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PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

**“TO NURTURE, EDUCATE AND INSPIRE STUDENTS
IN CHRIST-CENTRED LEARNING AND SERVING”**

...To nurture,
educate
and inspire
in Christ-centred learning and serving

GRACE

NURTURE INSPIRE EDUCATE



A NOTE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students,
Thank you for making the choice of Christian education at GCCS!

We trust that you and your family will be richly blessed as you are a part of our growing school community.

This handbook will help you navigate your path through the school year with all its complexities as it explains the different aspects of the school – its history and statements of faith, its routines, policies, and practices, and its overviews of annual events. While we hope that this handbook will provide answers to most of your questions, we are also available in person, by phone, and by email to answer any further questions you may have.

In His Service,

Justin DeMoor,
PRINCIPAL

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HISTORY AND GOVERNANCE

MISSION: GCCS seeks “to nurture, educate and inspire students in Christ-centred learning and serving.” We are continually seeking ways of putting our mission into practice by using it as a touchstone for reviewing current policies and practices, and for guiding us when making decisions.

HISTORY OF SCHOOL

Guelph Community Christian School is a society-operated, community-minded school which was started as John Calvin Christian School in 1961 by parents who attended First Christian Reformed Church. Over time, families from over 30 different churches have joined. To reflect this diversity, the name was changed to Guelph Community Christian School in July of 2008. The Board of Directors continues to be elected from within the membership of the society that is primarily composed of parents. The school rented facilities for its first three years in the basement of First CRC, moved into 286 Water Street in 1965, and into 195 College Avenue West in September of 2012.

Guelph Community Christian School is a member of the Edvance Christian School Association (formerly the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, an organization that began in 1952), and provides an umbrella for over 75 schools and 12,000 students. Edvance supports its member schools through educational, legal, and organizational advice. Guelph Community Christian School is also a member of the Christian School Foundation which holds a trust account for the school and allows it to have access to the interest accruing.

FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS AND GOALS OF GUELPH COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

GCCS seeks “to nurture, educate and inspire students in Christ-centred learning and serving.” We seek to provide a healthy environment, that will challenge and support students to do their best, so that they will be equipped to serve their neighbour and their Creator.

CORE VALUES

Our core values state that we are committed to continually aspire towards as a community. These values, alongside our mission, vision and strategic plan, give direction to the decisions we make. They name the kind of culture we feel God is calling us to be as an education institution in our Guelph Community.

At Guelph Community Christian School, we highly value:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ Integrating our Christian faith into all aspects of learning. | ✓ Being a welcoming place for everyone. |
| ✓ Knowing and understanding each student as a uniquely-created learner. | ✓ Encouraging family involvement in the life of the school. |
| ✓ Pursuing the best educational outcomes for each student. | ✓ Serving and caring for each other, our community and our world. |
| ✓ Encouraging wonder and creativity in the learning journey. | ✓ Being good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. |

PURSUING GROWTH IN A GCCS STUDENT

We pray that GCCS students will demonstrate Christ like behavior and choices that show they are growing in grace and knowledge. 2 Peter 3:18. Therefore, we desire to help our students:

- Embrace their role as a student, developing the study skills and work habits needed to do their best as working for the Lord (Col. 3:23) **WORK HARD FOR GOD**
- Serve God and others first in every aspect of life. (Deut. 6:5) Striving to share God’s love in word and deed (Micah 6:8) **SERVE GOD**
- Steward this world, taking care of all that God has given us, knowing that one day Christ will make all things new (Romans 8: 19-20, Rev. 21, Gen. 2:15) **CARE ABOUT CREATION**
- Know that they are a loved child of God who is fearfully and wonderfully made. Integrating the idea of “Identity in Christ” as part of knowing who they are in the world (Ps 119:14) **KNOW GOD’S LOVE**
- Discern wisely and make choices in light of God’s word (1 Cor. 8:4-8, James 2:17) **CHOOSE WISELY**
- Persevere through challenges on a journey of lifelong learning (Hebrews 12:1) **KEEP ON LEARNING**
- Respect and demonstrate gratitude to their teachers, peers, parents, and others (Col. 3:20) **APPRECIATE AND RESPECT**
- Participate in Christian community; recognizing, developing, and celebrating different ways that God has gifted all of us (1 Cor. 12:21-26) **GET INVOLVED**

CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES AND TEACHINGS

Being a Christian school, all students are expected to be involved in a number of activities of a religious and, often, specifically Christian nature.

- ✓ Classroom prayers that are spoken aloud by the teacher and/or the students;
- ✓ Regular lessons, projects and tests aimed at developing and assessing both Old and New Testament knowledge;
- ✓ Frequent whole-school chapels which involve singing songs of Christian worship, prayers, and listening to speakers give lessons about Christian living;
- ✓ Memory work of Bible passages that are assigned and tested weekly; and
- ✓ Integration of Christian philosophy into entire curriculum.

CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS

Being a Christian school, all students will be exposed to teachings on many matters of Christian faith and morality. Within our community of faith, some of these teachings are as follows:

A.

The God of the Bible is the One and only God, revealed as a trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Romans 1:19,20; Matthew 3:16,17; Matthew 28: 16-20; John 1; John 17; Luke 1: 26-38)

B.

People are made in God’s image, declared “very good” by their Creator. As such, human life is sacred from the moment of conception and all the people are to be honoured and loved because of God’s image in them. (Genesis 1:26, 27; Psalm 139).

C.

