responsible for ensuring the educational environment is free from disruption and disturbance in order to provide an equal educational opportunity to all students. The following policy is found by the Board of Directors to be in the best interest of students and necessary for maintaining privacy rights, safety, discipline, and order in the educational environment:

#### **ASSUMPTIONS:**

1. That the recognition of any distinction between “gender identity” and biological sex is not yet a matter of settled law in the United States;
2. That there exists no general consensus but rather disagreement between the State of Texas and the United States and in the United States as a whole—legal, scientific, educational, philosophical—about the relationship between “gender identity” and biological sex;
3. That GH will comply with all settled law (plain language of statute, controlling case law and duly adopted administrative regulations) for the states in which it operates schools;
4. That GH will take into account each student's right to privacy and safety in accessing facilities;
5. That EVERY CHILD entrusted to our schools, regardless of sex, class, race, religion, and national origin, is to be educated with exactly the same level of care and respect for his/her dignity and innate human potential.

DEFINITION: “Sex” means an individual's biological classification as male or female at the time of birth and as recorded on their official state-issued birth certificate.

#### **POLICY:**

##### **A. Student enrollment and instruction**

1. Schools will record, report, and classify each enrolled student as male or female according to the sex as indicated in the submitted enrollment documents. In the event of a discrepancy, the sex as indicated on the birth certificate will be considered as accurate.
2. In the event of an update or change to a birth certificate, the school shall consider the information upon the most recent birth certificate as accurate and shall modify all school records as pertinent.
3. Schools will record and report the legal name of the child as recorded in enrollment documents submitted by the family. School staff may either a) refer to a child by the name as indicated in school records, or b) refer to the child by a variant nickname sanctioned by the student and his/her family.

4. School personnel may use the personal pronouns consistent with the sex of students as recorded in school records described above.
  5. When a learning activity calls for the separation of students by sex, students shall be classified according to sex as recorded in current school records described above.
  6. Students must adhere to the uniform code and grooming standards of their sex as recorded in current school records described above.
- B. Use of School Facilities
1. Schools shall maintain restroom and locker room facilities that are single-sex only, and shall also provide single-occupant restroom and changing facilities that are sex-neutral. Students are permitted to use the single-sex facilities that correspond to their sex as noted in current school records describes above, and single-occupant restrooms and locker/changing rooms that are open to use by individuals of either sex.
  2. Restrooms, locker room facilities, and changing facilities shall be clearly marked and designated for the assigned sex or sex-neutral.
  3. This shall not apply to a person or persons who enter a single-sex facility for purposes of
    - a. Maintenance
    - b. Providing medical assistance
    - c. Protecting a student or students from a threat to good order or safety
    - d. Shelter in an emergency
  4. No student shall be compelled to use a single-sex restroom or locker/changing room facility against their wishes; access to private, sex-neutral facilities will be provided.
- C. Participation in school activities
1. Students are eligible to participate in the single-sex athletic activities that correspond to their sex as noted in current school records and based on requirements of the specific league or ruling body for the athletic activity.

## **Tolerance and Pluralistic Sensitivity**

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The Academy is a public, non-sectarian institution serving a variety of Texans. All members of the Academy community—the administration, teachers, parents, and students—should show profound respect and tolerance for the religious, political, and cultural traditions and perspectives of others. The administration and teachers will take the lead at the Academy in actively promoting tolerance, civility, and sensitivity. Teachers are not permitted to encourage a particular religious or political perspective in the courses they teach. Rather, they encourage a civil and tolerant discussion of ideas when such topics naturally arise in class or on campus.

### **Focus on the Western Tradition**

The Academy’s teachers are able to explain to students, parents, and the public why we focus principally on Western Culture at Great Hearts. This focus is not intended as a statement about other cultural heritages. The Western tradition is one of great depth and diversity (of peoples and ideas) and will serve as a superb foundation to our students as they go on to be lifelong learners. We believe that many of the values and ideas that underlie our own American society may be clearly traced to the classics we study.



## **Statement of Nondiscrimination**

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Great Hearts does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex or gender, disability, or age in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational and career technology programs. Great Hearts complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”); Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and any other legally-protected classification or status protected by applicable law.

As required by Title IX, Great Hearts does not (and is required not to) discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. This non-discrimination requirement applies to admission to and employment with Great Hearts. Inquiries into issues related to Title IX may be referred to Great Hearts’s Title IX Coordinator (identified below), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

Any questions or concerns about Great Hearts’s compliance with these federal programs should be brought to the attention of the following persons designated as being responsible for coordinating compliance with these requirements:

The Title IX Coordinator for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex/gender (including sexual harassment) is Dr. Dan Scoggin, 824 Broadway St, San Antonio, TX, 78215, 210-888-9475, [dscoggin@greatheartsameric.org](mailto:dscoggin@greatheartsameric.org)

The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability is Diane Jones, 3350 Story Rd W, Irving, TX, 75038, 469-759-3030, [Diane.Jones@greatheartstx.org](mailto:Diane.Jones@greatheartstx.org)

The Age Discrimination Coordinator for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of age is Great Hearts Texas HR, 824 Broadway St, San Antonio, TX, 78215, 210-888-9475, [HR@GreatHeartsTX.org](mailto:HR@GreatHeartsTX.org)

All other concerns regarding discrimination may be directed to Great Hearts Texas HR, 824 Broadway St, San Antonio, TX, 78215, 210-888-9475, [HR@GreatHeartsTX.org](mailto:HR@GreatHeartsTX.org)

## **Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation**

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### **Statement of Nondiscrimination**

Great Hearts prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis prohibited by law. Great Hearts also prohibits dating violence, as defined by this Handbook. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of Great Hearts policy.

## **Discrimination and Harassment (Prohibited Conduct)**

For purposes of Great Hearts policy, the term “Prohibited Conduct” means discrimination or harassment against a student involving conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender or sex, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law and that adversely affects the student, and/or that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

- Affects a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student’s academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities.

Examples of Prohibited Conduct may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person’s religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes; name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Great Hearts also considers gender-based harassment to be Prohibited Conduct. Gender-based harassment includes harassment based on a student’s gender, expression by the student of stereotypical characteristics associated with the student’s gender, or the student’s failure to conform to stereotypical behavior related to gender. Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student’s or the harasser’s actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not be limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property

“Prohibited Conduct” may also include dating violence, which occurs when one partner in a dating relationship, either past or current, intentionally uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other partner. Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student’s family members or members of the student’s household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engaged in these behaviors.

## **Retaliation**

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of Prohibited Conduct is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of reported Prohibited Conduct is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a Great Hearts investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

### **Reporting Prohibited Conduct**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced Prohibited Conduct or retaliation, or believes that another student has experienced Prohibited Conduct or retaliation should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, the Principal, or other school employee. The report may also be made by the student's parent. Alternatively, a report may be made directly to the appropriate Compliance Coordinator identified in this Handbook.

Upon receiving a report of potential Prohibited Conduct, Great Hearts will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited discrimination, harassment, dating violence, or retaliation. If not, Great Hearts will determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying. If the alleged prohibited conduct, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct and would also be considered bullying, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** Great Hearts's process concerning formal complaints of sexual harassment is outlined in "Freedom from Sexual Harassment" below.

### **Investigation**

To the extent possible, Great Hearts will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of Prohibited Conduct will be promptly investigated. The investigation may be conducted by the Compliance Coordinator or designee, or by a third party designated by Great Hearts, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the Principal or the student's teacher(s) will be involved in or informed of the investigation.

If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies Great Hearts that it is investigating the matter and requests that the school delay its investigation, Great Hearts will resume the investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

During the course of an investigation and when appropriate, Great Hearts will take interim action to address the alleged Prohibited Conduct.

If the school's investigation indicates that Prohibited Conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action and, in some cases, corrective action, will be taken to address the conduct. Great Hearts may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA").

## **Appeal**

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the school's student and parent complaint process, beginning at Level Two.

## **Freedom from Sexual Harassment**

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Great Hearts prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, by an employee, volunteer, or another student.

Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A school employee conditioning the provision of aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to Great Hearts's educational programs or activities;
3. Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as those offenses are defined in the Clery Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f), and the Violence Against Women Act, 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)).

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; sexually-motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and school employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a school employee is always prohibited, even if consensual.

## **General Definitions**

A "complainant" means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

A "respondent" means an individual who is reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

A "formal complaint" means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that Great Hearts investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

"Supportive measures" means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered appropriate and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to Great Hearts's educational program or activity

without unreasonably burdening either party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or Great Hearts's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Examples of supportive measures include, but are not limited to, counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of class schedules, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, and other similar measures.

### **Reporting Sexual Harassment**

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator in the "Statement of Nondiscrimination" section of this handbook, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Such a report may be made at any time, including during non-business hours, by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail to the office address, listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

Great Hearts's response to a report of sexual harassment must treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures and by following a grievance process before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent.

After a report of sexual harassment has been made, the Title IX Coordinator must promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures, consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

### **Notice of Allegations**

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, Great Hearts must provide the following written notice to the parties who are known:

- Notice of Great Hearts's grievance process, including any informal resolution process.
- Notice of the allegations of sexual harassment, including, to the extent known, the identity of the parties, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident.
- Notice that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made known at the conclusion of the grievance process.
- Notice that the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney.
- Notice that the parties may inspect and review evidence related to the complaint.
- Notice that Great Hearts prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

If, during an investigation, Great Hearts decides to investigate allegations about the complaint or respondent that are not included in the initial notice of the complaint, Great Hearts must provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

### **Grievance Process**

At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of Great Hearts.

The following guidelines apply when Great Hearts receives a formal complaint of sexual harassment. This process is designed to incorporate due process principles, treat all parties fairly, and assist Great Hearts in reaching reliable responsibility determinations.

- Great Hearts will require an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence—including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence—and credibility determinations may not be based on a person’s status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
- Any individual designated by Great Hearts as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or to facilitate an informal resolution process must not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or responsible. Great Hearts will ensure that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and anyone who facilitates an informal resolution process receive appropriate training related to the requirements of Title IX and Great Hearts’s sexual harassment policy.
- Great Hearts recognizes a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the complaint process.
- Great Hearts shall attempt to complete an investigation of reported sexual harassment within 60 calendar days of receiving a complaint. However, the investigation process may be delayed or extended for a limited time for good cause with written notice to the complainant and the respondent of the delay or extension. Good cause may include considerations such as absence of a party, a party’s advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.
- Students found to have engaged in sexual harassment are subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
- Great Hearts shall employ the preponderance of the evidence standard to determine responsibility when reviewing formal complaints.
- Great Hearts may not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions of evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure, of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

### **Consolidating Formal Complaints**

Great Hearts may consolidate formal complaints as to allegations of sexual harassment against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or

by one party against the other party, where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances.

### **Dismissal of Formal Complaints**

Great Hearts must investigate the allegations in a formal complaint.

Great Hearts must dismiss a formal complaint if the conduct alleged in the formal complaint:

- Would not constitute sexual harassment, even if proved;
- Did not occur in Great Hearts's education program or activity; or
- Did not occur against a person in the United States.

Great Hearts may dismiss a formal complaint or any allegations therein if, at any time during the investigation:

- A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein;
- The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by Great Hearts; or
- Specific circumstances prevent Great Hearts from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

Upon a dismissal, Great Hearts must promptly send simultaneous written notice to the parties of the dismissal and the reason(s) for the dismissal. Dismissal of a formal complaint does not preclude Great Hearts from taking appropriate action under the Student Code of Conduct or any other school policy that may apply to the alleged conduct.

### **Investigating Formal Complaints**

The following guidelines apply during the investigation of a formal complaint and throughout the grievance process.

- Great Hearts will ensure the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on Great Hearts and not on the parties.
- Great Hearts cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional's or paraprofessional's capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless Great Hearts receives that party's voluntary, written consent to do so.
- Great Hearts will provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
- Great Hearts will not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence.

- Great Hearts will provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisory of their choice, and not limit the choice or presence of an advisor for either the complainant or respondent in any meeting or grievance proceeding. Great Hearts may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties.
- Great Hearts will provide to a party whose participation is invited or expected written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews or other meetings with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.
- Great Hearts will provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which the recipient does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation.
- Prior to completing an investigative report, Great Hearts must send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least 10 calendar days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completing the investigative report.
- Great Hearts must create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and, at least 10 calendar days prior to a determination regarding responsibility, send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the investigative report in an electronic format or a hard copy, for review and written response.
- After sending the investigative report to the parties and before reaching a determination of responsibility, the decision-maker(s) must afford each party the opportunity to submit written relevant questions that a party wants asked of any witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. The decision-maker(s) must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

### **Determination Regarding Responsibility**

The decision-maker(s) making a determination regarding responsibility cannot be the same person(s) as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator(s). The decision-maker(s) must review the investigation report and make a written determination, based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, regarding responsibility. The written determination must include:

- Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;



- A description of the procedural steps taken from receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, or methods used to gather other evidence;
- Findings of fact supporting the determination;
- Conclusions regarding application of Great Hearts's Code of Conduct to the facts;
- A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to Great Hearts's education program or activities will be provided to the complainant; and
- Great Hearts's procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

Great Hearts must provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously. The determination becomes final either on the date Great Hearts provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies.

### **Appeals**

Great Hearts will offer both parties an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, and from Great Hearts's dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein, on the following bases:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and
- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

As to appeals, Great Hearts will ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, or the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator. Great Hearts will provide both parties a reasonable equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome.

The decision-maker(s) for the appeal will issue a written decision, based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result, and provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties.

A party who is dissatisfied with the appeal decision may file an appeal through the student and parent complaint process, beginning at Level Two.

## **Emergency Removals**

Great Hearts is able to remove a respondent from Great Hearts's education program on an emergency basis, provided that Great Hearts undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. Great Hearts's ability to do so may not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## **Informal Resolution**

At any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, Great Hearts may facilitate an informal resolution process, such as mediation, that does not involve a full investigation and adjudication. However, Great Hearts may not require as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continued employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to an investigation and adjudication of formal complaints. Additionally, Great Hearts may not require the parties to participate in an informal process and may not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed.

Prior to facilitating an informal resolution process, Great Hearts must:

- Provide to the parties a written notice disclosing the allegations and the requirements of the informal resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations. The notice must also inform that, at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint, as well as of any consequence resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.
- Obtain the parties' voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.

Great Hearts may not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

## **Retaliation Prohibited**

Neither Great Hearts nor any other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation or proceeding under this policy.

Examples of retaliation may include, but are not limited to, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination.

Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the grievance procedure described above.

## **Confidentiality**

Great Hearts must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by FERPA or as required by law, or for purposes related to the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising under the Title IX regulations.

## **Non-Sexual Harassment Sex Discrimination**

The formal complaint investigation and resolution process outlined above in “Freedom from Sexual Harassment” applies only to formal complaints alleging sexual harassment as defined by Title IX, but not to complaints alleging sex discrimination that do not constitute sexual harassment. Complaints of non-sexual harassment sex discrimination may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator and will be handled under the process described in the “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation” section of this Handbook.

## **Registration, Records, Immunization Compliance, Medication, & Health Screening Policies**

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### **Admissions Policy**

Admission and enrollment of students shall be open to persons who reside within the geographic boundaries stated in the Great Hearts Texas open-enrollment charter, and who are eligible for admission based on lawful criteria identified in the charter and in state law. The total number of students enrolled in the Academy shall not exceed the number of students approved in the charter or subsequent amendments. Total enrollment may further be limited by the Academy based on occupancy limitations, code compliance, and staffing requirements, as deemed necessary.

In accordance with state law, the Academy does not discriminate in its admissions policy on the basis of sex; national origin; ethnicity; religion; disability; academic, artistic, or athletic ability; or the district the child would otherwise attend.

### **Exception to Admission**

As authorized by the Great Hearts Texas charter and Texas Education Code §12.111(a)(5)(A), students with a documented history of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or serious discipline problems under Texas Education Code, Subchapter A, Chapter 37 will be excluded from enrollment in the Academy.

### **Submission of Applications and Admissions Lottery**

The Academy requires applicants to submit a completed application in order to be considered for admission. An admissions lottery will be conducted if the total number of applicants exceeds the

number of open enrollment spots. Parents will be notified of the results of the lottery and the available seats will be offered to applicants in the order of their waitlist numbers.

Once all available seats have been filled, the remaining applicants will be placed on a waiting list. If a vacancy arises before the commencement of the school year, the individual on the waiting list with the lowest number assignment will be offered admission and then removed from the waiting list.

### **Exceptions**

Federal guidelines permit the Academy to exempt from the lottery students who are already attending the Academy; siblings of students already admitted to or attending the Academy; and children of the Academy's founders, teachers, and staff, so long as the number of these students constitutes only a small percentage of the school's enrollment.

### **Student Information**

Any student admitted to the Academy must provide records, such as a report card and/or transcript from the previous school attended, to verify his or her academic standing. Verification of residency and current immunization records are also required. Every student enrolling at the Academy for the first time must present documentation of immunizations as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

No later than 30 days after enrolling in the Academy, the parent and school district in which the student was previously enrolled shall furnish records that verify the identity of the student. These records may include the student's birth certificate or a copy of the student's school records from the most recently attended school.

The Academy will forward a student's records on request to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll without the necessity of the parent's consent.

### **Residency Verification**

The Texas Education Code authorizes schools to obtain evidence that a person is eligible to attend public schools. To be eligible for continued enrollment in the Academy, each student's parent must show proof of residency at the time of enrollment. Residency may be verified through observation, documentation, and other means, to include but not be limited to:

- A recently paid rent receipt,
- A current lease agreement,
- The most recent tax receipt indicating home ownership,
- A current utility bill indicating the address and name of the residence occupiers,
- Mailing address of the residence occupiers,
- Visual inspection of the residence,
- Interviews with persons with relevant information, and

- Building permits issued to a parent on or before September 1 of the school year in which admission is sought (permits will serve as evidence of residency only for the school year in which admission is sought).

Falsification of residence on an enrollment form is a criminal offense.

### **Immunizations**

The State of Texas requires that every child in the state be immunized against preventable diseases caused by infectious agents, in accordance with an established immunization schedule.

To determine the specific number of doses that are required for your student, please read the current Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students. The current annual document and more information about school vaccine requirements are available at the Texas Department of State Health Services (“TDSHS”) Immunization Branch website: [www.ImmunizeTexas.com](http://www.ImmunizeTexas.com) (click on the “School & Childcare” link).

Immunizations can be received from the Dallas County Health Department at 2377 N Stemmons Fwy, Dallas, TX 75207. Students must take immunization records in order to determine immunizations required for school attendance. Otherwise, please take your child to the physician of your choice.

Immunization certificates must have the vaccine name, the day, month, and year administered. Acceptable documentation can be the signature stamp of physician or public health personnel, an official immunization record generated from a state or local health authority such as a registry or a record received from school official including a record from another state.

### **Provisional Enrollment**

Texas immunization laws require all students be fully immunized from specified diseases before they may enter school. However, a student may be enrolled provisionally for no more than 30 days if he or she transfers from one Texas school to another and is awaiting the transfer of immunization records.

A student may be enrolled provisionally if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate vaccine required by law. To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the Academy. The Academy shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. If, at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received a subsequent dose of vaccine, the student is not in compliance and the Academy shall exclude him or her from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

A student who is homeless, as defined by the McKinney Act (42 U.S.C. §11302), shall be admitted temporarily for 30 days if acceptable evidence of vaccination is not available. The

Academy shall promptly refer the student to appropriate public health programs to obtain the required vaccinations.

### **Exclusions from Immunization Requirements**

Exclusions from immunization compliance are allowable on an individual basis for medical reasons, reasons of conscience, and active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

**Medical Reasons:** If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student must present a statement signed by the child's physician (M.D. or D.O.), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States who has examined the child, in which it is stated that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccine required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child or any member of the child's household. Unless it is written in the statement that a lifelong condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

**Reasons of Conscience:** To claim an exclusion for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, a signed TDSHS affidavit must be presented by the student's parent, stating that the student's parent declines vaccinations for reasons of conscience, including because of the person's religious beliefs. The affidavit will be valid for a two-year period. The form affidavit may be obtained by writing the TDSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347, or online at <https://corequest.dshs.texas.gov/>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the Headmaster within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student. Students who have not received the required immunizations for reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs, may be excluded from school in times of emergency or epidemic declared by the commissioner of public health.

### **Immunization Records Reporting**

The Academy's record of your student's immunization history, while private in most instances, may be inspected by the Texas Education Agency, local health departments, and the TDSHS and transferred to other schools associated with the transfer of your student to those schools.

### **Food Allergy Information**

The parent of each student enrolled at the Academy must complete a form provided by the school that discloses (1) whether the child has a food allergy or a severe food allergy that should be disclosed to the Academy to enable the school to take any necessary precautions regarding the child's safety, and (2) specifies the food(s) to which the child is allergic and the nature of the allergic reaction.

