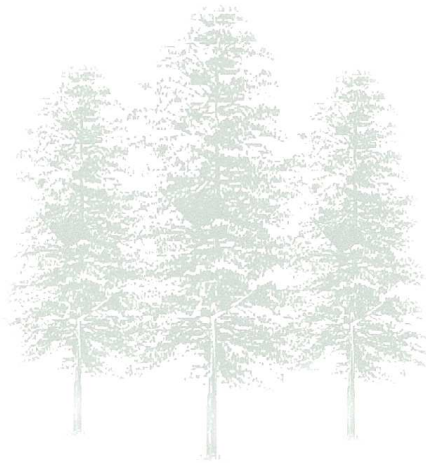


GIG HARBOR ACADEMY

SCHOOL HANDBOOK



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Gig Harbor Academy Parents,

Greetings. Welcome to Gig Harbor Academy. For over 30 years Gig Harbor Academy has been a leader in the tradition of educational excellence and community. The tradition now *continues* with you.

We have compiled this handbook to give full expression to our covenant with you as an educational community. As this handbook includes most of the general parameters of school life, it is important that you read through the entire booklet to familiarize yourself with its content. Information, rules, procedures, and the like are simply an attempt to help the community operate smoothly and fairly, allowing for freedom and grace within these boundaries to be expressed and enjoyed. Although the school has prepared this handbook with careful thought and planning, additional issues and concerns are likely to arise during the school year. We will communicate to you clearly and quickly if this happens.

In all that we do your child is our main focus. I look forward to partnering with you as we provide the best learning environment for your child to learn and to grow. In that spirit please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything that I can do. I look forward to seeing you on campus.

Best Regards,

Vince Fragasso
Head of School

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Vision/Mission/Philosophy

Vision for Gig Harbor Academy Students

In our vision for children of the 21st century, character and academic achievement meld. Cooperation, empathy, respectful interaction, perseverance, healthy risk taking, and self-direction foster individual and community growth. These are attributes that have symbiotic relationships with strong academic achievement. Our priority is in developing the multiple dimensions of childhood, which includes strong academic achievement, by focusing on the intellectual, social, emotional, creative, ethical and physical life and needs of children. Our goal is for children to become active participants in their learning.

Mission of Gig Harbor Academy

Gig Harbor Academy strives to instill academic excellence by challenging each student intellectually, creatively and physically in a respectful and caring environment. The GHA mission statement, posted throughout campus, highlights our purpose each day with our students. Beyond providing a challenging curriculum, we strive to teach our students GHA core values: stewardship, community and critical thinking:

- Community: Our students work with “buddies” in various grades to encourage a strong school community.
- Stewardship: Every GHA student is taught to be respectful of themselves and others as it applies to their classroom, campus, home, community and environment.
- Critical thinking: Students are given a variety of opportunities both during and after school to use their education to solve “real-world” problems. Logic and critical thinking skills are taught in the classroom to encourage students to think independently and proactively as they address everyday “problems”.

Philosophy that Delivers on the Mission

Central to our philosophy of education is the belief that formal education provides the frameworks for developing the academic and intellectual prowess and the social and emotional skills necessary for becoming independent thinkers, who can apply their knowledge to both practical and novel situations. For this to happen, it is essential that children feel safe, respected, valued for their individual learning styles and their stage of development. Within that context, children benefit from high expectations and challenges, personal goal-setting practices, and learning through exploration, direct instruction and play. A goal-oriented partnership between family and school is essential. Family support and involvement, both at home and at school, are crucial for the success of each child, as well as the classroom community.

Curriculum that Delivers on the Mission

- The emphasis is on the process, as well as the product.
- Teaching is thematic and integrated, creating connections between disciplines.
- Students have opportunities for choice in the content of their learning.
- Skills are learned in meaningful context
- Social Responsibility Curriculum: For students to gain a full sense of what it means to be human, they must have opportunities to develop a sense of social responsibility. At Gig Harbor Academy, students will learn that giving to their community is part of a life-long commitment to building relationships. They learn that expanding intellectual abilities is not the sole objective of schooling and learning. The scope of education also encompasses teaching students to use their developing gifts, not only for themselves, but also for the benefit of others. Curriculum at all Grade levels focuses on teaching children about the dynamics of community relationships and responsibilities.

Thinking Skills and Attributes of a Successful Learner

The development of specific behaviors and cognitive strategies, including meta-cognition, address standards that foster the purposeful pursuit of life-enriching experiences. This is the ultimate standard to pursue.

- Thinking skills are the cognitive processing and application skills that we want students to exercise, as they develop throughout their elementary school education. The development of these skills is uniquely paced to a child's personal aptitude and the degree to which a child applies him/herself to the task. Teachers are vigilant about leading children through that development as soon as they are ready. The categories for these skills can be summarized as:

Goal Setting, Problem-Solving, Comparing and Contrasting, Classifying, Sequencing, Predicting, Main Idea, Summarizing, Cause and Effect, Fact and Opinion, Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation and Critical Thinking.