We are called to seek a personal relationship with the Father, that can only be obtained by trusting in the sacrifice for our sins made by the Son, and by trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 22:37-40; Acts 1, 2, Acts 4:10-12; James 4:7-10) We are simultaneously sinful, broken people, sometimes arrogant and proud in our successes, but other times crushed by pain and failure and the despair of self-centredness it can breed. We don’t always do what we should, and what we should do, we sometimes neglect to do. We need saving, and we need to mature (Jeremiah 17:19; Romans 3:23).

D.

The Bible as the written Word of God is the Truth by which the Holy Spirit enlightens our understanding of God, the world and ourselves. It is the infallible authority by which God directs and governs all our activities. (2 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 4:4)

E.

Children are a gift from God and are to be educated, nurtured and inspired in right relationship to their Creator, their neighbour and the environment. As a school body, we have a duty to care for students in our classrooms. (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy. 6: 6,7; Mark 12:29-31; Ephesians 6:1-4)

F.

Christians are expected to set examples for the use of God’s gifts in a manner that demonstrates the renewing influence of the Holy Spirit, as evidenced by the fruit of the spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control). (Galatians 5:22; 1 Peter 4:7-11) Above all, the mark of the mature Christian is faith and hope, but most supremely, love (Mark 12:28, 34; John 13:35; 1 Cor. 13).

G.

Marriage is an exclusive union of body, mind, soul and spirit between a man and a woman that is recognized by the church or state. Marriage is held as a holy and binding covenant that reflects the relationship between Christ and His church. Sexual union belongs exclusively within marriage. (Matthew 19:4-6; Genesis 2:21- 25; Hebrew 13:4; Ephesians 5:31-32) GCCS recognizes the different evolving convictions of marriage and sexual minorities within the church today. Our staff will continue to teach the biblical view as understood here, but will acknowledge there are others views within our school and within the church today.

H.

Creation is the object of God’s love and care, and the subject of all things studied in school. God created perfectly, but through man’s disobedience, all of creation suffers and groans in sin. In spite of the pervasive-ness of sin, creation is a marvellous revelation of God’s power and majesty, and God has promised that it will be made new. In the meantime, we are called to be good stewards of creation, including our bodies and the natural environment. We are also called to share our wealth from creation in response to the needs of others. (Matthew 10:29, Luke 12:6, Romans 8:22, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Genesis 2:15; 1Timothy 6:17; Luke 10:30- 37)

I.

The responsibilities of citizenship include respecting the laws of the land, and engaging in healthy political discourse when we disagree with policy or those laws contravene God’s law. This discourse includes advocating for justice for the disadvantaged citizens, e.g. widows and the orphans(1 Timothy 2:1,2; Matthew 22:15-21; Romans 13:1- 7; James 1:27, Matthew 23:13-15)

J.

God’s gift of Christian community needs to be nurtured through fellowship and discipleship on a regular basis in order for there to be spiritual growth. We need to have respectful relationships with other Christians and with our community at large. (Hebrew 10:24,25; 1 Corinthians 12, 13; Romans 12:17,18; 1 Peter 3:15) See our Diversity Statement.

K.

There is more that unites Christians than divides them: we seek to shift our identity from being one rooted in Self or other idols to being rooted in Jesus Christ alone. While being one body of Christ, we do come as different parts of the that one body. In this light, our teachers do not make prescriptive statements on topics such as distinct forms of sacraments, e.g. baptism, or communion, or eschatology. (1 Corinthians 12:12,13; Galatians 5:6)

LOVE AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY AT GCCS

GCCS adds to the rich diversity of our city of Guelph: it is a Christian elementary school with a mission to nurture, educate and inspire students in Christ-centred learning and serving.

Our foundation is the historic Christian faith, a living tradition and personal relationship with God in Christ Jesus that we seek to bring to bear on every aspect of our teaching, curriculum, operations, and governance. Because of this foundation in Christ, we aspire to cultivate a community of love and respect for all people.

Our teachers, our staff, our administration, and our board are all committed Christians and affirm Christ's call to love our neighbours and serve self-sacrificially for the common good. All who wish to learn and work in this kind of faith-based community are welcome to participate and flourish with us.

We abide by Canadian laws, support human rights and freedoms, and cultivate the responsibilities of citizenship in Canada and the world. We accept all students who agree to be taught within our Christian tradition (see our Statement on Christian Activities and Teachings at GCCS document (CAT)), who meet our basic enrollment requirements, and for whom we have the resources to educate.



GOVERNANCE OF THE SCHOOL

Guelph Community Christian School Society is governed by a Board of Directors. The Board meets monthly to conduct regular school business and invites the parents and members to general meetings twice a year. At the Fall General Membership Meeting the audited financial statements are presented and new board initiatives are shared. At the Spring General Meeting, new Board members are elected, and the budget and tuition are set for the coming school year. Additional society meetings can be called when necessary.

STANDING COMMITTEES

In order to assist the board and staff of the school in the operations of the school there are a number of standing committees. Some of these are listed below.