For purposes of this requirement, the term "severe food allergy" means a dangerous or life-threatening reaction of the human body to a food-borne allergen introduced by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact that requires immediate medical attention.

Parents or Guardians of any child with a severe food allergy will be required to provide an Allergy Action Plan. The Allergy Action Plan can be obtained from the Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE) website linked here: <https://www.foodallergy.org/file/emergency-care-plan.pdf>.

This form must be signed by the child's physician and submitted to the school nurse prior to the first day of class. Food allergy information forms will be maintained in the child's student records and shall remain confidential. Information provided on food allergy information forms may be disclosed to teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other appropriate school personnel only to the extent consistent with Board policy and as permissible under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA").

### **Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medication Policy**

All medication must be delivered to the Nurse or designee who will store the medication in a locked container or cabinet in the Nurse's Clinic. Students may not possess any form of medication on their person while at school. Medication will be refrigerated only if refrigeration is required by the medication's labeling. At the end of the school year, all medication left at school will be returned to the parent or destroyed.

### **Prescription Medication**

A designated Great Hearts employee may administer medication to a student provided:

1. Great Hearts has received a written request to administer the medication from a parent, legal guardian, or other person having legal control of the student;
2. Prescription medications must be in English and in the original container, bearing a prescription label that includes the student's name, the name of the medicine, directions concerning dosage, the name of the prescribing physician, the name of the pharmacy filling the prescription, and the date the prescription was filled;
3. Prescription inhalant medications, properly labeled, may be carried by the student only if directed in writing by the physician and parent. This request must be filed in the Nurse's Clinic. Please request the appropriate form from the school nurse; and
4. All physician's sample medication must be accompanied by a written authorization from the physician.

No Great Hearts employee will be required to give medication above the daily recommended dosage by the Federal Drug Administration.

**No medication will be dispensed for a missed dose unless written authorization is received from the parent/guardian for each dose missed.**

### **Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medication**

Designated Great Hearts employees may administer over-the-counter medications to students if the following conditions are met:

1. Great Hearts has received a **written request** to administer the medication from a parent, a legal guardian, or other person having legal control of the student;
2. The written request of the parent/guardian must indicate the dosage, frequency of need, the reason the medication is needed, and the date(s) of requested administration;
3. The medication must be stored in the original container. Dosage must be within the recommended amount for the age of the student. **Medication may not be given for longer than 5 consecutive school days** unless directed by a physician.

The student will report to the Nurse's Clinic to take any medication. Exceptions to the Nurse's Clinic being the location for administering medications may be made if such is recommended by an ARD committee.

As a precaution to prevent tampering of the contents of an OTC medication, it must be brought by a student to the Nurse's Clinic in the original unopened container.

### **Fitness Testing**

According to requirements under state law, the Academy will annually assess the physical fitness of students. The Academy is not required to assess a student for whom, as a result of disability or other condition identified by rule or law, the assessment exam is inappropriate.

### **Exemption from Recess or P.E. for Health Reasons**

Both recess and Physical Education are state-mandated elements of our curriculum, and participation is required of all students. To excuse a student from P.E. or recess, a signed doctor's note with medical diagnosis, a list of medically-necessary restrictions, and the duration of those restrictions must be sent directly to the school nurse at [Megan.Holobowicz@greatheartstxschools.org](mailto:Megan.Holobowicz@greatheartstxschools.org). We are unable to excuse students from required classes on parent request.

### **Dyslexia and Related Disorders**

From time to time, students may be screened and treated for dyslexia and other related disorders in accordance with programs, rules, and standards approved by the State of Texas. Parents will be notified should the Academy determine a need to identify or assist a student diagnosed with dyslexia or related disorder.

### **Vision and Hearing Screenings**

All children enrolled in Texas schools must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems in accordance with regulations issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Students in certain grade levels identified by state regulations shall be screened for vision and hearing problems annually.



Screening records for individual students may be inspected by the Texas Department of State Health Services or a local health department and may be transferred to another school without parental consent.

### **Exemption**

A student is exempt from screening requirements if screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or a member. To qualify for the exemption, the individual or, if the individual is a minor, the minor's parent, managing conservator, or guardian, must submit to the Headmaster on or before the day of admission an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

### **Spinal Screening**

The State of Texas mandates that boys and girls in specified grades must be screened for abnormal spinal curvature during the fall semester. The screening requirement for girls entering grade 5 may be met if the child has been screened for spinal deformities during the previous year.

A parent, managing conservator, or guardian who declines participation in the spinal screening provided by the Academy must submit to the Headmaster documentation of a professional examination, which includes the results of a forward-bend test. This documentation must be submitted to the Academy during the year the student is scheduled for screening or, if the professional exam is obtained during the following summer, at the beginning of the following school year.

### ***Acanthosis nigricans* Screening**

All 1st, 3rd, and 5th grade students must be screened for *Acanthosis nigricans* (AN) as mandated by the State of Texas. *Acanthosis nigricans* is a skin condition that signals high insulin levels in the body. Screening for this condition can help identify students who run the risk of developing Diabetes Type II in the future. Once these students are identified, measures can be taken to help them lower their insulin levels and reduce risk.

### **Exemption**

A student is exempt from screening if the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or member. To qualify for the exemption, the student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian must submit to the Headmaster on or before the day of the screening procedure an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

## **FERPA Notification**

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### **Annual Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality Notice)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (eligible students) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. These rights include the following:

#### **The Right to Inspect and Review:**

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student’s educational records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Headmaster a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

If circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student’s educational records, the School shall provide the parent or eligible student with a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or eligible student to inspect and review the requested records.

The School shall not destroy any educational records if there is an outstanding request to inspect and review the records under this section. The School may charge a reasonable fee for a copy of an education record that is made for the parent or eligible student, unless the imposition of a fee effectively prevents a parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student’s education records. The School will not charge a fee to search for or to retrieve the educational records of a student.

If the educational records of a student contain information on more than one student, the parent or eligible student may inspect and review or be informed of only the specific information about that student.

#### **The Right to Seek Amendment of the Student’s Educational Records:**

Parents and/or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student. Such a request must be made to the Headmaster in writing, clearly identifying the part of the record the parent or eligible student wants changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. The School will decide whether to amend the record as requested within a reasonable time after receipt of the request. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, it will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

If, as a result of the hearing, the School decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, it shall amend the record accordingly and inform the parent or eligible student of the amendment in writing.

If, as a result of the hearing, the School decides that the information in the educational record is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, it shall inform the parent or eligible student of the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information in the record or stating why he or she disagrees with the decision of the School, or both. If the School places an amended statement in the educational records of a student, it is obligated to maintain the amended statement with the contested part of the record for as long as the record is maintained and disclose the statement whenever it discloses the portion of the record to which the statement relates.

### **The Right to Consent Prior to Disclosure:**

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A "school official" is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Charter Board of Directors; a person or company with whom the School has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another open-enrollment charter school, school district, or private school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

### **The Right to File a Complaint:**

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. These complaints should be addressed as follows:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

### **Access to Medical Records:**

Parents are entitled to access their students' medical records.

**Notice for Directory Information:**

Under FERPA, the School must, with certain exceptions, obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records. However, the School may disclose personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records without obtaining prior written consent of the parent or eligible student if the School has designated the information as "directory information."

The School has designated the following categories of information as directory information for the purpose of disclosure relating to school-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes:

1. Student name;
2. Address;
3. Telephone listing;
4. Electronic mail address;
5. Photographs (including video image);
6. Date and place of birth;
7. Degrees, honors, and awards received;
8. Dates of attendance;
9. Grade level;
10. Most recent educational institution attended;
11. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and
12. Weight and height of members of athletic teams.

School-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes are those events/activities that the School conducts and/or sponsors to support the educational mission of the School. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Extracurricular programs or events,
2. Publications,
3. Honor roll and other student recognition lists, and
4. Marketing materials of the School.

The School has designated the following categories of information as directory information for the purpose of disclosure to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, but only for secondary students:

1. Student's name,
2. Address, and
3. Telephone listing.

The School shall not release directory information except for the purpose indicated above, namely, disclosure relating to school-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes.

**A PARENT OR ELIGIBLE STUDENT MAY OPT OUT OF THE RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION FOR EITHER OR BOTH OF THESE PURPOSES BY SUBMITTING A WRITTEN OBJECTION TO THE HEADMASTER. GREAT HEARTS REQUESTS THAT**

SUCH AN OBJECTION BE SUBMITTED WITHIN THE FIRST FIVE SCHOOL DAYS OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

If the School does not receive an opt-out form objecting to the release of directory information by the fifth school day of the school year, the School will assume that the parent approves release of directory information for the purposes described above. However, parents may alter their decision to restrict or not to restrict release of directory information by submitting a completed “Use of Student Photos and Directory Information Opt Out Form” or otherwise notifying the School in writing at any time during the year. The Opt Out Form has been made available as part of the School’s Family Handbook (page 29) and can be requested at the front desk as well.

**FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT**  
**Use of Student Photos and Directory Information Opt Out Form**

You have the right to choose whether your student's information is released or not. Please check a box in the appropriate column below and return this form to your student's school no later than the end of the first week of instruction after the student is enrolled. **Parents, guardians, or eligible students who do not check a box, or who do not return this form, give their implied consent for release of directory information, consent to student photographs, and consent to release directory information to the military (grades 9–12 only).** If you do not wish to allow disclosure of this information, please return this form directly to Great Hearts either in person or by U.S. mail. If you have more than one student enrolled, you must complete a separate form for each student.

ALL STUDENTS

PLEASE MARK EACH APPLICABLE SPACE:

A. \_\_\_\_\_ I do NOT consent to the release of directory information about the student named below outside the Great Hearts system to sources such as an institution of higher education or newspapers and other media, except as authorized by law.

B. \_\_\_\_\_ I do NOT consent to the release of photographs or directory information within the Great Hearts system such as yearbooks, rosters for sports information, and programs or articles.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT Student's Full Legal Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Date of Birth (month/day/year)

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT Parent/Guardian/Full Legal Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (month/day/year)

**FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT**  
**Use of Student Photos and Directory Information Opt Out Form**

You have the right to choose whether your student's directory information (as defined in the Family Handbook) is released or not. Please check a box in the appropriate column below and return this form to your student's school. **Parents, guardians, or eligible students who do not check a box, or who do not return this form, give their implied consent for release of directory information, and consent to student photographs.** If you do not wish to allow disclosure of this information, please return this form directly to Great Hearts either in person or by U.S. mail. If you have more than one student enrolled, you must complete a separate form for each student.

ALL STUDENTS

PLEASE MARK EACH APPLICABLE SPACE

A. \_\_\_\_\_ I do NOT consent to the release of directory information about the student named below by Great Hearts to outside sources, as described in the Academy's Notice of Directory Information, except as authorized by law.

B. \_\_\_\_\_ I do NOT consent to the release of photographs or directory information within the Great Hearts school system in sources such as yearbooks, rosters for sports information, and programs or articles.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT Student's Full Legal Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Date of Birth (month/day/year)

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT Parent/Guardian/Full Legal Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (month/day/year)

## **FERPA, Parental Rights, and Student Privacy**

### **A. Comprehensive System:**

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and maintain a comprehensive system of student records and reports dealing with all facets of the school program and shall ensure through reasonable procedures that records are accessed by authorized persons only, as allowed by this policy. These data and records shall be stored in a safe and secure manner and shall be conveniently retrievable for use by authorized school officials.

### **B. Cumulative Record:**

A cumulative record shall be maintained for each student from entrance into Great Hearts (“the School”) until withdrawal or graduation from the School.

This record shall move with the student from school to school and be maintained at the school where currently enrolled until graduation or withdrawal. Records for non-enrolled students shall be retained for the period of time required by law. No permanent records may be destroyed without explicit permission from the Superintendent.

### **C. Custodian of Records:**

The Director of Campus Operations, assisted by the Student Information Specialist/Registrar, is the custodian of all records for currently enrolled students, and for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

### **D. Types of Education Records:**

For the purposes of this policy, the term “education records” means those records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by the School or by a person acting for Great Hearts including:

1. Admissions data, personal and family data, including certification of date of birth;
2. Standardized test data, including intelligence, aptitude, interest, personality, and social adjustment ratings;
3. All achievement records, as determined by tests, recorded grades, and teacher evaluations;
4. All documentation regarding a student’s testing history and any accelerated instruction he or she has received, including any documentation of discussion or action by a grade placement committee convened for the student;
5. Health services record, including:
  - a. The results of any tuberculin tests required by the School,
  - b. The findings of screening or health appraisal programs conducted or provided by the School, and
  - c. Immunization records;
6. Attendance records;
7. Student questionnaires;



8. Records of teacher, counselor, or administrative conferences with the student or pertaining to the student;
9. Verified reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns;
10. Copies of correspondence with parents and others concerned with the student;
11. Records transferred from other districts in which the student was enrolled;
12. Records pertaining to participation in extracurricular activities;
13. Information relating to student participation in special programs;
14. Records of fees assessed and paid;
15. Records pertaining to student and parent complaints; and
16. Other records that may contribute to an understanding of the student.

The term “education records” does not include:

1. Records that are created or received by the School after an individual is no longer a student in attendance, and that are not directly related to the individual’s attendance as a student;
2. Records made by school personnel that are kept in the sole possession of the maker, are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible or revealed to anyone other than a temporary substitute for the maker of the record;
3. Records maintained by a law enforcement unit of the school that were created by that law enforcement unit for the purpose of law enforcement; or
4. Grades on peer-graded papers before they are collected and recorded by a teacher.

#### **E. Access by Parents and Eligible Students:**

Great Hearts shall make a student’s records available to the student’s parent(s) and the eligible student, as permitted by law. The records custodian or designee shall use reasonable procedures to verify the requestor’s identity before disclosing student records containing personally identifiable information.

Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours without charge upon written request to the Headmaster specifying which records are to be inspected. For in-person viewing, either the records custodian or designee shall be available to explain the record and to answer questions. The confidential nature of the student’s records shall be maintained at all times, and records to be viewed shall be restricted to use only in the Superintendent’s, Headmaster’s, or counselor’s office, or other restricted area designated by the records custodian. The original copy of the record or any document contained in the cumulative record shall not be removed from the school.

If circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student’s educational records, the school shall provide the parent or eligible student with a copy of the records requested.

The School may not destroy any educational records if there is an outstanding request to inspect and review the records. The School may charge a fee for a copy of an education record that is made for the parent or eligible student, unless the imposition of a fee effectively prevents a

parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student's education records. The School will not charge a fee to retrieve the educational records of a student.

If the educational records of a student contain information on more than one student, the parent or eligible student may inspect and review or be informed of only the specific information about that student.

A parent may continue to have access to his or her child's records under specific circumstances after the student has attained 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

#### **F. Access by School Officials:**

A school official shall be allowed access to student records if he or she has a legitimate educational interest in the records.

For the purposes of this policy, "school officials" shall include:

1. An employee, director, trustee, or agent of Great Hearts including an attorney, a consultant, a contractor, a volunteer, and any outside service provider used by the School to perform institutional services;
2. An employee of a cooperative of which Great Hearts is a member or of a facility with which the School contracts for placement of students with disabilities;
3. A contractor retained by a cooperative of which Great Hearts is a member or by a facility with which the School contracts for placement of students with disabilities; or
4. A parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

All contractors provided with student records shall follow the same rules as employees concerning privacy of the records and shall return the records upon completion of the assignment.

A school official has a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records when he or she is:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities;
3. Compiling statistical data;
4. Reviewing an education record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or
5. Investigating or evaluating programs.

#### **G. Transcripts and Transfers of Records:**

The School may request transcripts from previously attended schools for students transferring into Great Hearts; however, the ultimate responsibility for obtaining transcripts from sending schools rests with the parent or student, if 18 or older.

For purposes of a student's enrollment or transfer, the School shall promptly forward in accordance with the timeline provided in law education records upon request to officials of other schools or school systems in which the student intends to enroll or enrolls. The School may return an education record to the school identified as the source of the record.

#### **H. Records Responsibility for Students in Special Education:**

The Headmaster shall be responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information in records of students in special education.

A current listing of names and positions of persons who have access to records of students in special education is maintained at the Great Hearts Administrative Office.

#### **I. Procedure to Amend Records:**

Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the Headmaster, clearly identify the part of the record sought to be changed, and specify why the record is inaccurate or misleading. The School will decide whether to amend the record as requested within a reasonable time after receipt of the request. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the Headmaster or designee will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing to challenge the decision.

#### **J. Consent to Disclose Personally Identifiable Information:**

A parent or eligible student has the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information, except to the extent that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") authorizes disclosure without consent.

"Personally identifiable information" includes, but is not limited to:

1. The student's name;
2. The name of the student's parent or other family members;
3. The address of the student or student's family;
4. A personal identifier, such as the student's biometric record, as defined by 34 CFR 99.3, social security number, or student number;
5. Other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name;
6. Other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the Great Hearts community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or
7. Information requested by a person who the School reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA

authorizes disclosure without consent. Upon request, the School will disclose educational records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

#### **K. Notice of FERPA Rights:**

The Superintendent or designee shall see that Great Hearts provides parents and eligible students annual notification of their rights under FERPA.

The notice must inform parents or eligible students that they have the right to:

1. Inspect and review the student's education record;
2. Seek amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights;
3. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and 34 CFR 99.31 authorize disclosure without consent; and
4. File with the United States Department of Education a complaint under 34 CFR 99.63 and 99.64 concerning alleged failures by Great Hearts to comply with the requirements of the Act and 34 CFR Part 99.

The notice must include all of the following:

1. The procedures for exercising the right to inspect and review education records;
2. The procedure for requesting amendment of records under 34 CFR 99.20; and
3. A specification of criteria for determining who constitutes a school official, and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest.

The Superintendent or designee may provide this notice by any means that is reasonably likely to inform the parents or eligible students of their rights. The notice shall also be effectively communicated to parents of students who are disabled and parents of students who have a primary or home language other than English.

#### **L. Instructional Resources and Surveys:**

All instructional materials, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material that will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any program funded in whole or in part by the U. S. Department of Education shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of students.

No student shall be required, as part of any program funded in whole or in part by the U. S. Department of Education, to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning the following topics without the prior consent of the student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor), or, in the case of an unemancipated minor, without the prior written consent of the parent. Topics covered by this include:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent(s);
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;

3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

#### **M. Opt-Out Notice:**

The Superintendent shall ensure that parents are provided reasonable notice of the contents of this policy. Such notice shall be provided directly to the parents of the students in attendance at Great Hearts. At a minimum, the Superintendent shall:

1. Provide notice at least annually, at the beginning of the school year and within a reasonable time after any substantive change in policy; and
2. Offer an opportunity for the parent to opt the student out of participation in an activity described above.

### **Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

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PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)—
  1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
  2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
  3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
  4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
  5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
  6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
  7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
  8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of—
  1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
  2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or

- scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
- 3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- *Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use—
  1. Protected information surveys of students;
  2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
  3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The Academy has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The Academy will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The Academy will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The Academy will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution;
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED;
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
 U.S. Department of Education  
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
 Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

## **Child Find**

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Child Find's intent is to ensure that all children from birth through 21 with delays or disabilities are identified, located, and evaluated with minimal cost to parents.

Anyone who has contact with the child may refer him or her to Child Find. Contact Child Find if you have concerns about how a child plays and interacts with others, learns, communicates, moves, sees, or hears.

When children are “found,” they are referred to a specialist to screen their development. The screening helps “identify” any areas of concern that need to be evaluated further. In order to receive early intervention or special education services, a child must be evaluated to confirm they have a delay or disability that falls under state definitions.

If needed, the child is evaluated using state criteria for specific delays or disabilities. If eligible, Child Find or a public school system will offer early intervention or special education services according to the child's needs.

- Early intervention supports and services assist families of children who are eligible by helping children ages birth to three years develop to their full potential.
- Preschool special education services for children ages 3 to 5 provide special strategies to help children reach their developmental milestones.
- Special education services for school-aged children in kindergarten through the age of 21 provide specialized instruction and services to assist children in the educational environment.

For older children, aged 2 years, 9 months to 5 years, parents/guardians may also contact the local school district.

## **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

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**IDEA** is a federal law that protects the rights of students with disabilities. In addition to standard school records, for children with disabilities education records could include evaluation and testing materials, medical and health information, Individualized Education Programs and related notices and consents, progress reports, materials related to disciplinary actions, and mediation agreements. Such information is gathered from a number of sources, including the student's parents and staff of the school of attendance. Also, with parental permission, information may be gathered from additional pertinent sources, such as doctors and other health care providers. This information is collected to assure the child is identified, evaluated, and provided a Free Appropriate Public Education in accordance with state and federal special education laws.

Each agency participating under Part B of IDEA must assure that at all stages of gathering, storing, retaining and disclosing education records to third parties that it complies with the federal confidentiality laws. In addition, the destruction of any education records of a child with a disability must be in accordance with IDEA regulatory requirements.