- "Attributes of a Successful Learner" reflect behavioral, social and/or learning characteristics that, when applied purposefully, impact the rate and quality of academic growth. The behaviors and characteristics of strongest impact are:

Attending, Deliberateness, Elaboration, Empathy, Flexibility, Fluency, Willingness to Participate, Precision, Originality, Inquisitiveness, and Persistence

Organization and Affiliations of the School

Board of Trustees

The school and child-care center are both incorporated as one non-profit 501(c) (3) corporation. It is governed, according to current By-Laws, by a 5-9 member Board of Trustees composed of parents and members of the community. There are two annual meetings. At the first Bi-Annual Meeting, in October, the annual financial report is presented. Trustees are elected at the second Bi-Annual Membership Meeting held each year in May. Board officers are: president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Committees are headed by Board members or others appointed by the trustees. Each trustee is elected for a 3-year term. Board meetings are held monthly except for December and July. The body of constituents that elects the trustees consists of parents of children currently enrolled in the school, faculty and staff, with only the Head of School abstaining.

School Family Network (SFN)

The SFN aids parents in becoming more involved with the school and their child's education. SFN is a relaxed and informal gathering of parents, with duplicate meetings held the same day, one in the morning and one in the evening. The network is headed by parent volunteers who meet regularly to plan and organize the following:

- Family events for the school community, such as Bowling Night, Pumpkin Carve Night, Gig Harbor Academy night at the Tacoma Rainier's, etc.
- Organize volunteers for special events or projects, such as the Maritime Parade Float, The Spring Art & Music Festival, and Teacher Appreciation Week
- Plan and implement weekly hot lunch program for the students
- Mentor new Gig Harbor Academy families.

These are several of SFN's major support projects, with new ideas, projects and suggestions always being sought. All parents are encouraged to become involved in SFN in whatever area interests them and to the degree to which they are comfortable.

Educational Affiliations

Gig Harbor Academy is a member of the Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools (PNAIS). PNAIS promotes high educational quality for its member schools, through the establishment and advancement of comprehensive accreditation standards. PNAIS standards foster collegial and ethical relations within and among PNAIS schools and work to safeguard and represent these standards. Gig Harbor Academy is also licensed by the Washington State Department of Education.

Non-discrimination Policy

Gig Harbor Academy admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities available at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, financial assistance, and any other school administered programs.

Parking and Student Drop-off/Pick-up

General Carpool and Parking Procedures

Traffic flows in and out of campus in one direction, with a U-turn permitted in the center of campus.

▪ **Parking Zones**

There are two parking areas...

- Staff parking is located to the right of the 3rd-5th Grade building and behind the 1st-2nd Grade building. Do not cross over the yellow drop zone to park there; students recognize this striping to indicate “a safe walking zone.”
- Parent parking is on the crushed gravel lot area surrounding the pump house buildings and in marked stalls on the paved areas.

▪ **No Parking Zones**

Parking cannot be permitted:

- Along the driveway entering or leaving school.
- 15 feet before or after the water tower by order of the Pierce County Fire Marshall.
- Anywhere along the yellow student drop zones **Safety**.
- Please, do not allow children to run across the parking lot at any time.
- Observe the speed limit of 5 mph.
- Do not leave children unattended in cars.

▪ **Drop Off Zones:**

- There are two stopping points in the drop-off areas: one is in front of the 1st-2nd building and the other is in front of the 3rd-5th building.
- Parents dropping their 1st-5th Grade children will form one line, adjacent to the yellow safety striping, stopping at the appropriate drop-off point.
- Once you drop your child off, please stay in the carpool lane, pull forward along the yellow safety striping and yield to the thru traffic before making a U-turn to exit or to pull right into the pump house lot to park.
- Unless directed by staff, please do not pull out of the drop zone to get around cars ahead of you. This will disrupt the flow of cars driving through the lot to park and may create a safety hazard.
- When using the drop-off areas, please do not get out of your car to drop your child off; remain behind the wheel.
- For their safety, please have students exit the vehicle on the building side (or the right side of the car) of the drop off areas.

▪ **Parents of 1st-5th Grade students:**

- If you do park to take your child to the classroom, please keep an eye on the time. Preschool and Kindergarten parents begin arriving around 8:50am. A majority of the parking lot and driveway congestion can be alleviated if parents of 1st-5th Grade children have cleared the lot by then.

- **Parents of Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, and Kindergarten students:**
 - Please do not arrive before 8:50am in order to allow elementary parents time to vacate the parking area.
 - Classroom doors do not open until 9:00am for AM Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, and Kindergarten. For PM Preschool, classroom doors do not open until 12:30pm.
 - We ask that all students in this age group be walked to and picked up from their classrooms.
 - With afternoon pick-ups, please keep an eye on the time. Much of the 1st-5th Grade parking and driveway congestion can be alleviated if early Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten parents have cleared the lot by 3:10pm.

Late Pickup

Students who are waiting to be picked up more than 15 minutes after dismissal time will be walked to the Child Care Center and should be picked-up there. The drop-in child care rate is \$9.00 per hour / per child. Please contact the Child Care Director, Rose Brown, at 265-8773 for more information.