- ✓ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – includes Board Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and Principal.
- ✓ CONTRACT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE – includes Board members, staff and representative society members. Meets as required to discuss teachers' contracts.
- ✓ Finance Committee – includes Board members, and knowledgeable society members. Meets monthly to prepare annual budget and oversee financial health of the institution.
- ✓ MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE – includes current and former Board members. Meets as required to interview new members, usually new parents, to determine suitability for society membership, update lists, and to issue voting cards at membership meetings.
- ✓ Promotion Committee – includes Board members, society members, a teacher and Principal. Meets as required to develop way in which to promote the school to prospective families.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

1

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

Guelph Community Christian School has a policy that ensures that all adults who will be in regular contact with the students, will submit a current (less than 3 years) Vulnerable Sector Check before service begins. All paid staff and volunteers will also need to be familiar with and agree to our 'Child Welfare Manual: Preventing and Reporting Child Abuse' and our 'Volunteer Guidelines'.

2

DRINKING WATER

Guelph Community Christian School obtains its water from the City of Guelph municipal water system and as such complies with Regulation 459/00 under the Ontario Water Resources Act. We also comply with the water flushing and testing requirements under Regulation 243/07.

3

BUILDING CODE

Guelph Community Christian School's building was renovated in compliance with the applicable Ontario Building Code, and all modifications to the building have been done with the proper building permits and inspections.

4

FIRE CODE

Guelph Community Christian School is inspected annually by the local fire department for compliance with the Fire Code. The school conducts fire drills at prescribed times to ensure that students are familiar with safe evacuation procedures.

5

HEALTH PROTECTION AND PROMOTION

Guelph Community Christian School participates in all programs sponsored by the local Public Health Unit. Each student is registered with the health unit. Some of these programs include dental screening, dental care training, and vaccinations. School suspensions for health reasons are enforced when so directed by the Medical Officer of Health. The school also advises parents on communicable diseases, and pests such as head lice.

COMMON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Follow [this link](#) to the Health Unit's description of common communicable diseases to know if your child should stay home and if you should report their illness to the school. We will be discrete in sharing this information, but there are other students who are especially vulnerable and whose parents will be notified to keep them home while certain viruses are present. Generally, children should be kept home while exhibiting symptoms, e.g. open sores, pink eyes, swollen glands.



MEDICATION

No medication (including acetaminophen) will be given to a student without the parents' written permission. The front office personnel can share these forms with you.



FIRST AID

School staff are trained in First Aid and will attend to most scrapes and cuts. More serious injuries will be reported to the parents, and/or the child will be taken to the hospital.

ANAPHYLAXIS

Parents must inform the school of any diagnosis of life-threatening allergies that their children may have.

The school's registration forms require that parents, and/or guardians, provide information on life-threatening allergies, and declare clearly if an epi-pen, or similar remedy, has been prescribed for their child (ren). The registration form includes a consent form for parents to pre-authorize school employees to administer medication or supervise a student while they take medication in response to an allergic reaction. It is the obligation of the student's parent or guardian and the student to ensure that the information in the student's file is kept up-to-date with the medication that the student requires.

The office will maintain a file for each anaphylactic student of current allergies and other information, including a copy of prescriptions and instructions from the student's physician or nurse and a current emergency contact list. This file will contain an individual emergency response plan for each student who has an anaphylactic allergy for use as a reference in staff training and in the case of an emergency.

If a student has been prescribed an epi-pen, the parents, and/or guardians, shall supply the school with two of the epi-pens. One of these shall be stored in a central and accessible location, clearly identified for that student, and the other shall be carried in a fanny pack that the student carries with them at all times.

The above procedure will be in effect until the parents, and/or guardians, submit a medical note to the contrary.

In the event that a student is identified as having a life-threatening allergy, steps will be taken to protect the student from exposure to the anaphylactic causative agents.

All employees and others who come into regular contact with students will receive training on dealing with anaphylaxis.

Employees will be pre-authorized to administer medication or supervise a student while he or she takes medication in response to an anaphylactic reaction, if the school has up-to-date treatment information and the consent of the parent, guardian or student, as applicable.

If an employee has reason to believe that a student is experiencing an anaphylactic reaction, the employee may administer an epinephrine auto-injector or other medication prescribed for the student for the treatment of an anaphylactic reaction, even if there is no preauthorization to do so.

The school will not be held liable for damages that shall be instituted respecting an act done in good faith or for any neglect or default in good faith in response to an anaphylactic reaction in accordance with this policy, unless the damages are the result of an employee's gross negligence.

The epi-pen should be used when there is any question of an anaphylactic reaction. It is better to err on the side of caution, and there is no lasting side-effect to using an epi-pen unnecessarily.

ASTHMA

Asthma is a chronic lung disease characterized by episodes of airflow obstruction. An attack can be triggered by allergens, cold, flu, stress and/or exercise. Symptoms of an asthma attack include:

Coughing || Wheezing || Shortness of breath || Chest tightness

Acute symptoms require prompt action to help students resume their activities as soon as possible. Prompt action is also required to prevent an episode from becoming more serious or even life-threatening. Symptoms that indicate an acute asthma episode need immediate action. The student's asthma puffers and plan should be easily accessible so that all staff, substitutes, volunteers, and aides can react appropriately.

EDUCATION

Education is the key preventive strategy. Children with allergic reactions must be carefully instructed about hidden allergens, cross-reactions to various allergens, unforeseen risks during medical procedures, and when and how to use self-administered epinephrine.