For additional information or to file a complaint, you may call the federal government at (202) 260-3887 (voice) or 1-800-877-8339 (TDD), or the Texas Education Agency (TEA) at (512) 463-9734.

Or you may contact:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

This notice is available in English and Spanish on the ADE website at [www.ade.az.gov/ess/resources](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/resources) under **forms**.

For assistance in obtaining this notice in other languages, contact the ADE/ESS at the above phone/address.

## **Academic Expectations, Evaluation, and Student Promotion**

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### **Academic Expectations**

Our curriculum is rigorous, and expectations of students are high; however, we are not an exclusive school for the best and the brightest. Our goal is to provide an environment that allows every student who wants to learn the opportunity to achieve academically. A student's wonder and desire to learn is the key to success and fulfillment at the Academy. While the Academy understands that some students are more talented than others in certain subjects, every student who has passed the appropriate prerequisites, is genuinely curious, and applies himself or herself diligently on a daily basis will succeed at the Academy. Success is measured as a student's growth in maturity, accomplishment, and understanding over the course of his or her thirteen years at the Academy and will finally be demonstrated in his or her character as a typical Academy senior and graduate, a truly impressive young man or woman.

As a key philosophical assumption, the Academy holds that every student can learn. As human beings, we are equal in that we all have the capacity to learn and grow. But this equality *in* capacity cannot be confused with equality *of* capacity, and certainly not with equality of academic results. Just as individuals differ in their physical gifts and characteristics, we all have different gifts and challenges in the subjects of learning. The Academy is committed to helping each student achieve as much as he or she can. True excellence across the curriculum is a rare and worthy achievement, to be admired by all, but not to be unreasonably expected of all.

The Academy requires a rigorous course of study, and we strongly recommend that students do not work at an outside job during the school year.



## Course of Study



	K	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
English	Core Knowledge Literature									Humane Letters:  US History from 1877- Present	Humane Letters:  Modern European History	Humane Letters:  Great Texts of the Ancient World	Humane Letters:  Rome to Modernity
	Spalding Phonics			Grammar & Composition			Literature & Composition						
	Leveled Readers		Junior Great Books										
History & Geography	Modified Core Knowledge History & Geography						World History & Cultures	Texas History	US History: Beginnings-1877				
	Emphasis: US History			Emphasis: Texas History	Emphasis: US History								
Math	Singapore Math						Math Fundamentals	Pre-Algebra	Algebra I	Geometry	Alg II Pre-Calculus	Calculus I	Calculus II
Science	Modified Core Knowledge Science				Physical Science			Life Science	Earth Science	Biology	Chemistry	Physics I	Physics II
Foreign Language	Beginning Latin						Latin & Western Humanities I	Latin & Western Humanities II	Latin & Western Humanities III	Latin III or Modern Lang I	Latin IV or Modern Lang II	Greek I or Modern Lang III	Greek II or Modern Lang IV
Fine Arts	Core Knowledge Fine Arts						Studio Art*	Studio Art/ Music*	Music*	Studio Art	Music	Drama	Studio Art
Other Core	Physical Education						Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education	Economics*	World History/ Geography	Senior Project
	Competitive Chess												
	Poetry Memorization & Recitation												

\*Indicates semester or every-other-day courses; all others are full year.

Note: In the founding years of a Great Hearts academy, modifications to offerings (especially in math & foreign language) are made.

## Physical Education

The Academy will ensure that students in kindergarten through grade 5 engage in at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week of moderate or vigorous physical activity.

## Exemption

Short-term exemptions from physical education are possible for students who have physical handicaps, illnesses, or other incapacities that a physician deems severe enough to warrant exemption or severe enough to warrant modified activity in such classes. Each case is handled on an individual basis as follows:

All notes for Physical Education exemption or modification must come through the nurse's clinic regardless of the amount of time requested.

1. A parent/guardian note will be accepted for exemption or modification for a duration of three days or less. This note must include: student's name, date(s) of non-participation, reason for non-participation, parent/guardian signature, and a phone number that the parent/guardian can be reached during the day.

2. After three days of missed Physical Education class the student must present the school nurse with a signed physician's certificate.
3. A request for long-term exemption must be accompanied by a physician's certificate. Such certificates are honored, but must be renewed each year.
4. When the physician's certificate will allow modified activities in class, the student should remain in physical education class. The teachers adjust the activities of the student to the disability.
5. Following a long-term exemption, the student may be admitted to regular physical education activities only upon presentation of a written statement from the same physician who signed the original exemption.

### **State Assessments**

#### **STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness): Grades 3–5**

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated assessments, such as the STAAR, in the following subjects:

1. Mathematics, annually in grades 3–5;
2. Reading, annually in grades 3–5;
3. Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grade 4; and
4. Science in grade 5.

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grade 5 is required by law, unless the student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student's current grade level, in order for the student to be promoted to the next grade level.

STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate will be available for eligible students receiving special education services, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

#### **TELPAS:**

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System ("TELPAS") is a system of statewide assessment administered to all Limited English Proficient ("LEP") students in 3rd–12th grades. The TELPAS measures English ability based on the stage of language development of second language learners. These results will further the understanding of the educational needs of LEP students by providing a state-level measure of both their current academic English levels and their annual progress in English.

### **Tutoring**

All Great Hearts teachers offer regularly-scheduled tutoring sessions before, during, and/or after school at no cost. Tutoring is an important opportunity for some students to receive academic guidance and support. Tutoring is by invitation only and may be required. Tutoring is also available for students receiving special education services.

Private tutoring is the responsibility of a student's parents. Teachers employed by the Academy are not permitted to privately tutor their own students for pay.

## Textbooks and Classics to Keep

Books are at the heart of a classical, liberal arts education. At Great Hearts, it has always been the tradition for students to develop a personal library of books that they mark in, keep, and return to during their time at Great Hearts and treasure for years to come. We call these books “Classics to Keep.” Your child’s class will utilize these classics during the upcoming school year. Parents and students are strongly encouraged to purchase these books for their own personal collections. We ask that all books match the ISBNs listed on our website. This ensures that students can all follow along on the same page when reading and discussing in class.

Families who are not able to purchase the texts should reach out to the Director of Campus Operations about applying for financial assistance. We have a limited quantity of school-owned texts available that may be made available upon request to students who qualify.

State-approved textbooks and additional curricular materials are provided free of charge for each subject or class. Materials must be treated with care and used as directed by the teacher. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher.

Students must return all textbooks and supplemental materials to the teacher at the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from school. Any student failing to return issued materials in an acceptable condition may lose the right to free textbooks and educational materials until the student and/or parent pays for the damages. However, a student will be provided textbooks for use at school during the school day. The release of student records, including official transcripts, may also be delayed pending payment for lost or severely damaged textbooks or supplemental materials.

## Homework

Great Hearts believes that the majority of class time should be spent in the collective pursuit of what is true, good, and beautiful about a specific subject. Homework time, then, is reserved primarily for reading and for meaningful independent activities that support the curricular objectives of a given course. Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd Grade students can benefit from nightly reading with family members, review of spelling words and poems, and practice of addition and subtraction Math facts. 3rd, 4th, and 5th Grade students should expect to do a small amount of meaningful homework each night.

General nightly homework expectations for the average student at the Academy are as follows:

**Kindergarten:** approximately 10 minutes of optional reading and review

**1st Grade:** approximately 10 minutes of optional reading and review

**2nd Grade:** approximately 10 minutes of optional reading and review

**3rd Grade:** approximately 20 minutes

**4th Grade:** approximately 25 minutes

**5th Grade:** approximately 30 minutes

Homework is not intended to be a burden on students or families. Parents of students who face significant struggles with homework or who routinely spend more than the above amounts of time on homework that has been assigned should reach out to their child's teacher for guidance.

We ask parents to help us communicate to students the importance of establishing a silent and distraction-free environment for completing all homework. If students do not work in such an environment, they should expect that:

- It will take significantly longer to complete the assignments; and
- The student's thought will be fragmented, and his or her overall comprehension of the material will be deficient.

Often, success with homework is a condition of the student's self-regulation. Skillful self-regulators have a number of strategies that enable them to achieve efficiently and effectively: help-seeking, planning, goal-setting, time-management, self-monitoring, reducing distractions, questioning, comprehension monitoring, and using feedback. Students who struggle often do not systematically employ these strategies, even though they may, in fact, spend a significant amount of time working/studying.

As students rise through the grades at the academy, they develop and strengthen their work skills. In essence, students *learn how to learn* through the rigors of school.

Teachers work carefully in measuring out a proper amount of work for their class. Students will have no more than two major tests on the same day. It is the responsibility of the student to make up missed homework after any absence, planned or due to illness, in a timely manner. If a student is unable to attend school and seeks his or her assignments, he or she should contact a classmate for that information, *not* the school office. It is wise for students to coordinate with a friend (perhaps one who lives close by) early on in the year so that homework handouts might also be collected for the absent student.

An absence on the due date of a major assignment (essay, lab report, project, etc.) or exam may not extend the due date of that assignment. The student should expect to submit the work and/or make-up the exam on the day of his/her return. Likewise, absences during the preparation time of a major assignment may not extend the due date. Please consult with your child's teacher for specific guidelines regarding make-up work following absences.

The school will schedule a number of "R and R" weekends and communicate these dates to parents. These are designated as school-wide "no homework" weekends. Teachers will not assign homework over these weekends and tests and quizzes will not be administered on the Mondays following. It may be the case that a long-term or multi-day project is given well before and due a few days after an "R and R" weekend; students will need to stick to a disciplined work schedule so as to enjoy the well-deserved time off.

### **Grades, Objectivity, and Qualitative Judgment**

The evaluation of students by their teachers is an essential part of formal schooling. This ongoing process of evaluation informs the teacher about what a student has mastered, where he/she is

struggling, and what he/she should learn next. Evaluation and timely academic feedback are also necessary for the student's self-understanding and self-management as a learner, particularly as children mature. Finally, evaluation and academic updates are crucial for parents if they are successfully to support and oversee the education of their children. While older students are more capable of receiving direct feedback from their teachers through written evaluations and quarter or semester grades, parents play the essential role in conveying to younger children what they need to know about their own progress and growth, since the report cards are written for the parents and not for the students.

A Great Hearts classical, liberal arts education calls upon teachers, students, and families to place their primary attention upon learning and growth, not upon the mere letter or number grades which are assigned as shorthand summaries of student progress. In the context of a classical education, "What grade am I/is my child getting?" is not the right question to ask; instead, the focus should be on specific areas of success, growth/progress, and struggles/opportunities for improvement. When students are young, this is a conversation between parent and teacher: *"My child usually does well on math tests, but I see that the last one she brought home was a 62—what went wrong? was there a pattern to her mistakes? Is he participating more? What's one thing he can do to improve his participation in class? Did she miss any homework assignments last week? Why are his quiz scores so low? How can she better prepare for her vocabulary tests?"*

But as children transition into adolescence, this conversation should increasingly take place between *student and teacher*, with parental support and guidance where needed, and only with the purpose of helping the student to become fully independent. By the time students have entered high school, the training wheels should be completely off, and both **parents and teachers should expect the student to be the active, autonomous, self-regulating, primary agent of his or her own learning and progress.**

In the classical, liberal arts tradition of education, the work of assigning numerical and/or letter grades to student learning is understood to be **an act of qualitative human judgment**, aided by but not reducible to the impersonal quantifiable results of a system, a calculation, or a set of spreadsheet formulas. But by "human judgment" we do not mean "subjective", for the rigorous, qualitative evaluation of student learning is not mere sentiment or an expression of a teacher's arbitrary likes and dislikes.

Our way of viewing grades is increasingly out of fashion in a world shaped by purely quantitative thinking and by digital tools of information management, from the Fitbit to banking apps to the invisible systems of "big data" that give business and government unprecedented knowledge and power to influence human behavior. Indeed, such digital tools have increasingly become part of what is accurately now called "the education industry", and the widespread use of these platforms for quantitative grade monitoring has made it increasingly difficult for 21<sup>st</sup>-century parents and teachers alike to think about learning in its qualitative essence. As the proverb of the telecommunications age has it, the medium is the message, and the medium of the digital grade platform, well suited to tracking quantitative data, silently and relentlessly conveys the message that the entire process of education is about measurable outcomes—the numbers, the results, the score, the return-on-investment. Classical, liberal arts education categorically rejects this view.

And because of the apparent ease and convenience of such digital systems, the greater good of academic conversation between parent and teacher, student and teacher, and even between parent and student, is bypassed in favor of the lesser good of instant information. Students who don't have to talk to their teachers or their parents about how they did on the last test, whether they turned in their missing homework, or whether they've been improving their participation, do not develop into autonomous, self-regulated learners.

For these reasons—because of our focus upon the qualitative, upon conversation, upon the process of learning, and upon the development of student autonomy, **Great Hearts does not employ an on-line system or portal to enable parents to check on real-time, daily/weekly student grades.**

### **Special Categories of Student Evaluation: Depth of Inquiry, Sense of Wonder, and Participation**

A Great Hearts approach to student evaluation includes the discrete and quantitative: numerical scores on quizzes and tests, scores on projects, homework grades for completion and/or accuracy. But a classical, liberal arts education aims at developing not only basic skills and subject matter knowledge, but also habits of understanding, imagination, and analysis. The evaluative categories of *depth of inquiry*, *sense of wonder*, and *participation* describe some of these higher habits. **They are fundamentally qualitative categories of evaluation, best expressed in narrative and not in quantitative scores. They are also objective and not subjective, for they reflect real acts and habits of the student, not the teacher's feelings or vague, personal impressions.**

When the teacher evaluates a student's *depth of inquiry*, he/she gives answers to questions such as *does the student ask questions in class? What kinds of questions does she ask? Do his questions rise above the pursuit of right answers to seeking causes and reasons why? Does she seek to make connections between what is at hand and what was learned earlier in the course, or even with other subjects? Does the student get beyond rules and formulas? Can he/she construct questions that are more specific than "I don't get it"? Is the student limited to "what do I need to know for the test?", or does he/she have a genuine desire to know? How does the student express depth of inquiry—is it in class discussions? On assignments, projects, or exams?*

When the teacher evaluates a student's *sense of wonder*, he/she answers questions such as *is the student interested by the subject matter's mysteries, problems, or puzzles? Or does he "shut down" in the face of the difficult or the unknown? Does the student demonstrate curiosity? Does she ask relevant "what if..." questions? Has the student had any "aha!" or "wow!" moments? Does the student demonstrate engagement? How?* Again, it is not only in overtly expressive classroom actions that wonder can be demonstrated; often, what a student writes or how he/she completes an assignment or a project can demonstrate this habit.

It is a mistake to think that *participation* is a measure only of a student's active, self-initiated volunteering in the classroom. While this is part of participation, a teacher's evaluation in this category answers a range of questions including *how does the student respond when the teacher calls upon him/her? Does he speak too much in class or too little? Is her participation self-centered, or is it mindful of others? Does the student listen well? Does she 'track the speaker'?*

*Does the student take notes or annotate readings, either in class or when working at home? Does he speak about the topic, or does he say whatever is on her mind regardless of relevance? Does she engage productively with others? Is he polite and courteous to classmates? Does she make distractingly silly or glib comments, or does she bring appropriate humor and playfulness to the classroom? Does he stay on task during independent or group work?*

**It is also a mistake to think that students' wonder, depth, and participation are just reflections of fixed, innate dispositions in students:** that a certain kind of gregarious, talkative, and socially uninhibited student gets an A for participation every year simply by showing up; that a student who is more naturally introverted will never be a strong participant and will never get more than a B; that certain students are just inquisitive and that's that. *Nothing could be further from the truth.* Students' natural dispositions are not evaluated; their actions and habits of learning are, and actions and habits are voluntary and can thus be altered through intention and effort. Some students will find certain habits of learning easier to develop than others, but intention and effort are still required. Teachers guide and encourage all students to develop all aspects of learning and give them the practice they need to grow where they need to grow, just like a good coach of young athletes, or a beginners' piano instructor.

### **Grade Scale** (updated August 2020)

The following letter grade scale with numerical equivalents is in use at all Great Hearts schools in Texas:

<u>For grade K–8:</u>		<u>For grades 9–12*:</u>		<u>GPA (non-honors):</u>	
93–100	A	93–100	A	A	4.0
90–92	A-	90–92	A-	A-	3.67
87–89	B+	87–89	B+	B+	3.33
83–86	B	83–86	B	B	3.0
80–82	B-	80–82	B-	B-	2.67
77–79	C+	77–79	C+	C+	2.33
73–76	C	73–76	C	C	2.0
70–72	C-	70–72	C-	C-	1.67
67–69	D+	0–69	F	F	0.0
63–66	D				
60–62	D-				
0–59	F				

*Note: There is no A+. \*By state law, a grade equivalent to 70/100 is required for high school credit. When 8th grade Algebra I is taken for HS credit, it is graded according to this F=69 scale.*

Grades assigned according to any different scale(s) prior to August 2020 are unaffected by the adoption of this scale.

At Great Hearts Irving, students in Grades K–5 receive letter grades in some subjects on the following scale with numerical equivalents identical to the above:

90–100	E for <u>E</u> xceeds Expectations (equivalent to A range)
70–89	S for <u>S</u> atisfactory (equivalent to B and C range)
60–69	N for <u>N</u> eeds Improvement (equivalent to D range)
0–59	U for <u>U</u> nsatisfactory (equivalent to F range)

### **Evaluation**

A liberal arts education requires a special kind of written evaluation—one that offers a prose discussion of the student’s sense of wonder, depth of inquiry, specific areas of mastery and needs for improvement, and attitudes toward learning and toward others. The narrative treats students in a fundamentally human way, not by neglecting numerical scores, but by situating those numbers as one part of fuller, more nuanced picture of the student’s progress in a given course.

**Academic Notices:** Midway through each quarter, academic notices are emailed out to the parents of students who are currently not passing. These notices are intended to prompt students to make necessary changes and improve their academic standing before the end of the quarter.

**Reports:** At the end of each quarter, parents will receive a report that indicates student performance in each subject area. At other reporting periods, teachers may write a narrative report for each student. These reports provide parents with specific feedback on a student’s strengths and weaknesses within a given class. In addition to narrative commentary, these reports include student grades in various categories of assessment along with an overall letter grade for the semester.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences:** At a specific point in the year, parents meet with the team of their student’s teachers to discuss the first quarter and overall student progress in greater depth. Parents will be encouraged to read the grade reports prepared for the student prior to this conference, and to come equipped with questions for the team of teachers present.

**State Testing:** Students will also be assessed according to state requirements. Please review appendix for list of state standardized exams. All tests will be conducted during the school year and the results will be mailed directly to families.

### **Promotion**

A student may be considered for retention or remediation (required to repeat a grade or particular course) if he or she has met any of the following criteria:

1. Failed one or more core subject areas;
2. Failed one or more state assessments;
3. Is below level in one or more core subject areas; or
4. Missed more than 10% of instructional days in an academic year.



Retention decisions will be made by a committee comprised of the child’s core subject area teachers and the Headmaster or designee.

In order to be promoted to the next grade level, students in certain grade levels—with limited exceptions—will be required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (“STAAR”).

In order to be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 STAAR assessment in English or Spanish.

If a student in grade 5 or 8 is enrolled in a course that earns high school credit and for which an end-of-course (“EOC”) assessment will be administered, the student will not be subject to the promotion requirements described above for the relevant grade 5 or 8 assessment.

If a student in grades 3–8 is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above his or her current grade level in which the student will be administered a state-mandated assessment, the student will be required to take an applicable state mandate assessment only for the course in which he or she is enrolled, unless applicable federal law requires otherwise.

Parents of a student who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance.

The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year.

A student in grade 5 or 8 will have two additional opportunities to take a failed EOC. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year.

In other grades, students will have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments.

Certain students—some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Upon the recommendation of the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (“ARD”) Committee, a student with disabilities who is receiving special education services may be promoted and/or permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her Individualized Education Program (“IEP”).

## Student Success Initiative

The Student Success Initiative (SSI) was created by the Texas Legislature to ensure that all students receive the instruction and support they need to be successful in reading and mathematics.

The SSI grade advancement requirements apply to the grade 5 mathematics and reading tests and the grade 8 mathematics and reading tests. As specified by these requirements, a student may advance to the next grade level only by passing these tests or, if the parent appeals, by unanimous decision of his or her grade placement committee (GPC) that the student is likely to perform at grade level after accelerated instruction.

Students have three opportunities to meet the passing standard on each of the tests and will receive additional instruction after each testing opportunity on which they do not meet the standard. A GPC, consisting of the Headmaster, teacher, and parent or guardian, meets when a student has not met the passing standard after two testing opportunities and is responsible for determining the accelerated instruction the student needs before the third testing opportunity. A student who does not meet the passing standard after three testing opportunities is automatically retained. However, if the parents appeal the retention, the GPC may choose to promote the student if all members agree that the student is likely to perform on grade level with additional accelerated instruction and if the student completes the required accelerated instruction.

For Special Education students, the ARD committee will serve as their Grade Placement Committee (GPC).