Restrictions on Picking up a Child

Students will be released only to adults authorized on the student profile form, unless prior written permission is given by the parent/guardian. A staff member may ask for verification of identity from the second party, if they are not known to them. Please do not rely on the telephone for such permission, especially in the event of an emergency.

Student Community Guidelines

Discipline

At the beginning of the school year, teachers will go over their classroom expectations. Consequences for unproductive or disruptive behaviors are designed to help the child learn more acceptable behaviors—not for the purpose of punishment. However, there are times when loss of privileges is a fitting consequence.

Faculty and the Head of School work together to ensure classroom discipline policies fit the general mission and spirit of the school. Routine daily discipline is the responsibility of the classroom teacher and/or specialist. Early intervention and redirection along with positive reinforcement is the preferred method of classroom management. When “missteps” do occur, additional school service projects may be assigned that help the student “give back” to the community.

General Guidelines for Good School Citizenship

- Students are asked to:
 - ✓ Behave throughout the campus in a manner that does not disrupt or interfere with the rights of other students to enjoy school, learn and grow.
 - ✓ Treat others (students and staff) with respect.
 - ✓ Take responsibility for their actions.

- ✓ Come to school with an attitude of cooperation.
- Parents are asked to:
 - ✓ Support the staff in matters related to school and classroom attitudes and behavior.
 - ✓ Become active partners in the discipline process.
 - ✓ There may be times when student behavior requires the intervention by the Head of School. In such instances, the Head of School will determine the disciplinary measures. First measures may result in no more than a simple, but direct, conversation with the student. Other matters may require that parents be notified; sometimes a student may be removed from the classroom for the remainder of the day. Depending on the severity of behavior, suspension may be required. Students can be given in-school or out-of-school suspensions. This means that the student will be removed from their normal learning environments to complete all class work that can be addressed outside of the classroom.

Students who are suspended must complete their class work for the time missed and have it ready to be turned in the day they return to class. Before returning to the classroom after a suspension, the student and his/her parents will need to meet with the Head of School. Reconciliation must be evident as a condition of the student's return, along with restitution being made (if applicable). The intent of all consequences will be to create a healthy school environment for all students, including the child returning.

The following behaviors are deemed particularly counterproductive to the school's mission and harmful to the well-being of the student community:

- Physical and verbal aggression
- Bullying behaviors
- Cheating, lying or stealing
- Defiant attitude, disrespect or disobedience
- Sexual harassment

Playground Rules

The playground can be a challenging place for students to remember rules and expectations. In the midst of activities and a release of energy, it can be difficult to remember to play fair, share, and treat others with kindness and respect. Certain cornerstone rules act as guidelines for our students. These guidelines help students better understand specific rules that students are generally required for them to follow. Please discuss these rules/guidelines with your child; they are established to help maintain a safe environment:

- Use the playground equipment safely and as it was intended to be used.
- Objects must not be thrown, unless expressly designed for that purpose.
- Stay in sight of a playground supervisor at all times.
- Stay in the boundaries that are set for recess.
- Fences must not be climbed.
- Pushing, pulling, grabbing, holding, or tackling games often end in misunderstandings and/or injuries. They can not be played at school. Tag games can sometimes cause hurt feelings or minor injuries. We emphasize that tag games should be played without using excessive force and without touching of the face or head.

General Expectations Anywhere on Campus

- Treat the buildings, equipment, and all the property with care.
- Walk inside the buildings and on sidewalks.
- Do not bring food or beverages on the playground unless it is a special occasion.
- Honor playground rules at all times.
- Remain in the central campus area at all times – do not go up the driveway toward the road or into the wooded areas without teacher, staff or parent supervision.
- Respect other students and adults at all times

Student Attire

Drawing attention to oneself through clothing can be fun and even developmentally appropriate; it can also become a distracting influence. While in school, we want children to understand that attention needs to be placed on learning. Here are some general guidelines:

Clothing must be neat, clean, without holes, and modest. Shoes, sandals or flip flops must be worn at all times. Even though sandals and flip flops are permitted, they are discouraged for safety reasons. Only tennis or sports shoes and socks are allowed for PE. No oversized, overly snug, or revealing clothing is permitted. Shorts are allowed, but should be long enough to be modest. Lewd or vulgar printing or designs on any article of clothing is not acceptable. Please make sure your child has a coat and/or gloves/boots for inclement weather conditions. In short, clothing should be functional.

- Should problems occur with clothing, parents will be contacted to bring different clothing. If that is not possible, school clothing, if available, will be loaned to the child to wear for the day.
- For younger students, particularly in Preschool through Kindergarten, we require you to leave a change of clothing in case their daily wear becomes muddy or too wet to wear in class.
- Please mark your child's backpacks, lunch boxes, and clothing/outdoor apparel clearly. Lost and found clothing is returned to the school office. Any clothing not claimed by the end of each grading period is donated to a local charity.