STUDENT CONCERNS



GENERAL BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour must be respectful and courteous at all times. For example:

- Speak positively and politely --
- “Please” and “Thank you”
- “Excuse me” and “I’m sorry”
- “Good morning!”
- Let others go first
- Make room in your group for others
- Open doors for others; offer to help
- Ask permission before borrowing
- Sit properly; feet off furniture
- Use indoor voice and walking pace
- Leave it better than you found it
- Big people take care of little people



PLAYGROUND BEHAVIOUR

- Only touch to help
- Stay on school property
- Go down the slides
- Sit on the teeter-totter; 2 at a time
- Don’t jump from the climber
- Sticks and stones and snow stay on the ground
- If a ball goes over the fence, ask an adult before going with a buddy to fetch it.
- Play in designated playgrounds
- Keep hockey sticks below the waist and wear face protection and helmet
- Wear a helmet when playing on the ice and/or sledding
- Play safely
- Leave food wrappers inside the school

RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

As a community of learners at GCCS we are committed to building and maintaining strong healthy relationships. We know that students who have a sense of belonging and connectedness with others in their school community are better equipped to make a positive impact in the world.

In order for these values to thrive we need to demonstrate the belief that all people are made in God’s image and that the place of GCCS is a gift from God that we interact with. The GCCS Student Growth Profile indicates that we pray students will demonstrate Christ-like behaviour and choices that show they are growing in grace and knowledge. (2 Peter 3:18)

In support of these principles we require students to follow the following general behaviour guidelines:

- ✓ Be positive and encouraging in your words and actions
- ✓ Be honest in your answers to questions
- ✓ Allow those around you to learn
- ✓ Take care to use school property for its intended purpose
- ✓ Admit when a mistake has been made
- ✓ Follow the Restorative Practices steps if harm takes place
- ✓ Act in a way that will not bring harm to you or others

Restorative practices focus on the importance of approaching situations requiring repair in a constructive and proactive way. Using a restorative approach requires those involved in the repair process to: demonstrate empathy; understand the context and impact of the situation; choose consequences and supports with learning outcomes and for everyone involved to work on repairing harmed relationships. This philosophical approach focuses not on the punitive aspect of a consequence, but rather on the learning that will come from the situation. A restorative approach is fundamental to learning and promoting positive behaviours.

To read the entire Restorative Discipline Policy, look in the document section of Sycamore.

DRESS CODE

Attitudes are often reflected in dress. We encourage neat and modest attire. Some details of our dress code include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ Minimal holes or tears; | ✓ No offensive ads or slogans; |
| ✓ Tops must meet bottoms; | ✓ No hats or hoods in class; |
| ✓ Underwear should be covered, e.g. straps and waistbands; | ✓ No spaghetti straps, thick tank top straps (think lasagna, not spaghetti); |
| ✓ Shorts must provide full coverage (no short shorts); | ✓ Shoes must be worn indoors at all times |

The school allows each student to have two pairs of footwear at the school during the school day. One pair for outdoor use and one pair to be worn indoors. The indoor shoes should be applicable for physical education classes. Only one pair of shoes should be left at school at the end of the day in order to respect space and safety. Swimwear is appropriate for some school activities. The same principles should apply, i.e. neat and modest, tops should meet bottoms, etc.

SCHOOL LIBRARY

Each class will have regular visits to the school library. Previous book loans should be returned before new books are borrowed. Parents are also encouraged to take their children to the Public Library on a regular basis.

Each year the school holds a Book Fair at which parents and/or students can buy books. The proceeds from these sales are used to purchase more library books.

In the event that a parent finds library material that they feel is unsuitable for our school, the parent will be requested to submit to the teacher-librarian the “Library Form—Request for Review of a Book” can be found in Sycamore. If the parent and teacher-librarian cannot agree, then they should ask the principal for a meeting. If further discussion is necessary, the Program Committee will review the request and come to a final decision.





STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Recognizing that our students have unique learning needs, GCCS provides various supports for student learning. A parent or a teacher may have concerns about their child's development in the area of academics, communication, social skills, and/or work habits. The teacher may bring these concerns to the Student Support Service Coordinator (SSSC) and a process will be followed to help develop a plan to provide additional support to this student. The SSSC will support the student through one or more of the following:

- Assess the student's learning needs through observations and/or testing. The SSSC can provide some basic in school testing but testing such as Psych. Ed testing will need to be paid for by the parent.
- Providing one on one or small group learning outside of the class provided by the SSSC or an EA.
- Providing advice to the homeroom teacher that will support the student learning needs through accommodations or modifications of the regular learning program.
- Arranging OT or PT support through the local LIHN if the student's health needs qualify them for this support.

Our goal is to provide the learning support each student requires, however, knowing that the resources of the school are limited we may be unable to provide for the learning needs of every student. Enrichment groups take the form of clubs, e.g. Battle of the Books, Chess Club, Concert Band, etc. Even sports teams should be considered enrichment for the athletically inclined.

MEASURING STUDENT PROGRESS

Students at Guelph Community Christian School are evaluated on a regular basis using regular classroom assessment, periodic tests, and homework assignments, as well as other testing instruments such as the MAPS (Measure of Academic Progress) and DRA (Development of Reading Assessment). It has been the practice of the school to administer these standardized tests to all grades to assist us in knowing what learning our student are ready for and in order to assess our curriculum.

A student progress report is provided to parents in the fall and two report cards are sent out to families in January and June.

Parent-teacher conferences are formally scheduled in November (required) and February (optional) but we encourage regular feedback opportunities between our teaching staff and the parents.

REPEATING A GRADE

In the event that academic indicators suggest that a student will benefit from repeating a grade, the parents will be notified by the end of term 2. The decision to repeat a grade will be made in co-operation with the parents, classroom teacher, and Principal.