## Family-Teacher Academic Partnership

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**Great Hearts believes that the student should be the primary agent in his or her education.** Our first priority in this regard is to encourage student responsibility by establishing an open line of communication between students and their individual teachers. Timely and effective communication between teachers, students, and parents is essential in fostering academic growth.

### Communication Roles

Student: Students are responsible for tracking assignments, understanding stated course requirements, and meeting deadlines. We strongly encourage students to meet with their teachers regularly for tutoring if they are having difficulty understanding specific concepts or material. It is also the job of the students to communicate honestly to their parents about their day-to-day performance and academic standing.

Teacher: Teachers are responsible for clearly communicating to the student what is expected of him or her. Teachers are also responsible for notifying parents when their student is struggling considerably with the material or is not performing as expected. See **Academic Notices** above.

Parent: The primary means by which parents can assist their children are:

1. Encouraging their children in their development in Academy goals, namely the growth of character and wisdom; and
2. Providing a distraction-free study environment.

When students are experiencing significant academic struggles, parents should generally seek to assist the student according to these guidelines:

1. First, student communicates specific difficulty directly to teacher.
2. Teacher meets with student to create action plan.
3. If difficulty persists, parents contact teacher or vice versa.
4. Teacher, parents, and possibly student, meet to discuss and address issue.
5. If difficulty persists, parents and/or teacher may contact the Assistant Headmaster.
6. Assistant Headmaster facilitates conference with parents and teacher.

Parents of students in all grades are encouraged to talk with the faculty as soon as they think their son or daughter might be having difficulty. The earlier a problem is recognized, the easier it is to resolve. Teachers are best reached via email; individual e-mail addresses are found on the school's website. To contact a teacher by phone, send an email to the teacher or call the school office to set up an appointment with the teacher in which he/she is available to have a phone conversation. Teachers will respond to phone calls and emails by the end of the next school day. It is not appropriate to stop by the classroom before school starts to meet with the teacher unless an appointment has been made. In the morning, teachers are monitoring students and it is important that they not be distracted from this duty. Our teachers' lunch time and prep time is also valuable and should be protected. If you would like to meet during the school day, please make an appointment.

Note: We ask that students and parents not enter faculty or administrative offices without invitation. This is a private workspace which contains confidential school records. Stopping by the faculty office before or after school is not a good time to meet with teachers.

While on campus, parents should always conduct themselves in a civil manner. Hostility, disrespectful speech, and vulgarity that Great Hearts determines is disruptive to the educational environment will not be permitted on campus, including in the parking lot. If parents are upset about a matter involving a teacher, we ask that they contact the school office to set up an appointment with the appropriate teacher, Assistant Headmaster, or the Headmaster as the situation warrants.

### **Student-Teacher Relationships: On-campus and Off-campus**

The Academy highly values the working relationship between teachers (or staff) and students. This is a relationship best characterized as a *professional* friendship grounded in mutual respect. Teachers will treat each student as a unique individual and will serve the student with a heart of charity. Students, on their part, will treat each teacher with the respect properly accorded his or her role as an authority figure and leader here at the Academy. With this in mind, students should address teachers by their formal title, i.e. Mrs., Ms., Mr., Dr., and their last name.

Our teachers, staff members, and coaches will maintain a proper professional boundary between him or her and the student. They will not be overly familiar with the student or get involved in the details of the student's personal life. (If a teacher senses that a student requires counseling for a social or family issue, that issue will be referred confidentially to the administration and/or parents). The faculty/staff/coaches of the Academy will insist on maintaining appropriate physical boundaries, and will not meet in a room alone with a student with the door closed. It is also Academy policy that faculty/staff do not transport students in their personal vehicles. This is excepting, of course, when transporting his/her own children, or when acting in some other capacity (for example as a camp counselor or church leader) *and* parental permission for such transportation is explicitly granted.

Many of our teachers and staff live in the same neighborhoods as our students, hence it is appropriate to offer a word regarding off-campus relationships. Students should not "friend request" or contact school faculty or support staff on any social media outlet. ***The same professional rules governing on-campus relationships apply to off-campus relationships or chance meetings between students and faculty.***

It is not appropriate for students and teachers/staff to interact as anything other than students and teacher/staff, regardless of the location, time, or day of the week. Furthermore, students should not contact or visit teachers or staff members off campus unless the teacher or staff member has spoken with the parents and explicitly invited such contact, nor should teachers or staff contact students off-campus (other than phone calls regarding academics or school-sponsored activities), unless such contact has been approved by the parents.

Parents, students, and Great Hearts Texas staff are advised that once a Great Hearts Texas employee has separated from employment, the separated employee no longer represents Great Hearts Texas in any personal, professional, or political activities or relationships.

## **Academy Parent and Student Grievance Procedure**

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Student and parent complaints or concerns can usually be addressed by a phone call or a conference with a teacher. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the Academy has adopted a standard complaint policy as stated in the Academy policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the Headmaster's or Superintendent's office. The Academy parent and student complaint process is also summarized below:

<b>Process</b>	<b>Guidance Notes</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> It is the school policy to ensure that students or parents with a grievance relating to the Academy, its administration, and/or other employees shall, except as otherwise set forth below, use a procedure which may resolve grievances as quickly and as fairly as possible.	

<p><b>2. Initial discussions</b> If you or your child has a grievance you should discuss it informally with the teacher, administrator, coach, or staff member directly involved in the matter. We hope that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this stage.</p>	<p>Informal discussions should resolve the vast majority of grievances.</p> <p>NOTE: Grievances or information involving an ongoing or imminent threat to a student's well being should skip this stage and be immediately directed to the Headmaster.</p>
<p><b>3. Stage 1</b> If you feel that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, you should put your grievance in writing to the appropriate teacher, administrator, coach, or staff member (again, the one directly involved). The school employee must offer a response within five (5) working days in an endeavor to resolve the matter.</p>	<p>The first stage should allow the family and school employee to resolve the grievance without the involvement of the Headmaster or Board of Directors. The aim should be to resolve the grievance at the lowest relevant level.</p>
<p><b>4. Stage 2</b> If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you may raise the matter, in writing, with the Headmaster, who must give a response within five (5) working days. This response may take the form of a letter and/or follow-up meeting with the family and any employee(s) involved in the matter. This meeting will be led by the Headmaster.</p>	<p>The Headmaster is the acting supervisor over all school employees.</p>
<p><b>5. Stage 3</b> If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you may raise the matter, in writing, with the Superintendent, who must give a response within five (5) working days. This response may take the form of a letter and/or follow-up meeting with the family and any employee(s) involved in the matter. This meeting will be led by the Superintendent.</p>	<p>The Superintendent is the acting supervisor over all Great Hearts Texas employees.</p>
<p><b>5. Stage 4</b> If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, and you wish to pursue this matter further, you should put your grievance in writing to the President of the Board of Directors. You may be entitled to have a meeting with the grievance committee established annually by the Board of Directors and comprised of directors. This committee will formally respond by setting a meeting or taking another course of action within thirty (30) days. If the Board as a whole is convened to address the grievance,</p>	<p>If the Board understands that stages 1 and 2 have not been completed, these may be a requirement prior to further action or hearing from the Board.</p> <p>A response by the committee may include a dismissal of the grievance, a formal reprimand of</p>

all applicable public open meeting laws will be followed, including prior notice and the right of the employee to request an open meeting or an executive session for the hearing. The board's decision is final.	the school employee, or headmaster, and/or a directive for staff to develop an additional policy recommendation for Board consideration.
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## Basic School Information

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### Office and Student Hours; Campus Access

The school office is open from 7:15 to 4:00 Monday through Thursday and 7:15–2:00 on Fridays that school is in session. The office will be closed during the last week of June and first week of July. The school phone number is 469-759-3030. Messages may be left via voicemail any time the phone is busy or staff is out of the office. Messages left after hours will be returned as soon as possible, usually by the next working day. Also, families may contact the administration via e-mail (please see the Staff Directory or our website).

School starts daily at 7:45 and ends at 3:30. For safety reasons, students should not arrive on campus earlier than 7:15am nor stay later than 4:00, unless they are attending an organized, adult-supervised program associated with the school. Students must leave campus immediately after school dismisses in the afternoon unless they are involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or sponsor. If a student is involved in an after-school activity, he or she must remain in the area where the activity is scheduled to take place. The student may not go to another area of the school without permission from the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity.

Outside of scheduled school activities, students and parents should not enter the campus after hours, during holidays and breaks, or on weekends. For example, the school's outdoor athletic and playground facilities are not open to general student or family use except in the context of a school activity or event. Unauthorized presence of this kind may constitute trespassing.

The Academy has a closed campus. During the school day, and excepting official school activities such as field trips and athletic contests, a student may not leave the campus except under parental supervision. Students may also not receive any peer or adult visitors to the campus during the school day, including before school, during lunch, and after school.

### Administrative Responsibilities

The **Headmaster of the Lower School** is Marcy Finn. The Headmaster works with the Academy Board of Directors under the authority of Great Hearts Academies, and is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the school. The Headmaster directly oversees the implementation of the Academy's curriculum and has sole authority to manage all teachers and staff at the Academy.

The **Assistant Headmasters** are Thomas Beyer and Robert Tiffin. The Assistant Headmasters assist the Headmaster with various administrative duties and are primarily responsible with the Headmaster for all matters of school culture, instruction, academics, and operations.

The **Dean of Academics** is Mary Pantin. She is responsible for assisting the Headmaster and Assistant Headmaster with instruction and academics, but also assists in the operation of the school more broadly.

The **Dean of Students** is Travis Kern. The Dean of Students' primary responsibility is to assist the young men and women of the campus in making virtuous choices and comporting themselves in accordance with the expectations of a Great Hearts scholar. The Dean of Students also assists the Dean of Academics, Assistant Headmaster, and Headmaster as a leader in the school.

The **Director of Campus Operations** role is currently vacant. The Director of Campus Operations's focus is the day-to-day operation of the school. The Director of Campus Operations is assisted by the Registrar Brianna Arias, the Receptionist Mary Rogers, the School Nurse Megan Holobowicz, and the Facilities Manager Nick Jared.

After the school's second year of operation, some faculty may also serve as **Master Teachers** and work closely with the Headmaster with curricular, teacher-mentoring, and administrative tasks. The Headmaster, then, functions as the head of the Master Teachers.

Questions or concerns about curriculum and instruction should be directed to the Dean of Academics or Assistant Headmasters. Questions or concerns about student conduct or discipline should be directed to the Dean of Students or Assistant Headmasters. General questions regarding the school may be directed to the Director of Campus Operations, the Assistant Headmasters, or the Headmaster. If you are uncertain whom to contact about a particular issue, please contact the office, and we will direct you to the appropriate person.

The Great Hearts Texas Superintendent and management team work with the headmasters and schools and offer essential support. For more information about Great Hearts Texas and its leadership, please visit [greateartsamerica.org](http://greateartsamerica.org).

Note to Parents: Copies of resumes and fingerprint clearance cards for all Academy faculty, Great Hearts leadership and Academy board members are available upon request. Please direct your request to the Director of Campus Operations for assistance.

### **Crisis Management Plan**

The Academy has an established Crisis Management Plan that is maintained and updated by the facilities and operations staff at Great Hearts. The plan outlines emergency procedures for natural disasters, violent situations, medical emergencies, and fires. Academy faculty and staff are trained in and drilled on the plan throughout the school year.

## **Official School Calendar and Website**

The official school calendar for each academic year is posted on the school website [www.greatheartssirving.org](http://www.greatheartssirving.org). Any updates and revisions will also be found on the web version of the calendar, which is updated as needed. This calendar should be carefully coordinated with each family's own calendar and should be consulted on a regular basis throughout the year. The calendar identifies school holidays, early-release days, special events, etc.

We encourage families to visit our website regularly to view faculty contact information, updates on athletic and extracurricular schedules and locations, and other school-related events and information.

## **Special Programs**

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### **Bilingual/ESL Services**

The Academy offers Bilingual/English as a Second Language ("ESL") services at all appropriate grade levels for English language learners who are limited in their English proficiency. The program is designed to assist students identified as having limited English proficiency with development in language—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The goal of the ESL program is to provide additional English language assistance to students, enabling them to become academically successful in all classes. Students are assessed with state-approved Oral Language Proficiency and Norm-Referenced Tests to qualify for placement in the program. If test results indicate either limited oral or limited cognitive academic English ability, the student (with parent approval) is provided additional English language support.

### **Special Education Services**

The Academy has the responsibility of identifying, locating, and evaluating individuals with disabilities who are 5–21 years of age and who fall within the school's jurisdiction. If you know or suspect that your child has a disability, please contact the Headmaster for information about available programs, assessments, and services.

Special education services are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. Each student who receives special education services has an Individual Education Plan ("IEP"), which is developed by the student's Admission, Review, and Dismissal ("ARD") Committee. The ARD Committee considers the student's disability and determines appropriate accommodations, supplementary aids, and/or services that are necessary for the student to participate in the general curriculum.

All special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment, which may be special education settings, general education settings, or a combination of both. All students receiving special education services are educated to the maximum extent appropriate with their non-disabled peers as well as participating in all school activities on the same basis as students who are not disabled.



The Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities, can be obtained from the Special Education Director or at the Texas Education Agency Special Education Website: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/>. For further information, please contact the Headmaster or designee.

### **Section 504 Services**

The Academy provides a free appropriate public education to each qualified student with a disability, regardless of the nature or severity of the student's disability. A "student with a disability" is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities, has a record of having such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. A student with a disability is "qualified" if he or she is between the ages of three and 21, inclusive.

An appropriate education is the provision of regular or special education and related services that are (1) designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of students who do not have disabilities are met; and (2) based on adherence to procedures that satisfy federal requirements for educational setting, evaluation and placement, and procedural safeguards.

Qualified students with disabilities will be placed in the regular educational environment, unless the Academy demonstrates that education in the regular environment with the use of supplemental aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Should an alternate educational environment be necessary, the Academy shall comply with all legal requirements regarding least restrictive environment and comparable facilities for students with disabilities. In providing or arranging for nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities, the Academy shall ensure that a qualified student with a disability participates with students who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

To be eligible for services and protections against discrimination on the basis of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a student must be determined, as a result of an evaluation, to have a "physical or mental impairment" that substantially limits one or more major life activities. If a student has or is suspected of having a disability, or requires special services, parents or teachers should contact the Headmaster for information concerning available programs, assessments, and services. For further information, please contact the Section 504 Coordinator.

### **Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services**

For those students who are having difficulty in a general classroom environment, all school districts and open enrollment charter school must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention ("RtI"). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for specific education or Section 504 services at any time.

### **Special Education Referrals**

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Note of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluation children who are suspected of having a disability and being in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school day timeline.

If the district or charter school decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30<sup>th</sup> due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply. Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school in a companion document entitled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

### **Contact Person for Special Education Referrals**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is:

Ben Moore  
Special Services Coordinator  
[Benjamin.Moore@greatheartstxschools.org](mailto:Benjamin.Moore@greatheartstxschools.org)

### **Section 504 Referrals**

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's or charter school's Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

### **Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is:

Pamela Olson  
504/MTSS Coordinator  
[Pamela.Olson@greatheartstxschools.org](mailto:Pamela.Olson@greatheartstxschools.org)

### **Additional Information**

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families:

- <http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/LandingPage.aspx>
- <http://prntexas.org/>
- <http://www.spedtex.org/>
- <http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/>

### **Services for Title I Participants**

Information regarding the school's participation in Title I or a specific Title I program may be obtained from the Headmaster or district office.

## **Academy Life**

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### **Pledges of Allegiance and Moment of Silence**

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the Headmaster or designee at the Academy office to excuse their student from reciting a pledge.

State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. In addition, state law requires that the Academy provide for the observance of one minute of silence at the beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

### **Recitation of the Declaration of Independence**

State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during “Celebrate Freedom Week.” A student will be exempted from this requirement if a parent provides a written statement requesting that the student be excused, the Academy determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or the parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity.

### **Prayer and Meditation**

Students have a right to individually, silently, and voluntarily pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other school activities. The Academy will not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

### **Holidays and Celebrations**

At Great Hearts Irving, our students work diligently in pursuit of what is good, beautiful, and true. Our course of study is rich and rigorous and demands our students spend every minute of the school day working toward the highest goods while they are here with their teachers and classmates.

Popular holidays like Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Halloween, and Christmas can be divisive. That said, festivals have an important role in any community. As a result, at Great Hearts Irving, instead of holidays, we choose to celebrate what we are learning about. In each grade level, celebrations occur throughout the year at the culmination of certain units of study. Celebrations like Community Helpers, Animal Kingdom, Dinosaurs, Ancient Rome, Texas History, and Renaissance Festival have become traditional over the years, and our students look forward to them eagerly each year. Teachers communicate in advance about when these celebrations occur so that parents can see when there may be opportunities for students to wear a

themed costume to school or for parents to volunteer on campus and help out with these fun and exciting days.

### **Student Birthdays**

For the same reasons that we refrain from hosting holiday parties, we also do not celebrate student birthdays during the school day. While grade levels and classrooms may have their own traditions for acknowledging students on their birthday, we ask that families refrain from sending in treats, cards, goodie bags, trinkets, food, or other favors for birthdays or other special occasions.

We do encourage donating a beautiful book to our school library from our [Amazon Wish List](https://greatheartssirving.org/wishlist) in honor of your child's birthday. To access the most up-to-date list, visit [greatheartssirving.org/wishlist](https://greatheartssirving.org/wishlist).

### **Searches**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that the Academy is safe and drug free, school officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

Administrators, teachers, and other professional personnel may question a student regarding the student's own conduct or the conduct of other students. In the context of school discipline, students have no claim to the right not to incriminate themselves.

Students shall be free from unreasonable searches and seizures by school officials. School officials may search a student's outer clothing, pockets, or property by establishing reasonable cause or securing the student's voluntary consent. Express or implied coercion—such as threatening to contact parents or police—invalidates apparent consent.

A search is reasonable if (1) the school official has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will uncover evidence of a rule violation or a criminal violation and (2) the scope of the search is reasonable if related to the circumstances justifying the search; i.e., the measures adopted are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and are not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

#### **Desk Searches:**

Students should have no expectation of privacy in the contents of their desks or other school property. Desks assigned to students remain at all times under the control and jurisdiction of the Academy. The Academy will make periodic inspections of desks at any time, with or without notice or student consent. School officials will remove any item that violates school policy or that may potentially be dangerous.

Students have full responsibility for the security of their desks and shall be held responsible for any prohibited items found during a search. The student's parent shall be notified if any

prohibited articles or materials are found in a student's desk or on the student's person as a result of a search conducted in accordance with this policy.

### **Random Drug Searches:**

In order to ensure a drug-free learning environment, the Academy conducts random drug searches of all school facilities. The Academy may use or contract for specially trained nonaggressive dogs to sniff out and alert school officials to the current presence of concealed prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. Canine visits may be unannounced. The dogs shall be used to search vacant classrooms, vacant common areas, the areas around student desks, and the areas where vehicles are parked on the Academy property or at school-related events. The dogs shall not be asked to alert on students. A dog alert to a desk, vehicle, or item in a classroom constitutes reasonable grounds for a search by school officials.

## **Law Enforcement Agencies**

### **Questioning of Students:**

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school:

- The Headmaster will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The Headmaster ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the Headmaster considers to be a valid objection.
- The Headmaster ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the Headmaster considers to be a valid objection.
- The Headmaster will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation.

When the investigation involves allegations of child abuse, special rules apply. See "Child Abuse Reporting and Programs."

### **Students Taken Into Custody:**

State law requires the Academy to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- Pursuant to an order of the juvenile court;
- Pursuant to the laws of arrest;
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision;
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated the terms of probation imposed by a juvenile court;
- Pursuant to a properly issued directive to apprehend; or
- By an authorized representative of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order and under the conditions set out in Texas Family Code § 262.104 relating to the student's physical health or safety.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the Headmaster will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The Headmaster will immediately notify the Superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises that the Headmaster considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents.

### **Child Abuse Reporting and Programs**

The Academy provides child abuse anti-victimization programs and cooperates with official child abuse investigators as required by law. The Academy also provides training to its teachers and students in preventing and addressing incidents of sexual abuse of children, including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse. Assistance, interventions, and counseling options are also available.

The school's administration shall cooperate with law enforcement investigations of child abuse, including investigations by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. School officials may not refuse to permit an investigator to interview a student who is alleged to be a victim of abuse or neglect at school. School officials may not require the investigator to permit school personnel to be present during an interview conducted at school.

Investigations at school may be conducted by authorized law enforcement or state agencies without prior notification or consent of the student's parent, if necessary.

### **Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse of Students and Other Maltreatment of Children**

#### **What is Sexual Abuse of a Child?**

The Texas Family Code defines "sexual abuse" as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as, in certain circumstances, failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child.

#### **What is Other Maltreatment of a Child?**

Under State law, "other maltreatment" of a child includes "abuse" or "neglect," as defined by Texas Family Code sections 261.001 and 261.401.