Solving Problems

We recognize that from time to time there may be an occasion when a parent may wish to address a particular concern over a student's academic progress, a classroom situation or incident, a discipline issue, etc. If such a situation arises, the following general procedures serve productive communication:

- 1) Meet with the teacher or staff member who has firsthand information about the matter. Keep the information confidential and the "circle of knowledge" limited to the parties who can bring resolution to the matter. All teachers and staff members at Gig Harbor Academy are genuinely interested in assisting parents with their concerns.
- 2) If the conference between parent and teacher/staff member does not result in a solution, then the parent and the teacher should agree to share the problem with the Head of School. The three parties will meet to discuss the matter and work together to find a mutually agreeable resolution.
- 3) The Board of Trustees is also available for guidance, should parents, teacher, and the Head of School be unable to reach a satisfactory solution.

- The parents may request to present the matter to the Board of Trustees. That request should be made in writing and sent to the Head of School. The request should clearly set forth the issues, a brief summary of prior conversations with school personnel, and include a desired outcome. The Board may refuse to hear the matter if the appropriate steps for resolution have not been taken.
- The Board of Trustees will inform the parents of the date, time, and place where the matter of concern may be presented. The goal at that meeting will be to a) gain a clear understanding of the problem; b) gain a solution to the problem; and c) achieve mutual reconciliation among all parties directly concerned.

Parent/Child Conversation

We ask that parents of all students go over the matters related to community behaviors during the first week of school. It is best to focus on what works, rather than what doesn't. The behaviors listed below are most influential in helping a child succeed in school and make friends. Parents who are unsure how to interpret the guidelines found in this manual should feel welcome to meet with teachers and the Head of School for clarification.

Student behaviors and attitudes that lead to success in school are:

- 1) An attitude of respect and a willingness to learn.
- 2) Being courteous, kind, and cooperative in their attitude, language, and actions.
- 3) Refraining from use of profane language; learning what bullying means and choosing not to do it.
- 4) Abiding by the expectations of the school as presented in this handbook and those presented by the teachers.

Parental roles that lead to student success are:

- 1) Support the expectations and responsibilities as outlined in this Gig Harbor Academy Parent Handbook.
- 2) Support the school personnel by participating as much as possible in school activities and volunteering opportunities.
- 3) Maintain child-centered communications between teachers, other parents, and school administrator.
- 4) Understand and support the homework expectations in your child's classroom.
- 5) Follow the steps outlined in this handbook for Solving Problems. (see page 11)
- 6) Share with your child your support of the community expectations at Gig Harbor Academy.

Parent Volunteers

Gig Harbor Academy faculty and staff feel strongly that it truly does “take a village” to not only raise, but to educate a child. Research has shown that students achieve better and have more confidence in their own abilities if their parents are actively involved in their education. Parent volunteers also help keep school costs down - thank you very much!

Over the summer, a parent survey is mailed home to help match our parents’ talents and interests with the school’s need for volunteers. These surveys are compiled by the office and become the source of information for teachers, staff, SFN, and Board committee chairs to use as they look for support.

The following “job descriptions” are intended to give you an overview of the type and scope of volunteer opportunities. Additional suggestions and/or ideas for volunteer activities are always welcome and should be brought to the Head of School’s attention.

Back-to-School Potluck Picnic Coordinator

Work with the Head of School to organize and implement the annual Back-To-School Picnic in September.

Scholastic Book Fair Chairperson

The Chairperson coordinates two book fairs each year (September and May).

- Schedule Book Fairs (5 days of fair and 1 “family” event).
- Post a sign up sheet for volunteers in the office (morning and afternoon schedules).
- Distribute wish list flyers to teachers.
- Get cash and change for cash register.
- Set up: One day before fair, display books on tables and fold out shelves in the library. This allows students and teacher’s time to fill out their wish lists.
- Set up 30 minutes before fair each day and be available each day of the fair.
- Take down the fair.
- Totals sales and completes Scholastic earnings worksheets.
- Count cash/coins with Business Manager.

Scholastic Book Fair Helpers

Book Fair helpers work in two-hour shifts and will perform some, but not all, of the following duties:

- Run the cash register
- Keep displays presentable
- Restock if needed
- Help with set up or take down

School Family Network Classroom Representatives (work with Head of School)

Increase communication, build cohesion, and promote feeling of inclusion within school community. Organize and implement the following:

- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Hot Lunch Committee
- Family Fun Events
- Mentorship Program
- Annual Parade
- Community Service Projects
- Art & Music Festival

Library Coordinators

- Input new books into system via computer
- Label and organize books

Classroom Library Representative

- Bring class to library
- Check-In and Check-Out books for each student
- Plan with teacher a library activity, such as reading a book to the class that relates to what the class is currently learning
- Walk students back to class

Archivist

- Collect articles about the school from various publications.
- Organize and collect the various forms and/or documents (such as the Strategic Plan) put in place by the Board of Trustees for future reference.
- Research school history to collect information about the many “missing” years in the school’s records.

Board of Trustees Committees

All committees are headed up by a Board trustee and volunteers for each committee are always needed. If you are interested in serving on any of these committees, please contact the main office; you will be put in contact with the chairperson.