HOMework

Our staff assigns homework when the need exists. We respect childhood, family and church time, and try to avoid excessive homework loads and busy work. The amount of homework will vary by grade level, by the needs of the child, and the amount of work not completed during class time. There will be certain research projects, memory work, novel reading, instrument practice, etc. that must be pursued outside of class time.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HOMEWORK TO CHILDREN?

- **RESPONSIBILITY** – Doing homework every day at the same time helps develop responsibility and prepares children for responsibilities they will face as adults.
- **REINFORCEMENT** – Homework helps children understand that learning doesn't stop when the school bell rings.
- **SELF-ESTEEM** - Children learn self-esteem by doing estimable things—completing homework assignments is estimable.
- **ACCOMPLISHMENT** – Taking pride in homework assignments helps children experience the satisfaction of a job well done.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

As part of the mission of GCCS, students regularly participate in service projects throughout the year. These include both class and school wide service projects. For example; our school may do a food drive or a class may partner with an organization such as Hope House.

WHAT DO CHILDREN NEED FROM PARENTS?

ENCOURAGEMENT Give your child specific praise for efforts and for completing assignments.

AVAILABILITY Encourage your child to do the work independently and be available for assistance

SCHEDULING Establish a set time to do homework each day. You may want to use a calendar to keep track of assignments and due dates.

SPACE Provide a space for homework, stocked with necessary supplies, such as pencils, pens, paper, dictionaries, a computer, and other reference materials.

DISCIPLINE Help your child focus on homework by removing distractions, such as television, radio, telephone, and interruptions from siblings and friends.

MODELING Consider doing some of your work, such as paying bills or writing letters, during your child's homework time.

SUPPORT Talk to your child about difficulties with homework. Be willing to talk to your child's teacher to resolve problems in a positive manner.

RESPECT **Doing an assignment for your child erodes his/her self-esteem.** The parent is sending the messages: "You are incapable; I must do this for you." "You can't be trusted to do this yourself." "Whenever you encounter difficulty, I will rescue you rather than let you take responsibility, experience struggle and success, and build character."

EXTRA-CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The school offers extra-curricular and co-curricular activities depending on the availability of staff and funds, and the interests of the students. For example:

1 AWARD SEALS

Records are kept of student involvement in extra-curricular activities and seals are awarded for documented and completed commitments. Each student has a file of his/her seals which is given to him/her upon graduation.

2 BAND

All students in Grades 7 and 8 take instrumental music. There is a concert band that meets at noon hour once a week to prepare pieces for chapels, concerts etc. Younger students may also join if they have some training on a suitable instrument.

3 BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

This club reads a prescribed list of books, and then competes with teams from other schools in a competition to answer comprehension questions.

4 CHAPEL

School wide chapels are held approximately every Friday. This chapel time is led by classes, invited speaker, or by a staff member. There is often a time of singing, and recognition of students who are visibly implementing the school's theme. Parents are welcome to attend.

5 CHOIR

All students in JK to grade 6 spend time singing during music class throughout the school year. There is also a concert choir that practices at lunch time throughout the school year. Students meet at noon hour once a week to prepare pieces for chapels, concerts, church services and community events.

6 SAFETY PATROLS

Student volunteers in the upper grades are trained by the Guelph Police to participate in the Guelph School Safety Patrol Program. Patrols are supervised by a staff member.

7 CHRISTMAS CONCERT AND SPRING CONCERT

There are two evening concerts every year. This gives every student a chance to present the gift of music to our school community.

8 CHESS CLUB

Students in the Junior and Intermediate grades have the opportunity to hone their chess skills at lunch during the colder months of the school year and possibly participate in out of school tournaments.

9 STUDENT COUNCIL

Classes in grades 5 – 8 elect two representatives each to plan fun days that build a sense of community in our student body. Some examples of these are Winter Carnival, Wacky Hair Day, etc.

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SPORTS TEAMS

Most events involve students in Grades 6 - 8 with the exception of cross country (grades 3 – 8) and track and field (grades 1 – 8) for which all full-time students are eligible. GCCS participates in soccer, cross-country, volleyball, ice hockey, basketball, baseball, and track and field. Team selection will be based on ability, and on Christ-like attitudes such as a respectful treatment of the coach and other team members, enthusiasm, and reliable attendance at try-outs and practices. When there are not enough selected players from the higher grades, students from lower grades will be considered.

If two players are equal in all other respects, the one from the higher grade will be chosen. When cutting players to get the numbers down to tournament size, the coach will try to avoid cutting only one player.

The final selection is the decision of the coach. Where there are two coaches working with a team, and one of them is a staff member, the staff member will take responsibility for the selection.

Team members (and parents) will respect the coach's decisions for all aspects of the game, including position assigned, and amount of playing time during a game.

During games, at home or away, athletes will conduct themselves in a respectful manner towards referees, coaches and players from other teams, and towards host facilities.

Coaches will respect the investment of time and expectations of the players with regards to playing time during tournaments by rotating the players appropriately, or explaining to the players how the playing time is being allotted based on the pressures of the game, etc. If a player is kept on the team as an emergency sub, the coach will explain to him/her early in the season that he/she might not see much playing time. The coach's treatment of the players should always leave the players' dignity intact. Sometimes it is better to let a player accompany the team, but not dress rather than dress and sit on the bench.

PRIVATE MUSIC LESSONS

The Ministry of Education allows up to one hour's absence per week for private instruction in music. We do provide space for private music lessons at school.

We can provide the contact information of these music teachers to parents to make arrangements for these lessons.