#### **Reporting Obligation**

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services ("DFPS"). Reports may be made by contacting one of the following:

- Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or, in non-emergency situations only, [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org).
- Irving Police Department: 972-273-1010
- 911 for emergency situations.

The Academy has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children (the “Plan”).

### **Methods for Increasing Awareness Regarding Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment of Children:**

**For Teachers:** The Academy annually trains teachers in all content areas addressed in the Plan. Training will include contents of the adopted board policy and is provided by campus staff, administrative staff, or outside agencies as determined by the Headmaster.

**For Students:** School counseling staff will address issues to increase awareness regarding sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children and anti-victimization programs with age appropriate conversation and materials. Sexual abuse awareness will be discussed in classroom group settings, or as otherwise deemed appropriate by campus administrators.

**For Parents:** Parents must be aware of warning signs indicating that their child may have been or is being sexually abused or otherwise maltreated. A child who has experienced sexual abuse or other maltreatment should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that evidence of sexual abuse or other maltreatment may be more indirect than disclosures or signs of physical abuse. It is important to remain calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing in coming to you.

The fact that the abuser is a parent or other family member does not remove your obligation to protect the child. Parents who permit their child to remain in a situation where he or she may be injured or abused may also be subject to prosecution for child abuse. And, if you are frightened for your own safety or that of your child, you should call 911 or the Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400.

Also remember that parents are legally responsible for the care of their children and must provide their children with safe and adequate food, clothing, shelter, protection, medical care and supervision, or arrange for someone else to provide these things. Failure to do so may be considered neglect.

The Headmaster or campus counselor will provide information regarding counseling options available in your area for you and your child if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment. The Department of Family Protective Services (“DFPS”) also provides early abuse intervention through counseling programs. Services in your county can be accessed at the following web address:

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention\\_and\\_Early\\_Intervention/Programs\\_Available\\_In\\_Your\\_County/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp)

These websites are also helpful:

- Texas Education Agency – Prevention of Child Abuse Overview:  
<https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/child-abuse-prevention/child-abuse-prevention-an-overview>



- Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/prevention-programs/sexualabuse/>
- Promoting Healthy Families in Your Community: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/packet.pdf>
- DFPS – How to Report Child Abuse or Neglect: [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact\\_us/report\\_abuse.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_us/report_abuse.asp)
- Texas Attorney General – What Can We Do About Child Abuse? <https://www2.texasattorneygeneral.gov/files/cvs/suspectchildabuse.pdf>
- Prevent Child Abuse.org – Texas Chapter: <https://www.texprotects.org/>
- Texas Council on Family Violence – Abuse Prevention Links: <https://tcfv.org/>

### **Likely Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment:**

Psychological and behavioral signs of possible sexual abuse or other maltreatment may include:

- Nightmares, sleep problems, extreme fears without an obvious explanation.
- Sudden or unexplained personality changes; becoming withdrawn, angry, moody, clingy, “checking out” or showing significant changes in eating habits.
- Depression or irritability.
- An older child behaving like a young child, for example, bedwetting or thumb-sucking.
- Developing fear of certain places or resisting being alone with an adult or young person for unknown reasons.
- Resistance to routine bathing, toileting, or removing clothes, even in appropriate situations.
- Play, writing, drawings, or dreams of sexual or frightening images.
- Refusal to talk about a secret he or she has with an adult or older child.
- Leaving clues that seem likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues.
- Using new or adult words for body parts.
- Engaging in adult-like sexual activities with toys, objects or other children.
- Developing special relationships with older friends that may include unexplained money, gifts, or privileges.
- Intentionally harming him or herself, for example, drug/alcohol use, cutting, burning, running away, and sexual promiscuity.
- Thinking of self or body as repulsive, dirty, or bad.
- Becoming increasingly secretive about Internet or telephone use.

Physical symptoms of possible sexual abuse or other maltreatment include:

- Stomachaches or illness, often with no identifiable reason.
- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Stained or bloody underwear.
- Genital or rectal pain, itching, swelling, redness, or discharge.
- Bruises or other injuries in the genital or rectal area.
- Unexplained soreness, pain or bruises around mouth, sexually transmitted disease, or pregnancy.

Any one sign does not necessarily mean that a child has been sexually abused or maltreated, but the presence of several signs is the time you should begin asking questions and seeking help.

Signs often first emerge at other times of stress, such as during a divorce, death of a family member or pet, problems at school or with friends, or other traumatic or anxiety-inducing events.

### **Actions That A Child Who Is A Victim of Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment Should Take:**

During student awareness sessions concerning sexual abuse and maltreatment issues, students will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in a private and confidential conversation if they have been a victim of sexual abuse or maltreated, or have been in situations that make them feel uncomfortable in any way. School employees are trained to take appropriate actions to help the child obtain assistance and to follow proper reporting procedures. Older students will also be provided with local crisis hotline numbers to obtain assistance.

### **Procedures for Use of Restraint and Time-Outs**

School employees, volunteers or independent contractors are authorized to use restraint in the event of an emergency and subject to the following limitations:

- Only reasonable force, necessary to address the emergency, may be used.
- The restraint must be discontinued at the point at which the emergency no longer exists.
- The restraint must be implemented in such a way as to protect the health and safety of the student and others.
- The student may not be deprived of basic human necessities.

At no time, however, may a student be placed in seclusion.

A student with a disability may not be confined in a locked box, locked closet, or other specially designated locked space as either a discipline management practice or a behavior management technique.

### **Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies**

From time to time, all members of the school community will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When a drill is initiated (either by an alarm or announcement), students should follow the instructions from their teachers or other individuals in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

### **Emergency Closings**

Generally the Academy dismisses classes for weather-related events on the same days as surrounding local independent school districts. Any closures for weather will be communicated to all families via email and through our automated notification service.

The Academy may also need to close during certain emergency situations beyond the control of school officials. The announcement of non-weather related school closings will be also be communicated to families via email and through our automated notification service.

### **Pest Control Information**

The Academy periodically applies pesticides inside school buildings and on school grounds. Students may not reenter a treated area inside a building or use an area on school grounds for at least 12 hours following application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application may contact the Headmaster.

### **Accident Prevention**

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the Academy. Although the Academy has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. Students should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk;
- Follow the behavioral standards in this Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the Headmaster, teachers, or bus drivers;
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the Headmaster safety hazards, such as intruders on campus and threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals; and
- Immediately follow the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other school employees.

### **Asbestos Management Plan**

All school facilities have been inspected for asbestos by a licensed Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (“AHERA”) inspector. An Asbestos Management Plan has been created for the Academy in accordance with federal regulations. Parents may view the Asbestos Management Plan by contacting the Headmaster. Copies of the management plan are also available at a reasonable charge.

### **Bacterial Meningitis**

State law requires the Academy to provide the following information:

#### **What is Meningitis?**

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is common and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

#### **What are the Symptoms?**

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over two years of age) and adults with meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness or joint pains. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. In both students and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body. The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

### **How Serious Is Bacterial Meningitis?**

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

### **How Is Bacterial Meningitis Spread?**

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing and sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes, coughing, or sneezing).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

### **How Can Bacterial Meningitis Be Prevented?**

Maintaining healthy habits, including getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. Students should limit activities involving the exchange of saliva.

There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis.

### **What Should You Do If You Think You Or A Friend Might Have Bacterial Meningitis?**

Students should seek prompt medical attention.

### **Where Can You Get More Information?**

Your family doctor and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Texas Department of Health office to ask about meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>; and the Texas Department of State Health Services ("TDSHS"), <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us>.

## Illnesses and Communicable Diseases

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, the Academy encourages the practice of common sense health habits which will reduce exposure to various contagious illnesses. All employees and students are encouraged to:

- Remain at home when ill;
- Remain at home until fever free for 24 hours;
- Cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing;
- Avoid sharing eating and drinking utensils;
- Avoid sharing hairbrushes and articles of clothing, including headwear; and
- Wash hands frequently and well with soap and water.

To further protect employees and students are to be excluded from school if any of these symptoms are present within the previous 24 hours:

- Elevated temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or greater. Students shall remain fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications before returning to school.
- Quick onset of cold, sore throat, or persistent cough. Persistent cough interrupts the child's ability to concentrate and is disruptive to the classroom learning environment.
- Vomiting, nausea, or severe abdominal pain.
- Repeated diarrhea the day or night before school.
- Pus-like discharge from the nose or eyes.
- Red or inflamed eyes or discharge from the eyes (conjunctivitis).
- Scaly patches on the scalp which could indicate ringworm.
- Suspected scabies, impetigo, acute skin rashes or skin lesion or draining wound not contained with use of a band aid.
- Signs of jaundice such as yellowing of the skin or eyes.
- Unknown rash.
- Lethargic behavior.

Students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents of students with a communicable or contagious disease should notify the Headmaster for reporting to the health department. Common conditions for which students will be excluded from school attendance include but are not limited to:

- Fever
- Conjunctivitis
- Fifth Disease
- COVID-19
- Influenza
- Bacterial Meningitis
- Hepatitis A
- Impetigo
- Ringworm of the scalp (*tinea capitis*), and
- Scabies.

Any student excluded from school attendance for reason of communicable disease may be readmitted by one or more of the following methods, as determined by the local health authority:

- Certificate of the attending physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant attesting that the child does not currently have signs or symptoms of a communicable disease or to the disease's non-infectiousness in a school setting;
- Submitting a permit for readmission issued by a local health authority; or
- Meeting readmission criteria as established by the commissioner of health.

In the event that your child becomes ill while at school, we respectfully ask that you or your designee pick your child up **as soon as possible** or within **one hour** of being notified.

Students will NOT be excluded for Ringworm of the skin if covered and is being properly treated; Hepatitis B; bed bugs; or head lice (*pediculosis capitis*) once parents confirm their student has been treated.

The Academy position on head lice is in compliance with the current positions of the State of Texas Department of Health Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In accordance with [Texas SB 1566](#), in the event that lice/nits are found, a notification will be sent to the parents/guardians of the students assigned to the same classroom as the child with lice.

In addition to the above, Great Hearts continues to update its policies related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as the situation and our understanding of the virus and its transmission evolves. Visit [greatheartamerica.org/safereturn](https://greatheartamerica.org/safereturn) for the most up-to-date information about our response.

### **Attendance Guidelines for COVID-19**

If your child tests positive for COVID-19, please notify the school nurse as soon as possible. Your child may return to school when **all three** of the following criteria are met:

1. At least one day (24 hours) has passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications).
2. The individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath).
3. At least five days have passed since symptoms first appeared, or in the case of an asymptomatic individual, five days since positive test.

We no longer routinely quarantine close contacts or notify parents when students or faculty test positive for COVID-19.

### **Personal Counseling**

The Headmaster is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including social, family, or emotional issues, and substance abuse. The Headmaster may also provide information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with the Headmaster should set an appointment through the receptionist.

**Please note:** The Academy will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent, unless required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reporting. In crisis situations when the risk of immediate harm is reasonably suspected, the school may conduct a risk assessment, which may involve a licensed professional interviewing the student. In such circumstances, parents will be notified as soon as possible.

### **Food and Drink on Campus**

Refrigerators are not available for student use, so care should be taken in packing lunches.

Food and drink (except bottled water with lids) is not permitted in the classrooms or halls absent special permission from the Headmaster.

There are several water fountains available on the campus. Students are encouraged to bring durable water bottles to school with their names printed on them. Students may refill these bottles from any of the drinking fountains on campus.

As a precaution against sickness and potential allergic reactions, students should not share or drink from the same bottles nor share food with one another while on campus.

### **Lost and Found**

The Academy maintains a lost and found area near the front office. Anyone who finds books, clothing or other personal items left unattended should bring these items to the lost and found. Unclaimed items may be given away or discarded periodically throughout the year. It is strongly recommended that all personal items be marked with the student's name. Uniform clothing should have the family name on the inside label; we recommend that student-owned consumable books have the student's name prominently displayed either on the front cover or on one of the four sides of the book.

### **Traffic Flow for Drop-off and Pick-up**

For maximum safety and traffic flow, parents must drop children off at the location indicated on the traffic flow map found on the school website.

Students who walk to school may do so only if parents or guardians have completed appropriate documentation, available from the school office. Students should always obey traffic lights and Walk/Don't Walk signals. Due to space constraints students may not leave bicycles on campus.

### **Transportation**

#### **Drop-Off & Pick-Up:**

The Academy does not provide bus transportation to or from school. Students planning to use public transportation should contact the Headmaster for possible discounts.

Student drop-off begins at 7:15 and ends promptly at 7:40 each morning. Vehicles entering the parking lot after this time are required to park and walk their students to the front office to be signed in.

Once a student is on campus, he/she will not be released to leave school with any adult except the parent, with another adult by written permission of the child's parent, or under the supervision of an authorized teacher or coach. If another adult will be picking up your child, please file permission with the office. In certain circumstances one-time authorization to pick up may be given via alternate means when written permission is not feasible.

It is school policy that faculty/staff do not transport students in their personal vehicles to or from school or to or from school events.

The ordinary process for student dismissal is our afternoon carline. Families will be supplied with unique placards printed with their child's name. When vehicles enter the parking lot, the placard must be presented to a staff member who then authorizes the child's dismissal. Vehicles not displaying a valid carline placard will not be permitted to pick up students in carline and will be directed to the front office to present identification and sign them out. Our unique placards are the primary method by which we ensure students are being dismissed to authorized persons during carline. Families should take care that placards are only shared with persons whose names are on file with the front office as having authorization to pick up their children. Families must NEVER modify or attempt to make copies of their carline placards. Additional placards may be requested from the front office.

On full days, student pick-up begins at 3:25 and ends at 3:50. On early-release Fridays pick-up begins at 1:25 and ends at 1:50. All students must be picked up by these times unless they are enrolled in an afterschool activity. A charge may be incurred for students picked up late.

All students must be picked up by 3:50pm unless they are enrolled in an afterschool program. Parents arriving at or after 3:50pm must park and walk to the front desk to sign out their student(s). After this time, students may be dismissed to Athenaeum. If a student is not enrolled in Athenaeum and is picked up late, a charge may be incurred.

### **Student Trips Away from Campus**

Students might have the opportunity to take field trips from time to time. Students involved in clubs and sports might also have the opportunity to travel; in some cases, trips will extend overnight and may take students out of the state.

Some trip guidelines for families are: 1) all families must sign a liability waiver before the student travels; 2) all students must have the proper insurance and have submitted proof of that insurance to the trip director prior to leaving campus; and 3) the student traveling must follow all the rules established by the school and trip director.

For its part, the Academy will maintain the safest travel conditions possible and provide appropriate supervision by the chaperones. On all trips, the Academy maintains a reasonable student-teacher chaperone ratio. For overnight trips, the chaperones will engage in periodic room



checks to ensure that the travelers are adhering to the set curfew; students and adult chaperones will never share rooms. Parents who agree to be chaperones on trips must follow the guidelines established by the trip director and have their fingerprint clearance on file with the Front Office. Students may not drive on trips off campus.

### **School-Sponsored Transportation:**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the Academy to and from the event. The Headmaster, however, may make an exception if the parent makes a written request that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent, so long as the written request is presented before the scheduled trip.

Only designated students are allowed to ride in school vehicles. Students may neither ride the vehicle to a different location nor have friends ride the vehicle to participate in after-school activities.

Students are expected to assist school staff in ensuring that school vehicles remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding school vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Follow the driver's instructions at all times;
- Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop;
- Keep feet, books, and other objects out of the aisle;
- Refrain from defacing the vehicle or its equipment;
- Refrain from putting his or her head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, holding any object out of the window, or throwing objects within or out of the vehicle;
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the vehicle and before crossing in front of the vehicle; and
- Not eat and drink on the vehicle.

When students ride in a school van or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened at all times.

Student misconduct while riding in a school vehicle will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, student transportation privileges may be suspended.

### **Campus Leave and Visitor Policies**

The Academy welcomes visitors for educational purposes. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, the Academy maintains a closed campus. Therefore, anyone wishing to enter the school property between the hours of 7:15am and 4:00pm must come directly to the school office and sign in to receive a visitor's badge.

The Headmaster or designee may take the following actions whenever there is a school visitor:

- Require the visitor to display his or her driver's license or another form of identification issued by a governmental entity containing the person's photograph.

- Establish an electronic database for the purpose of storing information concerning visitors. Information stored in the electronic database may be used only for the purpose of school security, and may not be sold or otherwise disseminated to a third party for any purpose.
- Verify whether the visitor is a sex offender registered with the computerized central database maintained by the Department of Public Safety or any other database accessible by the Academy.

Any visitor identified as a sex offender shall be escorted by school personnel at all times during a school visit and shall have access only to common areas of the campus.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted. Cell phone use is restricted to the front desk area and parking lot. We ask that all visitors put away their cell phones during their visit. This is essential to the cultivation of a small academy culture in which learning, discussion, and personal interaction take place without interruption.

In order to ensure faculty and administrators are able to carry out their monitoring duties properly, we ask that any substantive meetings be scheduled ahead of time rather than taking place without appointment directly before or after school. It is therefore strongly recommended that appointments be made during teacher free periods. However, with advance notice, it may be possible to schedule an appointment immediately before or after school.

#### **Additional Guidelines:**

- **Student Sign-out:** Parents wishing to sign out their children before the end of the school day (e.g. for a doctor's appointment) must park and walk directly to the front office. No student may be signed out early past 2:30pm.
- **Closed Campus:** Students are not permitted to leave campus during school hours or during after-school activities, unless accompanied by an authorized adult. Parental requests to excuse students to leave campus on their own for lunch will not be honored.
- **Non-custodial Parent Pick-up:** Non-custodial parents who wish to pick up a student during or after school must have a signed statement from the custodial parent for each occasion, or there must be a statement of permission on file with the office. If you plan on having other adults pick up your child, you must provide a written list of such authorized adults to the main office.
- **Alumni Visitors:** Alumni may be invited to visit the Academy during the school day for events throughout the school year. All alumni guests for such events must sign in at the front desk upon arrival and wear a visitor badge during the visit. If alumni are interested in visiting the school during the day outside of these specified events, they must contact school leadership well in advance in order to receive approval. All alumni visiting a campus must check in at the front office upon arrival and wear a badge during the visit. Alumni must dress tastefully and appropriately and are expected to observe the school policies regarding the use of cell phones and electronic devices.
- **Former Students on Campus:** Former students who visit the school should check in at the front office. They are not allowed to visit on campus during school hours unless the Headmaster has given written permission. Former students visiting a campus must obtain a badge and be in the presence of a teacher or administrator during the visit. Former

students must dress tastefully and appropriately and are expected to observe the school policies regarding the use of cell phones and electronic devices.

### **Student Fees**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to students. Students are expected to provide their own consumable items, such as pencils, paper, pens, erasers, and notebooks. Students may be required to pay certain fees or deposits, including:

1. A fee for materials for a class project that the student will keep, if the fee does not exceed the cost of materials;
2. Membership dues in voluntary student clubs or organizations and admission fees for extracurricular activities;
3. A security deposit for the return of materials, supplies, or equipment;
4. A fee for personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel, although a student may provide his or her own equipment or apparel if it meets reasonable requirements and standards relating to health and safety;
5. A fee for voluntarily purchased items, such as student publications, pictures, and yearbooks;
6. A fee for voluntary student health and accident benefit plan;
7. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the actual annual maintenance cost, for the use of musical instruments owned or rented by the School;
8. A fee for items of personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that become the property of the student;
9. A reasonable fee for transportation of a student who lives within two miles of the campus;
10. A reasonable fee, not to exceed \$50, for costs associated with an educational program offered outside of regular school hours through which a student who was absent from class receives instruction voluntarily for the purpose of making up the missed instruction and meeting the level of attendance required for class credit, so long as the fee would not create a financial hardship or discourage the student from attending the program;
11. A fee for lost, damaged, or overdue books; or
12. A fee specifically permitted by any other statute.

The Academy may waive any fee or deposit if the student and parent are unable to pay. A request for such a waiver may be made using the school's Student Cost Waiver Application, which is distributed at the school office. Notification of eligibility for waived or reduced costs is determined using the same standards as those of Free and Reduced Lunch.

### **Attendance**

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The state requires students to be present at 9:25am for their attendance to be credited for the school.

## **Compulsory Attendance**

The state compulsory attendance law requires that a student between the ages of 5 and 18 must attend school and school-required tutorial sessions, unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused. The Academy employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission—including absence from any class, required special programs, or required tutorials—will be considered truant and subject to disciplinary action.

## **Notice to Parents**

Under Texas Education Code §25.095(a), you are hereby notified that if a student is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in any one school year or is absent for three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the parent is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code §25.093, and a student age 12 through age 17 is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code §25.094 or to referral to a juvenile court in a county with a population of less than 100,000 for conduct that violates that section.

## **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade**

Our general policy is that, in order to receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend at least 90% of the days the class is offered. These days include both excused and unexcused absences. A student who attends fewer than 90% of the days the class is offered may be referred to the Attendance Review Committee to determine whether the absences were due to extenuating circumstances (in which case credit may be granted) and how the student may regain credit or earn a final grade.