▪ Building and Grounds Committee

Volunteers are needed at various times throughout the year for a wide variety of projects. They can cover minor building repair, minor electrical or plumbing issues, or simply help pull weeds from the flower beds.

▪ Personnel Committee

Volunteers with a background in wages, benefit packages, or contract work are an asset to this committee, but previous experience is not necessary. This committee checks for staff salaries and benefits in surrounding public school districts and comparable independent schools to suggest staff salaries to the Board. The Board’s goal is to keep staff salaries competitive with other schools in order to keep and attract the best staff possible.

- **Development**

Development activities currently consist of:

- Annual Fund (Year round program)
- Auction (March)

- **Other Committees and Task Forces**

Various committees or task forces are formed by the Board as needed throughout the year. These shorter term task force projects will be announced in the *The Bridge* or through other Board announcements.

Health, Safety, and Emergency Information

Student Illness

The health of all students at Gig Harbor Academy depends upon each family acting responsibly. Following these general guidelines will help protect not only your child, but also all the children in our school community.

Please keep your child home if:

- ✓ There are signs of a cold or rash
- ✓ There have been vomiting episodes within the previous 24 hours before school
- ✓ Your child is experiencing diarrhea
- ✓ Your child is experiencing a feverous condition; *please keep your child home 24 hours after running a fever*
- ✓ Your child has pink eye or an eye discharge
- ✓ Your child has a sore throat, mucous-producing cough, or nasal discharge

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten Considerations

Since colds and childhood diseases are most infectious before symptoms appear, it is wise to keep particularly young children home if they are extremely irritable or if you notice unusual lethargy; either may be the precursor to an illness. If your child does contract a contagious disease (i.e. measles, chicken pox, etc.), please contact the school office, so that parents of other children, who may have been exposed, can be notified of possible infection.

When students become ill at school, parents will be called to take the student home. If the parents cannot be reached, the emergency contacts on the student profile form will be contacted. If it is not possible for anyone to come get the child from school, he/she will remain in the school office area until a parent or authorized individual arrives to take them home.

Please reinforce to your child the need to notify a teacher immediately if he/she feels ill or is hurt. This is essential if the proper care is to be given. If a child is seriously ill or injured, the school will first call 911. The school will next attempt to notify the student's parents or emergency contacts listed on the Student Profile.

Medication Guidelines

While it is best if student medication can be administered at home, we realize that there are situations when a student's medicine must be taken during the school day. If your child has a medical need that requires medication to be administered at school, please follow these guidelines:

- All medications (prescription and non-prescription) must be brought directly to the school office by the parent and in the **original container**. The State of Washington Department of Health guidelines stress that a doctor's prescription or a Medical Society Physician's Orders for Medication at School Form must be turned in with the medication. The prescription label must be on the medicine container, detailing the dosage, duration, and method of administration and must match what is indicated on the prescription.
- **Do not put your child's medication in a backpack for transport to school or in your child's classroom cubby.**
- The school has the right to decline administering any medications or procedures that appear to be beyond the ability of unlicensed personnel.
- The school will record each administration of medication on a Medication Administration Log Sheet at the time of its administration by the individual who gave the medication.
- A Parent's Instructions for Medications Form must be on file in the office for administering medication. The form is available through the front office.
- Only the office staff may administer medication – unless it is an emergency situation (i.e. allergic reaction injections, asthma medication, etc.)
- At the end of each school year, parents must pick up unused medication or it will be thrown away.

We ask the parents of children with any type of allergic condition to notify the classroom teacher and the school office—in writing and verbally. Specify if the condition/reaction can be triggered by physical activities (such as in PE.), so that teachers and staff can be made aware of your child's needs. It is also recommended that if an allergic reaction is to be treated with medication, such as an Epi-pen, two such medications be brought to school – one for the classroom and one for the school office. That way medication can be easily available both in class and during recess or PE.

School Closure

- When inclement weather threatens and you are at a phone number other than those you have listed with the school office, please contact the office immediately and tell us where you may be reached.
- If a storm develops during the school day, plan to pick up your child early to avoid potential problems. Although early dismissal is unusual, we do encourage you to anticipate the local situation and do what is best for you, your child, and/or your child's carpool.

School Closure Announcements

It is the schools intent to make a school closure decision in a timely manner. Ideally, families will be informed by 8pm the night before or no sooner than 6:30am the morning of a closure.

In general, the Academy follows the Peninsula School district (PSD) closures. However, some circumstances may apply to PSD that do not pertain to Gig Harbor Academy, so it is best to check closure information first. If you have internet access, check for school closure information at www.schoolreport.org. Click on the link to *Private Schools* on the right side of the screen and then click on *Gig Harbor Academy/Our School*. Once a message is posted on this web site, it immediately goes out to all local television and radio stations in the Seattle area. Look for the closure messages across the bottom of the television screen. You may want to register in advance at this site to save time later.

While there may be occasional computer glitches to the PSECS system, it is the most reliable source of school closure information other than contacting the school directly. If you choose to contact the school directly, please understand that the weather conditions causing the school to close will also make it unsafe for the school staff to be out on the roads. *Additionally, GHA staff members and SFN class reps will use a phone tree system to contact families.*

And as safety is always a priority, we realize that weather and road conditions in your area may be different than at school and encourage you not to make the drive to campus if you feel it is unsafe even if school is open.