The cost is the sole responsibility of the parent. The school expects that the parents will consult with the classroom teacher about the best time for private lessons, and that the parents and student will accept full responsibility for any work that is missed.

STUDENTS' PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

The school accepts no responsibility for students' personal possessions. Any personal possessions deemed unhelpful for the student may be confiscated by the staff and returned at the end of the day to be kept at home.

Students have many personal possessions that they would like to bring to school. Parents should label all sports equipment, clothing, especially outer garments, knapsacks, book bags and lunch containers.

Bicycles, skateboards and personal electronic devices need to be put away safely while at school. A sturdy lock and chain is recommended for bicycles.

Students and parents are welcome to look through the lost and found area for lost items. Often, more valuable items will be displayed in the office. From time to time, lost and found items will be spread out for viewing. Items not claimed will be donated or disposed of.

COMPUTER USER AGREEMENT

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

I understand that use of school computer equipment is a privilege, not a right.

I understand that the computers are primarily for instruction and education in computer skills and other curricular programs.

I understand that the school reserves the right to view my files and to delete any unauthorized or offensive files without notice; all passwords will be given to the teacher.

I understand that failure to comply with the rules below will result in loss of this privilege and disciplinary action.

SPECIFIC RULES

- 1** — I will treat school computer equipment with great care and respect at all times. Misuse of equipment may result in financial charge of the offender(s) and disciplinary action.
- 2** — I will NEVER eat or drink near a school computer.
- 3** — I will protect the privacy of myself and others by not divulging or seeking personal information such as addresses, phone numbers, passwords, etc.
- 4** — I will not copy software TO or FROM the computer unless I have been authorized to do so by the system administrator. This includes the downloading of any material from the Internet.
- 5** — I will not play unauthorized games on the computers at any time.
- 6** — I will not alter any program files / system files / or network settings or adjust connections, settings, and arrangement of computer equipment unless I have been authorized to do so by the system administrator.
- 7** — I will save files only in my student folder on the server and on portable media unless instructed to do otherwise. Files saved to the local machine are not backed up or secure.
- 8** — I will not access or alter another person's file(s).
- 9** — I will not access offensive or discriminatory materials nor will I create or transmit information that is offensive or discriminatory. The offensiveness of materials will be determined by the computer administrator and/or school administration. Communications of a harassing or bullying nature will be considered offensive.
- 10** — I will treat school computer equipment with great care and respect at all times. Misuse of equipment may result in financial charge of the offender(s) and disciplinary action.
- 11** — I will only use my personal account (username and password) to log onto the network. I am responsible for any misuse of my account.

[THIS IS PART OF THE DIGITAL DRIVERS' LICENCING PROGRAM]

PARENT INFORMATION



REGULAR PROCEDURES

USING PROPER ENTRY DOORS

When arriving in the morning, all students are expected to enter through their assigned student doors. Coming in through the front doors is not encouraged unless the student is late for school.

ABSENCES, LATES, EARLY DEPARTURES

When a student will be away from, or late for, school, parents should notify the school by phone or email before classes start. If the school does not get notified, the Office Administrator will call to ensure the student's safety.

If a student must leave early, parents should send an email to the Office Administrator in the morning. When you arrive, please check in with the Office Administrator who will call your child down to the office to be picked up.

EARLY ARRIVALS AN LATE DEPARTURES

Students are not to be at school before 8:05 a.m. and must be picked up no later than 3:40 p.m. Safety patrols and yard supervisors are not on duty before or after these times. If a student is not picked up by 3:40 p.m. they will need to attend the After School Care Program for which there is a charge. Also, please inform the teacher by email if your child will be going home in a different way, or with different people, than usual.

PARENT DRIVERS

When parents are driving their children to and from school, they should:

- ✔ Use the school parking lot accessible from College Ave or use side streets such as Lynwood and Vanier

- ✔ Enter the school lot from the west, and exit from the middle

- ✔ Drive slowly in the school lot

- ✔ Cross their children at the crosswalk AND walk children on the sidewalk

- ✔ Pick younger children up from the back of the school after 3:20 instead of having them walk to your car

SCHOOL CANCELLATION /INCLEMENT WEATHER

If for any reason, school must be cancelled for the day, the announcement will be placed with the local radio stations, Magic 106.1 F.M. An email will be sent to all families, and it will be posted on the school's Facebook page before 6:45 a.m.

In the rare event that school must be closed early, an email will be sent out. No student will be sent home unless parents have been contacted. If the school bus is early or late, bus parents will be contacted.

Normally, students are expected to be outdoors before school and during recesses. In case of rain, extreme cold or hot weather, students may remain indoors at the discretion of the principal.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is an important part of school life at GCCS. Many members rely on the bus to transport their children to and from school. The GCCS Board also recognizes the important role transportation can play in a family's decision to choose GCCS for their children; therefore, a significant portion of the cost of bussing is covered through the budget. In order to provide better service for the families of GCCS, bus service is coordinated with Woodland Christian High School (WCHS).

A 'buddy system' is in place for students in Junior Kindergarten through grade 3 who are new to riding the bus. These students are paired up with a senior student for the first few weeks of school or as long as is necessary. There is no additional fee for the 'buddy system'

The monthly fees for September to June bus transportation are published in August.

Bus routes are determined in August. Once routes are established, each family will be contacted with their specific pick up/drop off times/locations.