The Attendance Review Committee will consider the following factors when determining whether there are extenuating circumstances for an absence:

- All absences will be reviewed, both excused and unexcused, with consideration given to special circumstances discussed in the Texas Education Code.
- For a student transferring into the Academy after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- The committee will attempt to reach a decision that is in the student's best interest.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or parent could exercise control.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documentation expressing reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student, parent, or other representative will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to discuss ways to earn or regain credit.

If credit is lost or a final grade is not earned due to excessive absences, the Attendance Review Committee will decide how the student may regain credit or earn a final grade. If the committee determines that there are no extenuating circumstances and that credit and/or a final grade may not be earned, the student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to Superintendent by filing a written request with the Headmaster. The appeal notice must be received by the Academy within fifteen (15) days following the last day of instruction in the semester for which credit was denied or a final grade was not earned. After the Superintendent has reviewed the appeal and made the decision, the student or parent may decide to appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Board of Directors by filing a written request with the Superintendent. The appeal notice must be received by the Superintendent within fifteen (15) days following the issuance of the Superintendent's decision. The appeal will then be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Headmaster or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

### **Absences**

In the event of a student absence, we ask that parents email the Attendance Clerk at [ghilsattendance@greatheartstxschools.org](mailto:ghilsattendance@greatheartstxschools.org) as soon as possible. If email is not accessible, please call the front desk. Emails must be received within two days of the absence.

If a student absence is anticipated, we recommend that the parents alert their child's teacher and the Attendance Clerk as soon as possible prior to the absence. Teachers may not always provide materials in advance. In the event of an unplanned absence, students should make every effort to acquire their homework assignments. It is the responsibility of the student to make up all missed assignments after any absence, planned or unplanned. Each teacher will have an established make-up policy, including required deadlines, for missed work.

Because excessive absences are considered truancy under state law, the school reserves the right to take extreme absence cases to court.

### **Types of Absences**

The Academy recognizes two kinds of absences: excused and unexcused. Students and parents should read this section carefully to understand the school's expectations. Students and parents should also be aware of the school's policy regarding homework, quizzes, and tests following an absence.

#### **Excused Absences:**

State law provides several exemptions to the compulsory attendance law for certain absences, so long as the student makes up all work missed. All excused absences require proper documentation. This includes absence for the following reasons:

- Religious holy day; (Note: In order for a holy day to be excused, documentation on letterhead from the place of worship must specify that the student is required to miss school on that specific day.)
- Required court appearances;

- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus;
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state;
  - Mental health or therapy appointments; or
  - Court-ordered family visitations or any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

Absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments.

For religious holy days, required court appearances, and activities related to obtaining citizenship, one day of travel to the site and one day of travel from the site shall also be excused by the Academy. Please note that even excused absences are considered absences and count toward the yearly total.

### **Unexcused Absences:**

Any absence not listed above will be considered an unexcused absence. Examples of unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Car trouble,
- Failure to email notification of the absence within two school days following an absence,
- Leaving school without the permission of a school administrator,
- Oversleeping,
- Personal business, and
- Vacations.

### **Make-Up Work**

If a student misses class for any reason, a teacher may assign make-up work that incorporates the instructional objectives for the class and that will assist the student to master the essential knowledge and skills necessary to meet subject or course requirements. Students are responsible for obtaining and completing the make-up work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher if the teacher has determined to assign it. Make-up work in this context is distinct from "extra credit," which is not assigned.

### **Notification to Parents**

After nine absences the Academy will send a notice to the parent by email. The notice will state that it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school. The parent is subject to prosecution for contributing to nonattendance under Texas

Education Code §25.093. If a student continues to accrue absences, the parent will receive additional notifications and be advised that a meeting with the attendance committee is required.

### **Tardiness**

Morning attendance is taken at 7:45am. Any student not present in the classroom at that time will be marked tardy. Students arriving late to school must report directly to the front office for a late pass to be admitted to class. If you do not see a faculty member outside directing traffic, carpool has ended and you need to park and walk your student(s) to the front desk. Excessive tardiness may result in more severe disciplinary consequences as allowed by the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Release of Students from School**

A parent or other authorized adult must go to the front office to sign the student out. The Academy will check the identity of the adult seeking to sign the student out. After the adult's identity is verified, the Academy will call for the student. For safety reasons and to preserve the learning environment, the Academy does not allow parents to go to a classroom to retrieve a child. If the student returns to school later that day, the parent or authorized adult must accompany the student to the front office to sign the student in, and provide documentation concerning the reason for the absence. The Academy will not release a student to anyone other than a parent or other adult authorized by the parent.

A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the School Nurse and/or front desk. The School Nurse and/or Receptionist will decide whether the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent of the student's illness. The sign-out procedures discussed above must be followed.

Parents should list all persons authorized to pick up a student on their registration paperwork. Requests to add additional individuals will only be taken in person. Staff members are not able to confirm an identity from a phone call or email. Furthermore, requests to notify students of changes in pick up (i.e. going home with a different individual) must be submitted in writing or in person and will not be accepted over the phone. Parents should make every effort to coordinate transportation arrangements prior to the start of the school day.

Doctor's appointments or meetings with other professionals should be scheduled at times when the student will not miss instructional time, if possible. Except for medical-related or Headmaster-approved circumstances, parents should not sign students out during the final 50 minutes of the school day so as not to disrupt our classroom's pack-up and end-of-day routines.

### **Families with Custody Agreements**

The school follows court orders and will only release students and student information according to verified legal documents and is not authorized to deviate from them.

## **Withdrawal from School**

### **Voluntary Withdrawal:**

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent or legal guardian. The Academy requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. A withdrawal form may be obtained from the front desk. An administrator will verify the information on the withdrawal form when the parent arrives to sign withdrawal papers to complete the process. The parent shall also provide the name of the new school in which the student will be enrolled and must sign the formal withdrawal form.

A student who is declared by a court to be an emancipated minor may withdraw without parental signature.

Withdrawing students and parents are expected to:

- Return all textbooks and checked-out materials and equipment;
- Complete any make-up work assigned;
- Pay any unpaid balance for student fees, if any; and
- Sign a release of student records if transferring to a private school.

In all cases, withdrawal forms must be appropriately completed and signed before withdrawal is complete.

### **Involuntary Withdrawal:**

The Academy may initiate withdrawal of a student under the age of 18 for non-attendance if:

- The student has been absent ten consecutive school days; and
- Repeated efforts by the attendance officer and/or Headmaster to locate the student have been unsuccessful.

## **Student Code of Conduct and Discipline**

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All of the information below is directed toward the common good of the Academy and its maintenance as a place of learning and moral development. We believe that habits of behavior play a significant part in forming habits of mind. The Academy's teachers will make every effort to enforce the rules below consistently, informatively, and with a heart of mercy for the student's overall well-being.

Students at the Academy strive to make the most of their educational opportunities. No less than their parents and the faculty, our students appreciate the overall environment that they help maintain for the good of the entire school community. It does not take long for our students to recognize the benefits of mutual encouragement, respect, courtesy, and helpfulness. As many students and parents will gratefully attest, the Academy is a very good place to be.

Nevertheless, our students are young and human, and they will make mistakes in speech or behavior—they are still learning how appropriately to comport themselves. Many such



behavioral mistakes, while requiring correction, need not be punished. Sometimes, however, their mistakes can be disruptive to other students and to our teachers. Therefore, for the sake of orderly and productive community life, it is necessary to discuss school expectations and sanctions so that students and families can have a blueprint for conduct which contributes to a wholesome academic environment and to each student's self-esteem and success.

The philosophy of the Academy is that students are young adults in the making who will learn civil, polite and respectful conduct by the example of their teachers and other adults. Consequently, students will be treated with respect and courtesy by the Academy staff and will be expected to treat not only all adults on campus with such respect, but one another as well. Several very obvious signs of such respect are a student's willingness to refrain from talking in class when others have the floor; a respect for the property of the school and of other students; a willingness to refrain from sarcastic or critical comments towards others; and a willingness to ask (and give) forgiveness when someone has been wronged.

In conjunction with parents, the Academy has the goal of developing not only habits of good scholarship and critical inquiry, but the character traits of courtesy, promptness, forgiveness, self-control, responsibility, diligence, courage, generosity, and magnanimity. Good behavior is expected of all students and will not be specially rewarded at school.

The Academy's guiding policy is to be fair, firm, and consistent in the application of discipline for inappropriate behavior. However, the following guidelines for discipline are not intended to be exhaustive. The school reserves the right to exercise reasonable judgment as an individual circumstance might dictate.

To function properly, education must provide an equal learning opportunity for all students by recognizing, valuing, and addressing the individual needs of every student. In addition to the regular curriculum, principles and practices of good citizenship must also be taught and modeled by school staff. To foster an orderly and distraction-free environment, the Academy has established this Student Code of Conduct ("the Code") in accordance with state law. The Code outlines prohibited behaviors and consequences for such behavior.

The Code has been adopted by the Board of Directors, and provides information to parents and students regarding expectations for behavior, consequences of misconduct, and procedures for administering discipline.

In accordance with state law, the Code will be posted at each school campus or will be available for review at the office of the Headmaster. Parents will be notified of any violation that may result in their student being suspended or expelled from the school.

Students must be familiar with the standards set forth in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules.

The Code does not define all types and aspects of student behavior, as the Academy may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Code. These rules may be posted in classrooms or given to the student and may or may not constitute violations of the Student Code of Conduct. When students participate in student activities, they will also be expected to follow

the guidelines and constitutions that further specify the organization's expectations, student behavior and consequences.

### **Jurisdiction**

The Academy has disciplinary authority over a student:

During the regular school day and while the student is going to and from school;

1. While the student is in attendance at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
2. For any misconduct, regardless of time or location, that impacts the learning environment or another student's learning or well-being at school;
3. For any mandatory or discretionary expulsion violation committed while on or off school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of another district in Texas;
4. When retaliation against a school employee or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
5. When the student commits a felony, as provided by Texas Education Code §37.006 or §37.0081; and
6. When criminal mischief or acts are committed on or off school property or at a school-related event.

Note: In addition to disciplinary consequences, misdemeanor and felony offenses committed on campus will be reported to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

### **Approach to Student Discipline**

In general, discipline is intended to correct misconduct, to promote each student's development in character and the virtues, and to foster the common good of the school community.

Disciplinary action will draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of disciplinary techniques. Disciplinary action correlates to the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, and the effect of the misconduct on the school environment.

The following approaches may be used—alone or in combination—for misbehavior violating the Code or campus or classroom rules:

- Assignment of school service or community service duties such as scrubbing desks or picking up litter,
- Behavioral agreements,
- Cooling off time or "time out,"
- Discussion with teachers, counselors, or administrative personnel,
- In school suspension or detention, as specified in the suspension section of the Code,
- Expulsion, as specified in the expulsion section of the Code,
- Grade reductions as permitted as policy,

- Out of School Suspension, as specified in the suspension section of the Code,
- Parent-Teacher conferences,
- Referral to an outside agency and/or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by the School,
- School-assessed and school-administered probation,
- Seating changes within the classrooms,
- Sending the student to the office or other assigned area,
- Techniques or penalties identified in individual student organization's extracurricular standards of behavior,
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process,
- Verbal or nonverbal correction,
- Withdrawal of privileges, or
- Other strategies and consequences as specified by the Code.

Students may be removed from class for a short duration following a perceived disciplinary infraction while an administrator collects an account of the situation. During this time, a student may be asked to sit quietly in an administrator's office and provide a description of the incident. In response to the student's behavior, a teacher or administrator may assign a lunch or recess detention. In the case of more serious misbehavior the parent will be contacted and other disciplinary measures taken, up to and including suspension and expulsion.

#### **Note Concerning Detention:**

Any student who fails to report to detention at the scheduled time will receive additional penalties (typically an additional detention). Students should not ask to have a detention rescheduled; detentions are by their very nature inconvenient, and students should view the inconvenience that detention causes to be a direct result of the misbehavior that incurred the punishment in the first place. Exceptions may be made in the event of a family emergency or serious scheduling conflict. All matters pertaining to the scheduling and serving of detentions should be directed to the faculty member.

Detentions can be serious in nature and a high number of detentions can indicate a student's general unwillingness to cooperate with the school. The accumulation of numerous detentions may result in a suspension based on the judgment of the Headmaster. A student may be suspended if many of the detentions are received for the same offense, or if the Headmaster determines that the detentions are of a serious nature and warrant immediate action.

In the case of more serious misbehavior, such as forging a parent's signature, lying, dishonesty on exams and/or academic assignments, fighting, theft, willful destruction of property, defiance, disrespect, leaving campus without permission, skipping class, or any other serious offense listed in the Student Code of Conduct, the parent will be contacted and other disciplinary measures taken, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Threats of violence and physical, verbal or sexual harassment are illegal and will result in parent contact and, depending on the nature of the offense, may result in other disciplinary measures, including notification of law enforcement authorities, suspension, and expulsion.

**Note Concerning Corporal Punishment:**

The Academy will not administer corporal punishment upon a student for misconduct.

**Conferences, Hearings and Appeals**

All students are entitled to conferences, hearings, and/or appeals of disciplinary matters as provided by state and federal law and school policy.

**Gun-Free Schools Act**

In accordance with the Gun-Free Schools Act, the Academy shall expel from the student's regular program for a period of one year, any student who is determined to have brought a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school. The Headmaster may modify the term of expulsion for a student or assess another comparable penalty that results in the student's expulsion from the regular school program on a case-by-case basis.

For the purposes of this law, "firearm" means:

1. Any weapon—including a starter gun—which will, or is designed to, or which may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive from the frame or receiver of any such weapon;
2. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer;
3. Any destructive device. "Destructive device" means any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than 1/4 ounce, mine, or device similar to any of the preceding described devices. It also means any type of weapon – other than a shotgun shell or a shotgun that is generally recognized as particularly suitable for sporting purposes – by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than 1/2 inch in diameter; and any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into a destructive device as described, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

For a list of Offenses and Consequences, please see Appendix A.

**Student Acceptable Use of Technology Policy****Technology Resources:**

The Academy has made a substantial investment in technology for instructional purposes. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents must read and agree to abide by the Student Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.

**Technology Statement:**

The Academy is committed to utilizing appropriate technology to enhance student learning and increase teacher effectiveness in accordance with its mission and vision.

**Student Safety:**

The Academy is aware that resources that are inappropriate or not designed for use in the educational setting may be accessed on the Internet. To protect students and staff from such inappropriate material, the school's Internet access is filtered with one of the highest-rated Internet filtering systems available. However, users must recognize that it is impossible for the Academy to restrict access to all controversial material and individuals must be responsible for their own actions in navigating the network.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure school-level compliance with all procedures and regulations regarding the local area network and Internet usage. All students, parents, teachers, administrators and school employees who obtain their Internet access through the Academy are expected to use these services appropriately.

**User Responsibilities:**

The use of the Internet is a privilege. Inappropriate or abusive conduct will lead to the privilege being revoked. The Academy provides Internet resources for educational purposes only. Student/Staff use of Internet resources must be related to an expressed educational and/or administrative goal or objective.

1. The use of the Academy Internet and computer network must be in support of educational goals, research, and class assignments and be consistent with the educational objectives of the school.
2. Users must have a valid, authorized account to access the network, and use only those computer resources that are authorized. Accounts may be used only in accordance with authorized purposes.
3. Individual accounts may be used only by the owner of the account except where specifically authorized by the Academy administration. In the case of class accounts, all use must be under the supervision of the sponsoring teacher/supervisor.
4. The user is responsible for safeguarding the computer account. Users are expected to protect access to accounts by periodically changing the password and keeping it confidential. They must respect the privacy of others by not tampering with their files, passwords or accounts.

**Policy – Terms and Conditions****Acceptable Use of Technology:**

Users are to properly use school network resources for educational and/or administrative purposes. Respectful and responsible network etiquette and behavior should be in keeping with the school's mission statement. Students and staff are expressly prohibited from accessing obscene, profane, vulgar, or pornographic sites or materials.

Students are prohibited from sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, students involved in "sexting" or the sharing of inappropriate images or other content may also be disciplined for violating the Academy anti-harassment and bullying policies.

### **Monitored Use:**

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by students and employees shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated school staff to ensure appropriate use for educational or administrative purposes. Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic mail messages is prohibited. Only the school's authorized IT Manager may read, delete, copy or modify the electronic mail of other system users.

### **Vandalism:**

Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, disrupt or destroy data of another user of the Academy network or any other agencies or networks that are connected to the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses. Any of these actions may be viewed as violations of school policy, administrative regulations and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. Users must respect the privacy of other users, and will not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify any file, data, or password belonging to another user, or represent themselves as another user unless explicitly authorized. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance and/or degrade, disrupt or bypass system security are violations of school policy and administrative regulations, and may constitute criminal activity under applicable laws.

Any prohibited behavior under this policy will result in the cancellation of technology privileges. The Academy will, in accordance with school policy, cooperate with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the Academy network.

### **Network Etiquette:**

Each network user is expected to:

1. Be polite (i.e., an all-caps message implies shouting);
2. Use appropriate language;
3. Refrain from any activity that may be considered "cyber bullying," including but not limited to threats of violence, extortion, obscene or harassing messages, harassment, stalking, child pornography, and sexual exploitation;
4. Maintain confidentiality of the user, colleagues, and students;
5. Respect copyright laws; and

6. Be respectful in all aspects of network use.

**Consequences:**

Violation of the Academy policies and procedures concerning use of the computer on the network will result in the same disciplinary actions that would result from similar violations in other areas of school policy, including the Student Code of Conduct. Any or all of the following consequences may be enforced if a student violates the terms of this policy:

1. Loss of computer privileges/Internet access, with length of time to be determined by campus administration.
2. Any campus-based disciplinary consequence, including suspension, as deemed appropriate by the administration.
3. Suspension and/or expulsion may be considered for flagrant violations or violations that corrupt the educational value of the computers or the Internet.
4. Expulsion may be considered in instances where students have used the Academy Internet access to engage in conduct that constitutes felony criminal mischief, and/or have deliberately attempted to bypass installed security software or copy/modify another student's work files.

**Electronic Devices, and other Prohibited Items**

Portable music players, pagers, cameras, electronic games, laser pointers, skateboards, roller blades, and other toys that are not part of the academic or extra-curricular program are prohibited on campus. Students may be disciplined, and such items will be confiscated and returned only at the parent's request.

Tobacco, other legally controlled substances, lighters, matches, pocket knives, weapons of any kind, and sexually explicit materials are also prohibited on campus at all times. Possession of these items will result in immediate disciplinary action.

**Cell Phones and Personal Technology**

The use of electronic devices is a major source of distraction in the classroom. For this reason, students are not permitted to use items such as smart watches, radios, mp3 players, video cameras, DVD players, cameras, video games, other electronic devices, or any internet-enabled devices at school, unless prior written permission from the Headmaster has been obtained.

The use of cell phones during the school day is prohibited, including during field trips or other off-campus events unless expressly permitted under the supervision of adults and for a specific purpose. Parents sometimes provide cell phones to their children in order to promote the safety of their children or to communicate regarding unanticipated changes in transportation. In light of this, the following restrictions/allowances apply:

A student may keep a cell phone turned off and stored in his or her backpack during the school day. After school, a cell phone may be used to communicate only with one's parents or individual responsible for transportation in the designated cell phone area.

Any non-permitted use or possession of a cell phone will result in confiscation of the phone and disciplinary action

If a school employee observes a student using a cell phone or other paging device during the school day or at a school-related activity, the employee will collect the item and turn it in the designated administrator's office. If a parent and student have executed a waiver permitting the student to possess a cell phone or other paging device at school, school officials may power on and search the device if there is reasonable cause to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, school policy, or school regulation.

A parent will be contacted to pick up the confiscated item.

The Academy will not be responsible for damage to or loss or theft of confiscated items. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Disruptions**

In order to protect student safety and sustain an educational program free from disruption, state law permits the Academy to take action against any person—student or nonstudent—who:

- Disrupts classes while on school property or on public property that is within 500 feet of school property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; entering a classroom without authorization; and disrupting the activity with profane language or any misconduct;
- Interferes with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building;
- Interferes with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to school property;
- Interferes with the movement of people in an exit, an entrance, or a hallway of a school building without authorization from an administrator;
- Interferes with the transportation of students in school vehicles;
- Uses force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly;
- Uses force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving school property without authorization from an administrator; or
- Uses force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.

### **Photography and Public Internet Postings**

The name, logo, and crest of the Academy are the property of the school and may be used only for official school business. Any Academy student who, without written permission from the headmaster, posts the crest or logo of the Academy on the internet or in any other public forum for purposes of identifying themselves or other students is subject to school disciplinary action.

All personal photography, including the taking of videos, is banned on campus and at school events. No photos of minors may be publicly displayed without the consent of the parent(s) or



guardian. Any Academy student found to be in violation of these rules is subject to school disciplinary action.