Emergency Plan

Students and staff practice fire drills and earthquake drills throughout the school year. Fire drills are conducted monthly; earthquake drills are conducted twice a year. The teachers conduct informal earthquake drills in their class, practicing beforehand until the children feel comfortable and sure of their role during an actual earthquake.

Each student is required to bring an emergency kit to school. A note describing what should go into the kit was sent home in the summer packet. We ask families to return the kits to the classroom teacher as soon as possible. These kits are stored in a separate storage site on campus where they will be available should an actual emergency arise.

Classroom Information

School Hours

Office Hours	8:00 am - 4:00pm	(Monday - Friday)
Grades 1-5	8:45 am - 3:15 pm	(Monday - Friday)
Early Childhood		
T/TH Morning Preschool	9:00 am - 11:30 am	
T/Th Afternoon Preschool	12:30 pm - 3:00 pm	
M/W/F Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten	9:00 am - 3:00 pm	(Monday - Friday)

Curriculum

The Gig Harbor Academy curriculum emphasizes meaningful and personally relevant learning, thus using actual literature selections for the reading program, rather than a text book series with artificially created reading selections. The classic subjects of reading, writing, spelling, grammar (*language arts*), math, science, health, social studies, and geography are taught by the regular classroom teachers. Specialists teach the additional subject areas of fitness, art, music, technology and Spanish. Each grade level has specific content and skill goals that serve as the frameworks for instruction.

Homework

Homework is an important part of the school program in Grades 1-5. Students learn the value and importance of personal responsibility, which includes goal setting and self-directed behaviors. Homework assignments are effective in providing needed extra practice or for special projects.

Classroom teachers will explain their homework plan at the Parent Orientation Night. It is intended that homework to be completed with little or no additional assistance from parents. If at any time during the year you and your child are finding the homework consistently frustrating or taking considerably longer to complete than expected, contact the classroom teacher. General time frames have been planned for each grade level:

1 st Grade:	15-20 min. per night
2 nd Grade:	25-30 min. per night
3 rd Grade:	30-40 min. per night
4 th Grade:	40-50 min. per night
5 th Grade:	50-60 min. per night

Attendance

Regular attendance is important for student success. If your child is going to be absent, a phone call needs to be made to the school office by 8:40 am. If you know in advance that your child will miss school (doctor/dentist appointments, etc.), please notify your classroom teacher as early as possible.

Tardiness

It is important for students to have a smooth start to their school day. Being in the classroom on time allows them to prepare for their day. Arriving late not only disrupts or delays instruction time; it also makes it more difficult for the child to smoothly transition into the school day. The classroom teacher and the administrator may request a conference to determine the reason(s) for excessive tardiness. Students are “officially” tardy 10 minutes after class starts. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late must be accompanied by the parent to the office to sign in and obtain an admission slip.

Early Release

Parents of students who need to leave school early must give the teacher written notice before school. A parent must sign the early release sheet in the office when picking up their child. Students are not counted absent for medical or dental appointment if they are in attendance at least half the day (3 hours).

If children must be picked up before school is out, please:

- make arrangements with the teacher and the office
- park your car in the lot, not in front of the classroom
- go to the classroom to pick up your child

Family Vacations

School is much more than simply completing assignments. While some of the daily work done in the classroom can be “made up,” much is lost by students who miss the discussions, experiments, and group activities. Every effort should be made to schedule family vacations during the school holidays. Teachers are not expected to send work with the student on vacation – the work must be made up when the student returns.

Make-up Work

After being absent, a student may be required to complete make-up work. Teachers will do their best to provide extra assistance to a student who is absent because of a family emergency and/or illness. However, given that much classroom work is collaborative and project oriented, it is not always possible to provide makeup work.

Snacks and Lunches

Students are encouraged to bring a nutritious snack to be eaten in class during an appointed snack time. All students are to bring complete lunches from home, including beverages, along

with the utensils and paper goods necessary. Refrigerators are not available in most classrooms for student lunches. Microwaves are available for reheating foods that require no more than a minute and a half heating time. In the interest of time, we ask that students do not bring foods that require longer periods of heating time. When several students need something reheated, the process takes longer than there is time for; children do not end up with enough time to finish their meals.

Supplies

With the exception of a computer memory stick, all school supplies are provided by the school. Students only need to bring their own backpack and lunch box. From time to time during the year, teachers may request particular small items for special events or projects. Every attempt is made to keep those requests at a minimum.

Personal Mail

Only official school mail may go home from the classrooms and in school folders. Personal communication between families must take place through conventional means: such as telephone and Postal Service. The reason for this is that families come to expect information coming home from school to be school sponsored, and personal communication can and does cause confusion.

Classroom Parties and Birthdays

Classroom parties are at the teacher's discretion and kept to a minimum. Teachers will inform parents of seasonal parties to be held during the Parent Orientation Night. The class SFN representative will contact parents if assistance is needed in preparing for the party. Other class celebrations for rewards, etc. may also be held. Information about these will be given with sufficient advance notice, usually in the weekly class newsletter.