Students riding the bus must obey the bus driver at all times for the safety of everyone. The school's code of conduct also applies to the bus. Parents whose children cannot safely, or obediently, ride on the bus may be asked to pay for a bus sitter, or to remove their child(ren) from the bus. Bus students may only be picked up or dropped off at their designated stops. Guest passengers are discouraged.

REFUND POLICY

If a family withdraws their child(ren) before the end of the school year for extenuating circumstances such as a change in employment, residential move, or unexpected financial difficulties:

- Tuition must be paid for each month attended. The cost of each month is equal to one-tenth of the total tuition.
- Attendance of any part of a month constitutes a full month owing.
- Refunds for overpayments will be made to the family.
- If a refund is due after a Donation Receipt has been issued for the tuition payments made, the refund will be withheld until the Donation Receipt is returned to the Bookkeeper for voiding or adjustment.

The Treasurer and the Board may determine when a refund is warranted on a case-by-case basis.

If a family withdraws their child(ren) for any length of time during a school year for optional reasons such as travel or a decision to change schools, no refund will be granted. The family will be expected to honour their Financial Commitment Pledge.

TUITION FEES, TUITION BURSARIES AND TAX RECEIPTS

Tuition fees are set every year by the Board on the advice of the Finance Committee. They are voted on, with the budget, at the Spring Membership Meeting. Our fees do not include transportation but a portion of the bus cost is subsidized by the general budget.

The school does have a Tuition Bursary Fund that is used primarily to help families through unforeseen and temporary difficulties. If a family is having difficulty meeting their tuition obligations, they should contact the Treasurer. The philosophy behind tuition fees at our school is that we work together as a community. The fee is not simply based on a cost per pupil. Our scale is a compromise between "every family pays the same" and "fee per child." Those families with larger incomes are encouraged to donate above and beyond their assessed fees.

A portion of the tuition fees is partly refundable by the federal government as a charitable donation. Revenue Canada has decreed that each child receives a measurable service from the school. They have usually assessed the value of this service around \$4200 per year per full-time student. Parents, and others donating on behalf of a specific family, will get a charitable receipt for any amount over and above the value of this measurable service.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a great way to address the "inspire" component in our mission statement and are encouraged for educational purposes. Most of the expenses are met with funds raised by students in events like the Walk-a-thon. If there are additional expenses, and a family finds them a hardship, the family is encouraged to talk to the teacher or principal.

Parents are often asked to participate in field trips by chaperoning. This provides the extra supervision needed for safety and allows for positive interaction between parents and their children.

We prefer to take a bus on a field trip if it is economically feasible. If private cars are used, the driver should be over 25, the car must be in good repair, insurance coverage for liability should be over 1,000,000, and there must be enough seatbelts and necessary booster seats for every passenger.

DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students must pay for lost or willfully damaged materials. If your child has lost or damaged school equipment, we will contact you concerning restitution.

EXTENDED ILLNESS

In the event of extended illness, the teacher will co-operate with the parents in keeping the student current with the core material, e.g. math and language, and with any large projects, according to the work capability of the student.

ILLNESS

When to Keep Students Home

How do you decide when keep your child home?

- Take your child's temperature; a temperature of 38C /100F or over is a sure sign to keep your child home.
- If your child has been vomiting or having diarrhea during the previous evening or night.
- A blistery rash, especially if accompanied by fever and a history of exposure
- Keep your child home if they have a heavy nasal drip and/or frequent cough.
- If your child is diagnosed with a contagious disease, such as strep, they should be on prescribed antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.

School is important, but sick children need to be at home.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Students get excited about birthday parties! Here are some suggestions that will help prevent a difficult situation and show that as a Christian school we value the feelings of each student:

- ✓ If there is a birthday party after school, please keep all presents in the backpacks.
- ✓ Please don't pass out birthday invitations at school unless all male or female students in the class receive an invitation. We realize that sometimes there are too many children in the class to make this practical, but we also know that it is often the same one or two students who are not invited to the parties.
- ✓ Consider inviting a student who has been left out before. The classroom teacher would be glad to supply a name or two.

VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

GCCS Volunteer Program

(G.I.F.T.S.* – Getting Involved for the Students)

Guelph Community Christian School relies on parent volunteers. From the board, committees, fundraising, building maintenance and classroom help, volunteers are integral to achieving the objectives of the school. Volunteering brings value to the school as a community in many ways:

- ✓ Parent volunteers at GCCS bring a passion for the shared vision of Christian education and their contributions model the values the school strives to pass on to the children.
- ✓ Volunteering gives parents an opportunity to use their unique abilities in a meaningful way to support and assist staff in the realization of the GCCS Mission.
- ✓ Through volunteering, parents can connect as a school community, form friendships, and support each other as families. Volunteering builds community.

All parents will participate in The G.I.F.T.S.* Program as a means to formalize these values and provide structure to volunteering at GCCS. More details about volunteering can be found on our website in the Volunteer Handbook.

FUNDRAISING PARTICIPATION

The Purpose: As a private school, GCCS does not receive direct government funding for education. The support of GCCS families in the various fundraising events and programs is essential for a number of reasons. Fundraising significantly contributes to GCCS and directly benefits all the students. It also broadens the school's financial support beyond the immediate school families. Monies raised help to make tuition more affordable. This benefit translates to over \$900/family raised through the various fundraising efforts.

MAJOR FUNDRAISERS:

GOLF TOURNAMENT

This event is a fun celebratory event that includes golfers enjoying a round of golf and a larger number of the school community coming together for a great dinner and an auction. Money raised goes to enhancing learning opportunities for our students. This event happens in early June.