Any public display or posting by an Academy student, on the internet or in any other public forum, of derogatory, offensive, or harassing speech directed against another student, teacher, or other member of the school community is in violation of the standards of the Academy and is subject to school disciplinary action.

### **Displaying a Student's Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work**

Teachers may display student work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement. However, the Academy will seek parental consent before displaying student artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and other original works on the Academy website, on any campus or classroom website, in printed materials, by video, or by any other method of mass communication. The Academy will also seek consent before displaying or publishing an original video or voice recording in this manner.

### **Great Hearts Policy: Addressing the "No Pop-Culture Rule"**

Great Hearts is very intentional about creating a common and civil community among its students and in preserving an educational environment free from distractions. This includes manners of speech, habits of respect during discussions with others, attention to the content of the curriculum to the exclusion of references either to current pop-culture personalities, music, movies, and even politics and current events. To further this educational environment, Great Hearts also requires students to use backpacks, lunch bags, and other accessories that are free from such images or references.

The intention and educational purpose is to pull students out of the parochial thought-worlds of their time and that of their peers, and introduce them into the broader and more permanent concerns of the human community. In this environment of learning, students will take authors and artists of historical times and different cultures seriously and better envision and entertain ideas such as goodness, virtue, and heroism from many prior historical and cultural contexts within which they have arisen.

Great Hearts also seeks to avoid cultivating a "chronological snobbery" in our students, and in furtherance of this, we avoid contemporary comparisons during classes and school activities. Overall, Great Hearts asks and challenges students to step out of themselves—to step out of their times, their familiar idioms, even their preferred styles in art and music, in order to appreciate the goods and virtues of other times and places. This is the essence of a classical education.

Great Hearts seeks to develop the unique character and quality of each student; however, this uniqueness and true self is not encouraged through participation in consumerism and mass marketing. Great Hearts desires to free the educational environment from consumerism and external marketing influences through this policy of "no pop culture" in school. Its purpose includes:

1. To give young people an educational space free from popular examples that may be merely superficial and time-bound, while we try to introduce them to more permanent and universal aspects of human nature and human community;
2. To give them educational space from the peer pressure to be media and celebrity “literate;”
3. To elevate their imaginations and their thoughts above the low, the base, and the mediocre
4. To create points of reference and a common ground for conversation that transcends the student’s age, experience, and the biases of his peer group; and
5. To give them the broadest range of images and ideas from which they will eventually address the concerns of their own time and place.

This policy creates and preserves the desired educational environment and improves the educational process for the benefit of all students, and acts as a shield against what is shallow and temporary in popular culture on behalf of what is serious and permanent. Students will learn to think for themselves and develop deep critical thinking skills and analytical ability. It is in that ability that we hope to see meaningful distinctions in our students and not in clothing or accessories. It is also the intention of this policy to improve student learning, to reduce disciplinary referrals, to improve morale, and to instill self-worth and self-confidence in students as lasting traits.

### **Policy on Hazing**

Hazing, solicitation to engage in hazing, and aiding and abetting another person who is engaged in hazing is strictly prohibited. A person is considered a “student” who has enrolled, who has been accepted for enrollment, or intends to enroll within the next 12 calendar months. This policy applies to all students until graduation, transfer, promotion, or withdrawal from the school.

“Hazing” is defined as any intentional, knowing or reckless act committed by a student, whether individually or in concert with other persons, against another student, and in which both of the following apply:

- The act is committed in connection with an initiation into, an affiliation with or the maintenance of membership in any organization that is affiliated with an educational institution; and
- The act contributes to a substantial risk of potential physical injury, mental harm or degradation or causes physical injury, mental harm or personal degradation.

“Organization” means an athletic team, association, order, society, corps, cooperative, club or other similar group that is affiliated with an educational institution and whose membership consists primarily of students enrolled at that educational institution.

Violations of this policy do not include customary athletic events, contests or competitions that are sponsored by an educational institution or any activity or conduct that furthers the goals of a legitimate educational curriculum or legitimate extracurricular program.

It is no defense to a violation of this policy if the victim consented or acquiesced to hazing. All students, teachers, and staff shall take reasonable measures within the scope of their individual authority to prevent violations of this policy.

### **Reporting Procedures:**

Students and others should report hazing to the Headmaster, but may also report hazing to another professional staff member. If an individual besides the Headmaster receives the report, the individual receiving the report will submit a report of the incident to the Headmaster. The individual shall respect the confidentiality of those involved, disclosing the incident only to those with a need to know or as required by law. Any incident of hazing that includes possible violation of state or federal statutes shall be treated as required by statutory requirements and reported to law enforcement.

All violations of this policy shall be treated in accordance with the discipline procedures and penalties in effect for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

If an organization knowingly permitted, authorized, or condoned hazing activity, its permission to conduct operations at the Academy may be revoked or suspended.

### **Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying**

Great Hearts prohibits bullying as defined by this section, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process. Bullying means a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student; or
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or the School; or
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Cyberbullying means bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

The school's bullying policy applies to:

- Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;

- Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
- Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying:
  - Interferes with a student's educational opportunities; or
  - Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

### **Reporting Procedures:**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced any form of bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to the Headmaster or designee, a teacher, counselor, or other school employee. A report may be made orally or in writing, and may be submitted anonymously. Any school employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the Headmaster or designee. The Headmaster or designee will notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any student witnesses of available counseling options.

The Headmaster or designee shall provide notice of incident of alleged bullying to:

- A parent or guardian of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the date the incident is reported; and
- A parent or guardian of the alleged bully within a reasonable amount of time after the incident.

### **Investigation of Report:**

The Headmaster or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited harassment and, if so, proceed under that policy instead. The Headmaster or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report, and shall take prompt interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

The Headmaster or designee shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including a determination of whether bullying occurred. If the results of an investigation indicated that bullying occurred, the school shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Great Heats may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the school concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying under this policy.

Discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities shall comply with applicable requirements under federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Section 1400 *et seq.*). Great Hearts may not impose discipline on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying, based on that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying.

The Headmaster, or the Headmaster's designee, may make a report to the police department of the municipality in which the school is located or, if the school is not in a municipality, the

sheriff of the county in which the school is located if, after an investigation is completed, the Headmaster or designee has reasonable grounds to believe that a student engaged in conduct that constitutes an offense under Section 22.01 (Assault) or 42.07(a)(7) (Harassment), Texas Penal Code.

**Confidentiality:**

To the greatest extent possible, Great Hearts shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation.

**Appeal:**

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the Great Hearts grievance procedure.

**Social Media**

The Academy reserves to itself the right to investigate allegations of bullying, harassment, intimidation, and threats that occur in social media venues and which disrupt the learning environment of the school. Not everything said or done by students online is the school's business, but actions and words directed against fellow students, parents, or school staff will be considered as such. The school will also notify law enforcement when credible threats of violence are detected.

**Alcohol-Free School Notice**

In order to provide a safe and alcohol-free environment for students and employees, all alcoholic beverages are prohibited on school property at all times, and at all school-sanctioned activities occurring on or off school property. Student violators are subject to the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

**Tobacco-Free School Notice**

Smoking and using smokeless tobacco, including electronic cigarettes, are not permitted in school buildings, vehicles, or on or near school property, or at school-related or school-sanctioned events off school property. Students may not possess tobacco products at any of the locations or activities listed above. All violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law. Additionally, student violators are subject to the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

**Drug-Free School Notice**

The Academy believes that student use of illicit drugs is both wrong and harmful. Consequently, the Academy prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs by students on school premises or any school activity, regardless of its location. Student violators are subject to

possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

## **Suspension**

### **Process for Suspensions Lasting up to Five Continuous Days:**

In addition to the above list of Code of Conduct violations, the Headmaster has authority to suspend a student for a period of up to five continuous school days at a time for any of the following reasons:

1. The need to further investigate an incident;
2. A recommendation to expel the student; or
3. An emergency constituting endangerment to health or safety.

### **Prerequisites to Suspension:**

Prior to suspending a student, the Headmaster or designee must attempt to hold an informal conference with the student to:

1. Notify the student of the accusations against him/her,
2. Allow the student to relate his or her version of the incident, and
3. Determine whether the student's conduct warrants suspension.

### **Notification to Parents/Guardians:**

If the Headmaster or designee determines the student's conduct warrants suspension during the school day, the Headmaster or designee will make reasonable effort to notify the student's parent(s) that the student has been suspended before the student is sent home. The Headmaster or designee will notify a suspended student's parent(s) of the period of suspension, the grounds for the suspension, and the time and place for an opportunity to confer with the Headmaster.

### **Credit During Suspension:**

A student shall receive credit for work missed during the period of suspension if the student makes up work missed within the same number of school days the student was absent on suspension.

### **Process for Out-of-School Suspensions over Five Days and Expulsion:**

#### **Notice:**

When the Headmaster or designee determines that a student's conduct warrants suspension for more than five days or expulsion, but prior to taking any expulsion action, the Headmaster or designee will provide the student's parent(s) with written notice of:

1. The reasons for the proposed disciplinary action; and
2. The date and location for a hearing before the Headmaster, within five school days from the date of the disciplinary action.

The notice shall further state that, at the hearing, the student:

1. May be present;
2. Shall have an opportunity to present evidence;
3. Shall be apprised and informed of the school's evidence;
4. May be accompanied by his or her parent(s); and
5. May be represented by an attorney.

#### **Expulsion Hearing Before Executive Director of North Texas Academies:**

The Academy shall make a good faith effort to inform the student and the student's parent(s) of the time and place for the hearing, and the school shall hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parent(s) or another adult representing the student attends. The Executive Director of North Texas Academies may audio record the hearing.

Immediately following the hearing, the Executive Director of North Texas Academies will notify the student and the student's parent(s) in writing of his or her decision. The decision shall specify:

1. The length of the suspension or expulsion, if any;
2. When the expulsion is not permanent, the procedures for re-admittance at the end of the expulsion period; and
3. The right to appeal the Executive Director of North Texas Academies' decision to the Superintendent of Great Hearts Texas.

The notice shall also state that failure to request such a hearing in a timely manner constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter.

#### **Appeal to the Superintendent:**

The student or his or her parent(s) may appeal the expulsion decision to the Superintendent by notifying the Headmaster in writing within seven calendar days of the date of receipt of the Headmaster's decision. The Superintendent will review the audio or transcribed record from the hearing before the Headmaster at a specially called meeting. The Superintendent will notify the student and his or her parent(s) of its decision, in writing, within five calendar days of the hearing. Parents will be notified of the right to appeal the Headmaster's decision to the Board of Great Hearts Texas.

#### **Appeal to the Board of Directors:**

After appealing the expulsion decision to the Superintendent, the student or his or her parent(s) may appeal the expulsion decision to the Board of Directors by notifying the Headmaster in writing within seven calendar days of the date of receipt of the Headmaster's decision. The Board will review the audio or transcribed record from the hearing before the Headmaster at a specially called meeting. The Board will notify the student and his or her parent(s) of its decision, in writing, within five calendar days of the hearing. The decision of the Board is final and may not be appealed.

Discipline consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of an appeal of an expulsion to the Board.

**No Credit Earned:**

Except when required by law, students will not earn academic credit during a period of expulsion.

**Emergency Placement and Expulsion:**

If the Headmaster or designee reasonably believes a student's behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with a teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students in a class, with the ability of a student's classmates to learn, or with the operation of the school or a school-sponsored activity, the Headmaster or designee may order immediate removal of the student. Immediate suspension may be imposed by the Headmaster or designee if he or she reasonably believes such action is necessary to protect persons or property from imminent harm. At the time of such an emergency removal, the student will be given verbal notice of the reason for the action and appropriate hearings will be scheduled within a reasonable time after the emergency removal.

Note: Colleges routinely ask students and/or schools to report all suspensions or expulsions in the college application paperwork. The Academy honestly answers such questions and reports all suspensions at the high school level. (Colleges will take into consideration the timeframe and nature of the suspension, and students with suspensions have been accepted into top colleges.)

**Placement of Students with Disabilities:**

All disciplinary actions regarding students with disabilities shall be conducted in accordance with the most current federal and state laws.

**Suspension/Expulsion Requirement:**

A student with a disability shall not be excluded from his or her current placement pending appeal to the Board of Directors for more than ten days without ARD Committee action to determine appropriate services in the interim. Pending appeal to a special education hearing officer, a student with a disability shall remain in the present education setting, unless the Academy and the student's parents agree otherwise.

**Removal from School Transportation:**

A student being transported by the Academy transportation to or from a school-sponsored or school-related activity may be removed from a school vehicle for conduct violating the Academy's established standards for conduct in a school vehicle.

**Academy Honor Code**

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The objective of the Academy Honor Code is to build trust among students and to maintain an academic community in which a code of values is shared. The Academy Honor Code is given below:



As a student and citizen of the Academy, I agree to the following when I sign on the Signature Page at the end of this *Family Handbook*:

- I will not lie, cheat, or steal in any of my academic endeavors.
- I will forthrightly oppose each and every instance of academic dishonesty.
- I will not request, receive, or give aid in examinations/tests/quizzes.
- I will not give or receive illicit aid in class work, homework, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the teacher as the basis of grading. I will understand the difference between studying and reviewing with others (which often is acceptable) and producing written documents that are submitted under my name for credit (which can only be done alone).
- I will not copy from or collaborate with others in completing homework. When I put my name on a homework assignment, I attest that all of the work on the assignment is my own in origin and content.
- In the case of all essays and research papers, I will carefully cite all external sources. I will not represent someone else's work as my own. I will do my very best to learn from my teachers the clear distinctions between appropriate research and plagiarism, intentional or unintentional.
- I will never use any "study aids" such as Cliff's Notes, Sparks Notes, or other materials, nor will I watch a movie/video version of a work of literature before or during study of it in school, unless I've been given specific permission (in a unique circumstance) to do so. I will do the reading for myself and strive to understand it for myself.
- I will give prompt (and confidential) notification to the appropriate faculty member or the Dean and Headmaster if I observe academic dishonesty in any course. I will let my conscience be my guide if I should make such a report.
- I will never attempt to pass off work completed in class or during instructional time as if it had been completed the night before as homework.

The faculty manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code. On some occasions, teachers may ask students to write "AHC" (Academy Honor Code) on the heading of their assignments to remind them of the details and spirit of this honor code.

Please see the Discipline Section for information on how violations of the Academy Honor Code are addressed by teachers and the Headmaster. Since academic dishonesty is viewed as a serious offence, even first offenders may be punished with a suspension. The Academy Honor Code is typically reviewed in class with students during the first week of school each year.

(Note: Portions of this honor code are derived from the current Duke University and Stanford University honor codes.)

## **Lower School Uniform and Dress Code**

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The Academy has a primary objective of developing a “community of learners,” dedicated to the highest standards of academics and deportment. As such, a distinctive uniform is a unifying factor within our school community. It is also a visible signature of our school to the larger community, an indicator of our unity and of our pride of purpose. This is one of the most important functions of a uniform: it identifies its wearer as part of a distinctive group with a distinctive purpose. It is a reminder to its wearer of that purpose and of one’s responsibility to that group. Our school is also committed to the development of individual personality and character—not through external “expressions” of dress and appearance, which can easily be purchased or affected, and which can quickly divide students through the power of snap judgments and prejudices, but through personal qualities, virtues, and traits. It seems countercultural to assert this in our age, but the Academy holds that the school uniform is an essential condition for cultivating genuine individuality in the school community. It is not this or that particular element of the uniform that “matters” more than any of the others; rather, the uniform as a whole is what matters.

While students are responsible for their clothing and appearance, it is the parents who are responsible for providing the conditions required for meeting the standard, e.g. proper shoes, shirts, skirts and pants that fit properly, etc. Parents are expected to be familiar with the uniform requirements below and to ensure that their children come to school each day in the appropriate attire, from head to toe. It is an uncomfortable experience for a child to be corrected for a uniform violation, and repeated uniform issues can become an enormous distraction for students.

The uniform is the basis of a dress code with a “professional,” business-like standard. Our students should dress their best, look their best, and do their best. All clothing must be clean, neat, reasonably pressed, and in properly-fitting condition. If a child is deemed to be wearing inappropriate attire, the parent will be notified, and a change of clothing may be required for attendance that day. If in doubt about the appropriateness of an article of clothing, check with the front desk or administration before purchasing.

Decisions about the appropriateness of apparel may be referred to the Dean of Students, whose judgment, in consultation with the Headmaster and Assistant Headmasters will be final. The school will make specific exceptions to the dress code as required by particular religious customs; parents should address specific concerns to the Assistant Headmasters.

Students must stay in uniform whenever they are on campus (including the parking lot) during a school day. This means arriving on campus fully in uniform and leaving campus fully in uniform (correct shoes, shirts tucked in, etc.). Students may only change out of uniform after school with teacher/coach permission to participate in an approved curricular or extracurricular activity that requires an immediate change in dress.

Parents must provide their students with the required uniform, except in the case of educationally-disadvantaged students as provided in the Texas Education Code. The Academy may provide a uniform for such students. A request for school assistance for purchasing uniforms must be made in writing to the Headmaster and include evidence of financial hardship. Please contact the Director of Campus Operations for more information.

**Purchasing Note:** Many components of the uniform must be purchased from either [Dennis Uniform](#) or [Flynn O'Hara Uniforms](#), whereas other items can be purchased from other vendors. Please see the note under each item.

### **Kindergarten–5th Grade Boys' Uniform Requirements**

#### **Required Items:**

- Short-sleeve polo shirt with logo (white or light blue, available from [Dennis](#) or [Flynn O'Hara](#))
- Pants or shorts (navy blue, available from a vendor of your choice)
- Solid black or brown belt. (Kindergarteners do not need to wear belts.)

#### **Optional Items:**

- Long-sleeve polo shirt with logo (white or light blue, available from [Dennis](#) or [Flynn O'Hara](#))
- V-neck or cardigan sweater with logo (navy blue, available from [Dennis](#) or [Flynn O'Hara](#))
- Fleece pullover or jacket with logo (navy blue, available from [Dennis](#) or [Flynn O'Hara](#))

#### **Acceptable Footwear:**

- White or black athletic shoes
- Shoes should be without conspicuous brand markings.
- K–2nd graders' shoes may have Velcro closures; 3rd–5th graders must have laces. Students must have their shoes fastened correctly at all times.
- Socks must be solid white, solid black, or solid navy, free of logos, crew-length or ankle-high. “No-show” socks are not permitted.

#### **Examples of Acceptable Kindergarten–5th Boys' Shoes:**



#### **Additional Kindergarten–5th Grade Boys' Uniform Requirements:**

**Boys' Hair:** Hair should be neatly combed or styled. Hair must be above the top of the shirt collar. Hair should be styled so that it does not fall below the eyebrows or past the midpoint of the ear. Hair must be natural looking and conservative in its color and cut (no bleaching or unnatural streaking/highlighting, no artificial jet-black coloring, and no unnatural colors). Accommodations for religious reasons are permitted.

## **Kindergarten–5th Grade Girls’ Uniform Requirements**

Girls are required to wear one of the following choices:

### **Choice 1:**

- Short-sleeve polo shirt with logo (white or light blue, available from [Dennis](#) or [Flynn O’Hara](#))
- Pants or shorts (navy blue, available from a vendor of your choice)
- Solid black or brown leather belt, not woven. (Kindergarteners do not need to wear belts.)

### **Choice 2:**

- Short-sleeve polo shirt with logo (white or light blue, available from [Dennis](#) or [Flynn O’Hara](#))
- Great Hearts plaid skort (available from [Dennis](#) or [Flynn O’Hara](#))

### **Optional Items:**

- Long-sleeve polo shirt with logo (white or light blue, available from [Dennis](#) or [Flynn O’Hara](#))
- V-neck or cardigan sweater with logo (navy blue, available from [Dennis](#) or [Flynn O’Hara](#))
- Fleece pullover or jacket with logo (navy blue, available from [Dennis](#) or [Flynn O’Hara](#))

### **Acceptable Footwear:**

- Keds® “School Days II” shoes
- White or black athletic shoes
- Shoes should be without conspicuous brand markings.
- K–2nd graders’ shoes may have Velcro closures; 3rd–5th graders must have laces. Students must have their shoes fastened correctly at all times.
- Socks must be solid white, solid black, or solid navy, free of logos, crew-length, ankle-high, or knee-high. “No-show” socks are not permitted.
- Tights must be solid white or solid navy. Solid white or solid navy footless tights or leggings are permitted, but socks must be worn. Knit tights for colder weather are also acceptable.
- All socks, tights, and leggings must be plain and free of logos or designs (no polka dots, fishnets, etc.). Plain cable-knit texture is acceptable.

### Examples of Acceptable Kindergarten–5th Girls’ Shoes:



### Additional Kindergarten-5th Grade Girls’ Uniform Requirements:

**Skorts:** The skort hem may be no higher than just above the knee, both in front and in back. To measure a correct skort/jumper length, properly adjust the skort at the waist, kneel on a level surface, and measure at most two inches between skort’s hem and the floor. Skorts must be worn at the waist. The Great Hearts plaid skort comes with built-in, black modesty shorts.