If parents wish to bring or send a special treat for the class on their child's birthday, please speak with the teacher in advance. (Please take into consideration those students who may have various food allergies when bringing any treats for your child's class.) **All party invitations/thank yours should be mailed from home - not placed in cubbies.**

Items from Home

We ask that your child's toys remain at home, except for scheduled sharing times and other times authorized by your child's teacher. Check with the teacher for guidelines. Any items brought from home are your child's responsibility. Toys associated with violence, including toy guns and toy knives, are to be kept at home, as should toys and novelty gags of questionable taste.

Volunteering in the Classroom

Volunteering in your child's classroom is encouraged and welcome. This may take many different forms from teacher to teacher and from grade level to grade level. However, it is distracting for students to have siblings in the classroom during instruction times. **Therefore, we ask that parents make other arrangements for siblings when volunteering their time in the classroom or on field trips.** There are some field trips, however, that are considered family field trips, and the whole family is welcome at these times (see "Field Trips" under Communication Between Home and School).

All parents are welcome to visit the classrooms and are asked to speak directly to the teacher or contact the school office to schedule such a visit in advance.

Communication between School and Home

Classroom e-mail addresses

During the school day, phone messages will be taken for teachers and delivered as soon as possible so as not to interrupt important instruction time or you are welcome to leave a message on the teacher's voice mailbox. E-mail is also available for each classroom teacher. You can expect a response to your e-mails within 48 hours. Please refer to your faculty/staff email page for appropriate email address.

Weekly Newsletter

The school's newsletter comes out weekly via email. It is designed to provide families with a glimpse of school activities on the immediate horizon. It often contains information that is relevant to a broad range of student and family needs. Information about fundraising, school events and SFN activities usually populate this newsletter.

Classroom Weekly Letters

The classroom newsletter contains work that has been covered during the week, the next week's calendar and important information about upcoming events. Your teachers will tell you their procedures during orientation.

Progress Reports

Report cards are issued three times during the year in Grades K-5. The first trimester report cards will be given to parents during the November Parent/Teacher conferences. Second Trimester reports are also given at the Parent/Teacher conference that is held in March. For Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten, progress reports are given at Parent/Teacher conferences held in February. End-of-the-year progress reports are mailed to parents approximately one week after school dismisses.

Progress reporting is done on a scale from 1-4:

- 4 – Exceeds Standards
- 3 – Meets Standards
- 2 – More practice is recommended
- 1 – Attention is requested

The above numbers do not equate to the standard letter grades (i.e. 4 does not equal an “A”). They indicate how the student is working relative to curriculum standards.

Grades for Art, Music, Spanish, PE, and Technology are given by the specialists. Should there be questions or concerns in those areas, please contact the appropriate specialist teacher. The classroom teacher will be able to elaborate on grades in all other areas.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent Conferences are held twice a year—November and March. School is closed on a Friday and the following Monday both times of the year for these conferences. Sign-up sheets are posted on or near each classroom door so that parents can schedule times that are most convenient for their schedules. Each grade level’s completed sign-up sheet is also given to the school office. If you will be unable to make the scheduled meeting, please contact the office or your teacher to reschedule.

Standardized Testing

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is administered to grades 1-5 in the spring. Assessment results provide the administration and faculty with additional information for monitoring and reviewing curricular and instructional programs. Reports giving individual student information will be mailed home with the last progress report at the end of the school year.

Alcohol Policy

Alcohol Policy

The use of alcohol by any GHA employee or parent is not permitted at any GHA school event that takes place on campus at any time or at any GHA sponsored event off campus where children may be present.

Field Trips and Driving Abstract Policy

Field Trips

Field trips are an integral part of the school's academic program. The number and type of field trips taken varies by grade level, but all trips relate to areas being studied in the classroom. Parents are our main source for transportation on field trips. As supervisors on field trips, parents are asked to carry out these responsibilities:

- Before the day of the field trip, be sure your driver's license, abstract and proof of insurance are on file in the school office.
- If you have a cell phone, give the number to the classroom teacher. She/he will turn that list in to the office before departing from school, so that you are able to be contacted should the need arise.
- Please honor the car assignments set-up by the teacher. These arrangements are carefully and thoughtfully planned out, at times for very specific reasons.
- Be sure that students are securely fastened in their car seats (if applicable) with seat belts at all times in the vehicle.
- During the field trip, the teacher may have specific questions to be asked or details to be researched. Please help the students in your group to accomplish their learning goals for the trip.
- ***Students need 100% of supervisors' attention 100% of the time. It is easy to become involved in conversations with the other parents during a field trip. We ask that all parents keep the students at the center of their attention at all times.***
- Students, parents, and teachers leave a lasting impression of Gig Harbor Academy wherever they go on field trips. Please help everyone make that impression a good one.
- Please respect the teacher's wishes when it comes to buying treats or souvenirs, stopping on the way back to school, etc. This will avoid possible student confusion or distress.
- Contact the school immediately if you become lost or delayed in traffic so that the teacher and parents of students in your vehicle can be informed of the situation.
- No pets on field trips unless otherwise specified.
- Some field trips are designated as "Family Field Trips". Unless designated as such, siblings or other relatives and friends are not able to accompany the class on field trips.