FALL FUN DRIVE FOR GCCS

One of the goals of this fundraiser is to increase the base of support for GCCS beyond the immediate school families. Many students and families have been blessed by Christian Education at GCCS over the history of the school. The financial support of these individuals and families will be gratefully received to continue the mission of GCCS. Volunteers will be required during the Fall Fund Drive period to make phone calls or visit with families. This drive takes place from late October into late December.

WALK-A-THON

This is a high energy, fun event, where the students in Grades JK - 8 bring in pledges for the Walk-a-thon. Volunteers are needed serving refreshments/pizza lunch and walking with classes. Typically, over \$40,000 is raised towards the Student Activities.



STUDENT VACATION WITHDRAWAL GUIDELINES

GCCS is founded on the premise that parents are the primary educators and have a God-given responsibility for the education of their children. As a school, we offer to assist the parents with this responsibility and can only do so if the children are in regular attendance at school.

We recognize that from time to time, families will choose to take vacations during the school term, and that these vacations also present many educational opportunities. In light of the fact that such trips are usually optional, we only ask that the family's trip does not become a burden for the teacher by expecting the teacher to get packages of class lessons ready for students before they go on vacation. It has been our experience that these packages do not get completed and the textbooks and notebooks have been lost.

In the event that a family decides to withdraw their child(ren) for a family vacation, we ask that the family:

- ✓ Notify the school of their plans, by filling in the appropriate Google Form.
- ✓ Ask the teacher which pages he/she deems essential in a text or workbook, e.g. math or grammar, that the child(ren) should be completing while away, or if there is some independent research project that will be due soon after their return.
- ✓ Mark the child(ren)'s work as it is completed. The sooner the child(ren) receives feedback the better.
- ✓ Realize that the teacher may ask the child(ren) to get caught up on missed tests or assignments upon their return within a reasonable time, and with a fair chance to prepare.

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive each other whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” - Colossians 3:12-14

If a person in the school community, a parent or a staff member, has a complaint about an employee of the school, or a volunteer, or a committee or Board member, that involves serious allegations of abuse, illegal activity, unethical or immoral behaviour they should immediately contact the principal and/or the Chair of the Board of Directors.

If the concerns are not of that nature and severity, then the complainant should go through the following process:

- 1** In the spirit of Matthew 18:15, go first to the perceived offender to seek clarification and understanding.
- 2** If that first step does not bring resolution and restoration, and the complaint is against a teacher or volunteer, the complainant should approach the principal who will facilitate a process to bring resolution and restoration through restorative practices. If the complaint is against the principal, the complaint should be put in writing and sent to the Vice-Chair of the Human Resources Committee. That Vice-Chair will arrange for a meeting of the complainant and the principal in order to conduct an informal restorative circle.
- 3** If resolution and restoration are still not achieved, the principal will convene a meeting with the complainant and the perceived offender with the additional involvement of the Human Resources Committee. If the complaint is against the principal and the informal restorative circle does not bring resolution and restoration, the Vice Chair of the Human Resources Committee will arrange a formal restorative circle with a trained facilitator.

If a person in the school community, a parent or a staff member, has a complaint about a policy or procedure at the school, they should go through the following process:

- 1** The complainant should go first to the Chair of the appropriate committee to begin the process of resolution.
- 2** If the first step does not bring resolution and restoration, the complainant should ask the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Human Resources Committee to arrange for and attend a meeting of the complainant and the other committee chair in order to conduct an informal restorative circle.
- 3** If the informal restorative circle does not bring resolution and restoration, the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Human Resources Committee will arrange a formal restorative circle with a trained facilitator.

The outcome of any complaint that reaches the Human Resources Committee shall be reported to the Executive of the Board of Directors by either the Chair or Vice-Chair of the committee. The Chairperson of the Board reserves the right to report appropriate complaints to the appropriate authorities (eg. Child and Family Services) if that is deemed necessary.

PRIVACY

Guelph Community Christian School respects the right to privacy and is committed to upholding the confidentiality and security of personal information. We have developed practices to ensure this commitment is carried out in a responsible manner.

Guelph Community Christian School collects, retains, and discloses certain personal information in order to:

- Help us in providing satisfactory instruction
- Comply with government directives
- Process financial records
- Provide you with information about our school
- Respond to any of your information requests
- Share the information with another educational institution

We collect, use or disclose your personal information with your permission. Your permission may be expressed in writing or be implied, and you may give it to us verbally or electronically.

If you believe any of the information we have collected about you is incorrect or incomplete, you have the right to ask us to change it or delete it. If your personal information is inaccurate or incomplete, we will make the necessary changes. We will keep your personal information only as long as it is necessary to satisfy the purposes for which it was obtained, or as required by law.



Discussion of a student's performance, behaviour or character can only be justified when it can "help us in providing satisfactory instruction." This includes conversations between school employees, as well as between school employees and other students or parents.

When we destroy personal information, we will use safeguards to prevent unauthorized parties from gaining access to that information during the process.

Guelph Community Christian School may use photographs or pictures of its students, families, employees and volunteers in internal school communications, publications, yearbooks, newsletters, brochures, websites and press releases. No full names will be associated with pictures or photographs used on openly accessible portions of the school website or in communications clearly intended for external use. Newspapers require the release of full names which will be withheld if the school has a signed exclusion form.

CONTACT INFORMATION



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