**Makeup:** K–5th Girls may not wear makeup. Fingernails should not be excessively long or painted garishly. Fingernails may only be painted in light pink or beige. Tasteful French manicures are acceptable. No shades of red, blue, green, yellow, purple or black are permissible, nor are glittered, speckled, or patterned nail polish.

**Girls’ Hair:** Hair should be neatly combed or styled. Neat, small bows, barrettes, headbands, and hair ties are permissible so long as they coordinate with the uniform. Hair must be natural looking and conservative in its color and cut (no bleaching or unnatural streaking/highlighting, no artificial jet-black coloring, and no unnatural colors). Accommodations for religious reasons are permitted.

### Additional Requirements for All Students

**Pants:** Boys’ and girls’ pants must reach to the shoe but should not drag on the ground. Pants should not be excessively tight or loose-fitting. No jeggings or pants with elastic at the ankles. The pants must have belt loops and a solid black or solid brown belt at least 3/4” wide must be used (except in Kindergarten). No jeans (including khaki-colored denim) or pants with external sewn pockets, rivets, or other jean-like characteristics are permitted. No Dickies, cargo pants, oversized pants, super- baggy pants, dungarees, extra pockets, extra zippers, or extra seams will be permitted. Slacks should be worn at the waist.

**Shorts:** Shorts should reach to just above the knee but not below and should not be excessively tight or loose fitting. Shorts should be worn at the waist. Shorts must have belt loops and a solid black or solid brown belt at least 3/4” wide must be used (except in Kindergarten). No jean shorts (including khaki-colored denim) or shorts with external sewn pockets, rivets, or other jean-like characteristics are permitted. No Dickies, cargo shorts, oversized shorts, super-baggy shorts, extra pockets, extra zippers, or extra seams will be permitted.

**Undershirts:** White undershirts may be worn but should not be visible (except for a small triangle underneath the collar). Long-sleeve undershirts must be worn with long-sleeve uniform shirts that cover them completely.

**Jewelry:** Students may wear one pair of small, inconspicuous stud or short earrings only on the ear lobes. “Short” means that the earrings should hug the ear lobe and be no more than 1cm in diameter. Large hoops or other dangling or distracting earrings are not permitted. No body-piercing jewelry except traditionally-located earrings will be permitted. One simple ring on each hand is permitted. One wrist bracelet, one watch (smartwatch prohibited), and one small necklace are permissible. Only simple, fine-gauged, 16 to 20-inch, silver or gold chain necklaces (with or without a pendant) are permitted. The following will not be permitted: chokers, beaded necklaces (colored or otherwise), leather necklaces, shells, large or elaborate chain-link, and large or elaborate pendants (larger than an inch in length, width or diameter).

**Headwear:** Hats and caps free of pop culture references or images, messages, or conspicuous logos may be worn at recess, P.E., carline, or other outdoor activities, but must be removed when entering the school building or at a teacher’s request. Accommodations for religious reasons are permitted.

**Examples of Acceptable Headwear:**



**Outerwear:** Knit uniform sweaters and uniform fleece pullovers with the Great Hearts logo available from [Dennis](#) or [Flynn O’Hara](#) may be worn throughout the school day all year long. Other jackets, coats, and sweatshirts may be worn to school for warmth but must be free of pop culture references or images, messages, or conspicuous logos. Appropriate outerwear may be worn during recess, P.E., carline, and other outdoor activities, but students must store outerwear in their cubbies or on hooks while they are inside the school building.

### Examples of Acceptable Outerwear:



**Sunglasses:** Plain sunglasses free of pop culture references or images, messages, or conspicuous logos may be worn at recess, P.E., carline, or other outdoor activities, but must be removed when entering the school building or at a teacher's request.

**Tattoos:** No tattoos are permitted—either temporary or permanent. This prohibition includes pen and ink drawings on the skin. Accommodations for religious reasons are permitted.

**Other:** No oversized or baggy clothing will be permitted. All clothing should be labeled in case of loss.

### Backpacks, Lunchboxes, and Water Bottles

Students may bring backpacks, lunchboxes, water bottles, and purses to and from school. These items must be stored inside cubbies or on hooks during the school day and should not be accessed without permission or left on the floor/ground. All items should be free of pop culture references or images, messages, conspicuous brand logos, and dangling accessories.

The following are examples of acceptable items:





Academy officials may search and seize property when there is reason to believe that some material or matter is present that is detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of students.

### **School Concert Dress Code**

**Boys:** Black (or dark) dress pants, white button-up dress shirt with black (or dark) necktie. Necktie is required for all boys. Black (or dark) dress shoes *or* all-black athletic shoes.

**Girls:** Black (or dark) modest-length dress *or* black (or dark) modest-length skirt with a white blouse/top. No “spaghetti strap” or strapless dresses. Dresses and skirts should be no shorter than knee-length since students will be on stage. Black (or dark) dress shoes, black (or dark) dress sandals, black (or dark) ballet flats, *or* all-black athletic shoes. All clothing must be modest and not form-fitting.

### **Dress Code for Special Events**

All shirts worn for special events should be modest, loose fitting, in good repair (no holes, torn pant legs, etc.) and should be worn either tucked in or well over the waist of the pants/shorts if not tucked in. No midriffs may be shown. T-shirts are preferred—no tank tops, camisoles, or sports bras may be worn as outer garments. Sleeveless shirts may be worn if modest. Pants/Shorts should be modest and in good repair (no holes, torn sleeves, etc.). Pants/Shorts should be worn at the waist. Shorts should be no shorter than mid-thigh, and no-longer than just below the knee. No short-shorts or long baggy shorts may be worn. No boxers or undergarments may be visible.





## **Donate to your Great Hearts Academy and Support Your Faculty and Programs!**

### **Community Investment and a Great Hearts Education**

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#### **What is the Community Investment campaign?**

Great Hearts is committed to transforming students into leaders who are prepared for the 21st-century. We do this by teaching the skills necessary for success; the ability to innovate through creativity, the ability to communicate clearly, the ability to apply critical thought through analysis and questioning the world around us, and through building virtue and character in order to demonstrate ethical judgment and integrity. The unique Great Hearts educational model is made possible by the annual Community Investment campaign.

Charter schools are funded differently than district schools. The Community Investment campaign was created to help our schools cover the gap between what we need to deliver a top-tier education and what we receive through public funding.

Your Community Investment gift helps us pay, reward, and retain our excellent and dedicated faculty, so that we can continue to provide the full Great Hearts educational model to our students.

We ask each family to contribute to help cover the gap between what we need for our unique academic model and what we receive from public funding.

We recognize every family in our community has unique circumstances. Every family's participation, at any level, is appreciated, and vital to supporting the teachers and educational priorities of our academy.

## Signature Page

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Thank you for taking the time to read the Academy *Family Handbook*. If you have any questions or comments about this Handbook, please contact the school office. Please sign and return this Signature Page to the Front Office.

We understand and agree to abide by the rules, guidelines, and procedures outlined in the Academy *Family Handbook*.

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A

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### Offenses and Consequences

#### Level I Offenses:

The following behaviors are prohibited at all school and school-related activities:

1. Violating dress and grooming standards as communicated in the Handbook. See “Uniform and Dress Code,” page 97 and following.
2. Littering
3. Chewing gum on campus
4. Insubordination
5. Cheating or copying the work of another
6. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by others
7. Defacing or damaging school property, including textbooks, lockers, furniture, and other equipment, with graffiti or by other means
8. Failing to comply with directives given by school personnel
9. Falsifying records, passes, or other school-related documents
10. Fighting or scuffling
11. Forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force
12. Gambling
13. Hazing. See “Policy on Hazing,” page 89 and following.
14. Improperly discharging a fire extinguisher
15. Engaging in any misbehavior that gives school officials reasonable cause to believe that such conduct will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence
16. Engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors directed toward another student or a District employee. See “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation,” page 8 and following.
17. Engaging in disruptive actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities
18. Engaging in harassment motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age and directed toward another student or school employee. See “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation,” page 8 and following.
19. Engaging in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual contact directed toward another student or a school employee
20. Engaging in threatening behavior toward another student or school employee on or off school property
21. Engaging in verbal or written exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property
22. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of a student’s private body parts
23. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission
24. Making false accusations or hoaxes regarding school safety
25. Possessing a cellular telephone or other telecommunications device at school during the school day

26. Abusing a prescription drug, giving a prescription drug to another student, or possessing or being under the influence of another person's prescription drug on school property or at a school-related event
27. Possessing a stun gun
28. Possessing ammunition
29. Possessing an air gun or BB gun
30. Possessing fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device
31. Possessing mace or pepper spray
32. Possessing pornographic material
33. Possessing or selling a "look-alike" weapon
34. Possessing or selling look-alike drugs or items attempted to be passed off as drugs or contraband
35. Possessing or selling seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount
36. Possessing or using a laser pointer for other than an approved use
37. Possessing or using any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the Headmaster or designee determines that a danger exists
38. Possessing or using matches or a lighter
39. Possessing published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety; using e-mail or Web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior; or threatening school safety
40. Possessing, smoking, or using tobacco products
41. Possessing, using, giving, or selling paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance
42. Refusing to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or Headmaster
43. Repeatedly violating campus or classroom standards of behavior
44. Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal
45. Stealing from students, staff, or the school
46. Repeated tardiness
47. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage
48. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the educational program
49. Violating computer use policies, rules, or agreements signed by the student, and/or agreements signed by the student's parent. See "Student Acceptable Use Policy," page 83 and following.
50. Being a member of, pledging to become a member of, joining, or soliciting another person to join, or pledge to become a member of a public school fraternity, sorority, or gang, as defined by Texas Education Code §37.121
51. False accusation of conduct that would constitute a misdemeanor or felony
52. Forgery of school documents at school or otherwise
53. Hit list under Texas Educational Code §37.001(b)(2)
54. Knife possession—not an illegal knife
55. Non-Title five felony; school is notified by police
56. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by others
57. Possession of stolen property

58. Threats—student on personnel/facility
59. Threats—student on student
60. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the school program
61. Violating the School’s medication policy, See “Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medication policy,” page 22 and following.
62. Simple assault
63. Bullying and/or cyberbullying, including intimidation by name-calling, using ethnic or racial slurs, or making derogatory statements that could disrupt the school program or incite violence. See “Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying,” page 90 and following.
64. Burglary of a motor vehicle on campus
65. Deliberate destruction or tampering with school computer data or networks
66. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward another student or school employee
67. Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony under Title 5, Texas Penal Code, when the conduct occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and (1) the student receives deferred prosecution; (2) a court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct; or (3) the Superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that the student engaged in the conduct
68. False alarm or report
69. Inappropriate sexual conduct
70. Issuing a false fire alarm
71. Repeated failure to comply with directives given by school personnel
72. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, controlled substance, dangerous drug, or alcoholic beverage

**Disciplinary Consequences (may not necessarily be followed in order, and progressive disciplinary measures are not required):**

1. Afterschool detention
2. Application of one or more Discipline Management Techniques listed in “Approach to Student Discipline” beginning on page 81.
3. Confiscation of cell phones or other electronic devices
4. Grade reductions for academic dishonesty
5. In-school suspension
6. Removal from the classroom and/or placement in another classroom
7. Restitution/restoration, if applicable
8. Saturday Detention
9. Out-of-school suspension for up to three days
10. School-assessed and school-administered probation
11. Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process
12. Verbal correction
13. Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities and eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, and/or membership in school-sponsored clubs or organizations

## **Level II Offenses:**

The following behaviors are prohibited at all school and school-related activities:

1. Engaging in verbal or written exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property
2. Failing to comply with directives given by school personnel
3. Repeated tardiness
4. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage
5. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the educational program
6. Falsifying records, passes, or other school-related documents
7. Possessing, smoking, or using tobacco products
8. Possessing, using, giving, or selling paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance
9. Refusing to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or Headmaster
10. Repeatedly violating campus or classroom standards of behavior
11. Forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force
12. Possessing or selling look-alike drugs or items attempted to be passed off as drugs or contraband
13. Possessing or selling seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount
14. Possessing or using any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the Headmaster or designee determines that a danger exists
15. Possessing or using matches or a lighter
16. Being a member of, pledging to become a member of, joining, or soliciting another person to join, or pledge to become a member of a public school fraternity, sorority, or gang, as defined by Texas Education Code §37.121
17. False accusation of conduct that would constitute a misdemeanor or felony
18. Fighting
19. Assault (Class C misdemeanor)—student on student or student on staff member
20. Bullying and/or cyberbullying, including intimidation by name-calling, using ethnic or racial slurs, or making derogatory statements that could disrupt the school program or incite violence. See “Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying,” page 90 and following.
21. Engaging in any misbehavior that gives school officials reasonable cause to believe that such conduct will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence
22. Forgery of school documents at school or otherwise
23. Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another’s reputation, or illegal
24. Stealing from students, staff, or the school
25. Gang activity
26. Harassment under Texas Education Code §37.001(b)(1)
27. Hazing under Texas Education Code §37.151(6)
28. Engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors directed toward another student or a school employee. See “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation,” page 8 and following.

29. Hit list under Texas Educational Code §37.001(b)(2)
30. Knife possession—not an illegal knife
31. Non-Title 5 felony; school is notified by police
32. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by others
33. Possession of stolen property
34. Threats—student on personnel/facility
35. Threats—student on student
36. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the school program
37. Violating the School’s medication policy. See “Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medication policy,” page 22 and following.
38. Engaging in harassment motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age and directed toward another student or school employee. See “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation,” page 8 and following.
39. Engaging in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual contact directed toward another student or a school employee
40. Engaging in threatening behavior toward another student or school employee on or off school property
41. Abusing a prescription drug, giving a prescription drug to another student, or possessing or being under the influence of another person’s prescription drug on school property or at a school-related event
42. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of a student’s private body parts
43. Improperly discharging a fire extinguisher
44. Possessing a razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person.
45. Any discretionary or mandatory expulsion violation under Texas Education Code, Chapter 37
46. Any offense listed in Sections §37.006(a) or §37.007(a), (b), and (d) of the Texas Education Code, no matter when or where the offense takes place
47. Arson
48. Burglary of a motor vehicle on campus
49. Commission of a felony offense listed under Title 5, Texas Penal Code
50. Conduct endangering the health and safety of others
51. Deliberate destruction or tampering with school computer data or networks
52. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward another student or school employee
53. Committing or assisting in a robbery or theft even if it does not constitute a felony
54. Defacing or damaging school property, including textbooks, lockers, furniture, and other equipment, with graffiti or by other means
55. Possessing a stun gun
56. Possessing ammunition
57. Possessing an air gun or BB gun
58. Possessing fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device
59. Possessing mace or pepper spray
60. Possessing pornographic material

61. Possessing or selling a “look-alike” weapon
62. Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony under Title 5, Texas Penal Code, when the conduct occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and (1) the student receives deferred prosecution; (2) a court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct; or (3) the Superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that the student engaged in the conduct
63. False alarm or report
64. Felony criminal mischief against school property, another student, or school staff
65. Gang activity (violent)
66. Making false accusations or hoaxes regarding school safety
67. Possessing published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety; using e-mail or Web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior; or threatening school safety
68. Inappropriate sexual conduct
69. Engaging in disruptive actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities
70. Indecency with a child
71. Indecent exposure
72. Issuing a false fire alarm
73. Manslaughter
74. Murder
75. Persistent Level I offenses (two or more Level I offense committed in any one school year)
76. Persistent Level II offenses (two or more Level II offenses committed in any one school year)
77. Possessing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of inhalants
78. Possessing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of a simulated controlled substance
79. Public lewdness
80. Repeated failure to comply with directives given by school personnel
81. Required registration as a sex offender
82. Retaliation against any school employee or volunteer at any time or place
83. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, controlled substance, dangerous drug, or alcoholic beverage
84. Setting or attempting to set fire on school property (not arson)
85. Sexual abuse of a young child or children
86. Sexual assault
87. Targeting another individual for bodily harm
88. Use, exhibition, or possession of a firearm, illegal knife, club, or prohibited weapon
89. Conduct punishable as a felony
90. Criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder
91. Criminally negligent homicide
92. Vandalism of or conduct constituting criminal mischief with respect to school facilities or property
93. Aggravated assault
94. Aggravated kidnapping



95. Aggravated robbery
96. Aggravated sexual assault
97. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail (obtaining money or another object of value from an unwilling person)
98. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of a student's private body parts
99. Capital murder
100. Engaging in bullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide.
101. Inciting violence against a student through group bullying.
102. Releasing or threatening to release intimate visual material of a minor or a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.

**Disciplinary Consequences (may not necessarily be followed in order, and progressive disciplinary measures are not required):**

1. Any applicable Level I Disciplinary Consequence
2. Out of school suspension for five–ten days
3. Expulsion

Disciplinary actions may be used individually or in combination for any offense.

## **Appendix B**

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### **Sec. 3.10.1. Bullying and Cyberbullying Prohibited**

Great Hearts prohibits bullying, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process.

Bullying means a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that satisfies the applicability requirements provided by Section 3.10.2 below, and that;

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
3. Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or Great Hearts or
4. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying also includes cyberbullying, which means bullying done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

### **Sec. 3.10.2. Applicability of Policy**

This Policy applies to:

1. Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
3. Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying (i) interferes with a student's educational opportunities or (ii) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom Great Hearts or a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

### **Sec. 3.10.3. Retaliation**

Great Hearts prohibits retaliation against any person, including a victim, witness, or another person who, in good faith, provides information concerning an incident of bullying.

### **Sec. 3.10.4. Reporting Procedures**

Reports of bullying and/or cyberbullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. Reports should generally be made to the Headmaster or to a student's teacher. Failure to immediately report may impair Great Hearts' ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

Any Great Hearts employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying and/or cyberbullying shall immediately notify the Headmaster or designee.

A report may be made orally or in writing. The Headmaster or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form. The Superintendent or designee shall develop a written form on which incidents of suspected bullying may be reported. The form shall allow for the anonymous submission of reports of suspected bullying.

#### **Sec. 3.10.4.1. False Claim**

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a Great Hearts investigation regarding bullying and/or cyberbullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

#### **Sec. 3.10.4.2. Notice to Parent or Guardian**

The Headmaster or designee shall provide notice of an incident of bullying to:

1. A parent or a guardian of the alleged victim on or before the third school day after the date the incident is reported; and

2. A parent or guardian of the alleged bully, within a reasonable amount of time after the incident.

### **Sec. 3.10.5. Investigation of Report**

The Headmaster shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited discrimination and/or harassment, and if so proceed under Board Policy PG-XX (Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation) instead.

The Headmaster or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report and shall take prompt interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of the investigation, if appropriate.

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten Great Hearts business days from the date of the initial report. However, the Headmaster or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

Following completion of the investigation, the Headmaster or designee will prepare a written decision regarding the complaint. If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying and/or cyberbullying occurred, Great Hearts shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Great Hearts may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if Great Hearts concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying and/or cyberbullying as defined in this policy.

Great Hearts may not impose disciplinary measures on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying on the basis of that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying.

Discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities must comply with applicable requirements under federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

#### **Sec. 3.10.5.1. Confidentiality**

To the greatest extent possible, Great Hearts shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

#### **Sec. 3.10.5.2. Appeal**

A parent or student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal under Board Policy PG-3.XX (Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances).

### **Sec. 3.10.6. Assistance from Headmaster**

Any student who feels that he or she may be the victim of bullying should contact the Headmaster to obtain assistance and intervention in response to the potential bullying.

The Headmaster or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any student(s) who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.

### **Sec. 3.10.7. Access to Policy**

Information regarding this policy shall be distributed annually to Great Hearts employees and included in the Student Handbook. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the Great Hearts administrative offices.

### **Sec. 3.10.8. Report to Local Law Enforcement**

A Headmaster or the Headmaster's designee may make a report to local law enforcement officials if, after an investigation is completed, the Headmaster has reasonable grounds to believe that a student engaged in conduct that constitutes an offense under Section 22.01 (Assault) or 42.07(a)(7) (Harassment) of the Texas Penal Code.

A Headmaster's designee may include any employee under the supervision of the Headmaster, other than a school counselor.

A report to local law enforcement officials may include the name and address of each student the Headmaster or designee believes may have participated in the conduct.

**Bullying** is defined as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that (1) has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student; (3) materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or the School; or infringes on the rights of the victim at school. Bullying also includes "cyberbullying," which means bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device including a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool. Bullying conduct includes conduct (1) that occurs on or is delivered to School property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property; (2) that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and (3) cyberbullying that occurs off School property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying (i) interferes with a student's educational opportunities or (ii) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, the School, or a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

**Intimate Visual Material** means visual material that depicts a person (a) with the person's intimate parts exposed; or (b) engaged in sexual conduct.

Revised July 2020