The school maintains a driving policy (below) for fieldtrips that requires parents to get a Washington State Patrol Traffic Abstract.

Policy for Driving Students on School Field Trips

Parents volunteering to drive on Gig Harbor Academy field trips are asked to submit a traffic abstract to the administration. This must be done even if a parent will be driving only his/her own child. This abstract needs to be submitted anew each school year. Please see your teacher or the front office to get a form for securing an abstract.

Requesting abstracts is by no means an exhaustive approach to ensuring safety. It does, however, provide one measure that helps families and faculty feel that children are being properly cared for while in vehicles.

Driving behaviors that often come to light through an abstract and that warrant school concern are:

- Driving under the influence
- Reckless driving
- Repeated or excessive speeding
- Accidents in which driver was cited
- Improperly maintained vehicle
- Failure to use seatbelts or child seats

The Head of School alone will make the determination about the eligibility to drive on a field trip. Parents will be informed of the decision by mail. However, if there is a concern, parents will be contacted by phone first to learn of any circumstances that might influence the decision. As with all school policies, the administration is available to discuss the rationale leading to the Driver Abstract policy.

Fitness at Gig Harbor Academy

Fitness participation is required of all students in Pre-K-5th Grade. Exercise and awareness of healthy behaviors play a critical role in a child's ability to fully benefit from school. Fitness classes are held outside, unless there is a steady rain. If raining, classes will be modified and held indoors. The PE teacher or the Head of School will determine indoor or outdoor class according to the weather conditions at the time. Due to the often wet outdoor conditions of the Pacific Northwest, it is highly possible that students may get mud or water splashed on their clothing during Fitness activities. Parents may wish to send a change of clothing to keep at school during the winter months, just in case unavoidable mishaps with mud and/or puddles occur.

All students are requested to dress appropriately for extensive physical activity on their scheduled Fitness days. No open toed sandals, flip flops or platform style shoes are allowed for class. Students should wear tennis or sports shoes (no cleats). Students wearing shoes that are inappropriate will be asked to sit out.

Re-enrollment, Financial Aid, and Early Withdrawal

Re-enrollment

Current families are mailed re-enrollment contracts the first week in February. Contracts are due, **(along with the 10% deposit)** to hold your child's spot in class by the **last business day in February**. Beginning March 1st, new applicants will be considered according to class space availability.

Financial Aid

We realize that funding a private education is a choice and that family resources for this choice vary from year to year. There may be times when it is difficult for families to absorb the full cost of tuition. When such times occur, Gig Harbor Academy's financial aid program may be able to provide the assistance needed.

To apply for financial aid, request a financial aid packet from the Admissions office in January before re-enrollment time in February. Policy and procedures having to do with financial aid can be found in the Financial Aid brochure located in the main office.

Requests for financial assistance are considered on a year to year basis. All applicants will be notified by the end of April concerning their application. The school must receive notification that the assistance will be accepted or declined within two weeks so that further considerations can be made.

LATE ENTRY/WITHDRAWALS

A student entering the school after the first day of instruction will be subject to tuition in **Schedule A**. When a student is withdrawn or is dismissed from the school during the school year, or when the Enrollment Contract is cancelled by the parents before the start of the school year, it is extremely difficult to determine the amount of damage that the cancellation, withdrawal or dismissal will cause to Gig Harbor Academy. It is therefore agreed that the percentages of tuition specified in **Schedule B**, below, represent a reasonable estimate of the damage that will be experienced by Gig Harbor Academy in the event of cancellation, withdrawal or dismissal at the dates indicated below. The parents therefore agree to pay the tuition percentage indicated in **Schedule B** in the event of early withdrawal or dismissal.

Month entering or withdrawing	Schedule A	Schedule B
	% Charge to Enter	% Charge to Withdraw
September 1-30	100%	35%
October 1-31	90%	40%
November 1-30	80%	50%
December 1-31	70%	60%
January 1-31	60%	80%
February 1-28(29)	50%	100%
March 1-31	40%	100%
April 1-30	30%	100%
May 1-31	20%	100%

Giving

Donations

Donations of almost any kind are always welcome. Donations of materials or equipment must be in keeping with the school's mission and programs. Monetary donations are also welcome and may be designated for particular projects, equipment, etc. that the school needs. Undesignated monetary donations will be used as determined by the school's administration and Board of Trustees.

Annual Fund

The Annual Giving Fund is money for the school's current-year operating expenses. Annual gifts make up the difference between what tuition covers and the actual cost of running the school. Such gifts are usually unrestricted (meaning that the donors allow the school to spend them on whatever it deems necessary) and almost never spent on items outside the operating budget.

We ask that families support the Annual Fund to whatever extent they are able. As the school grows each year, the annual fund plays an increasingly important role in providing for the school's increasing programs, activities and events.