



PARENT HANDBOOK

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GIG HARBOR ACADEMY VISION, MISSION & PHILOSOPHY

HANDBOOK PURPOSE

This handbook contains general information about school procedures and expectations. As a result, the information contained herein is intended as guideline only, not promises of specific treatment in specific situations.

ORGANIZATION

Gig Harbor Academy is incorporated as a non-profit 501(C)(3) corporation. An elected parent-run Board of Directors governs the school and each member is elected to serve a three-year term. A member may serve another three-year term, if reelected. Board meetings are open to the public and are held on the third Tuesday of each month. The Board has three main responsibilities:

- Fiduciary: concerning itself with the stewardship of tangible assets and ensuring the school is financially sustainable,
- Strategic: building a strategic partnership with the Head of School to develop long and short-range goals and plans,
- Generative: concerning itself with setting the future direction of GHA. The Board of Directors provides direction through planning, developing, and evaluating its policies.

The administrative staff at GHA consists of the Head of School, Director of Operations, Director of Admissions and Marketing, and the Business Manager. It is the responsibility of the administration to operationalize the strategic plan in the daily affairs of the school.

VISION STATEMENT

Empower every child through joyful discovery.

MISSION STATEMENT

Gig Harbor Academy cultivates an inclusive community that creates a child-centered learning environment. Academic excellence and compassionate, responsible citizenship anchor our approach to lifelong learning.

GHA's vision and mission reflects our school's unique character and traditions and powerfully states our ends, means, and values. In a mission driven school, such as GHA, the board makes its decisions in the context of the mission, framing difficult and major decisions by asking, "Does our mission dictate that we should do this?" Our vision and mission gives our entire community a clearer picture of what we value and provides us all with an essential overview of where we want to go and what we want to be.

The following explains why we selected the words we did. None of them were chosen lightly.

Vision: Empower every child through joyful discovery.

GHA's vision is our ultimate goal—where we hope to see ourselves in the future. If we could have our way, if we could impact EVERY child, this is what we would do. These are powerful words. Our vision is intrinsic to the nature of GHA that learning is *joyful*, we hear it in children's voices, their energy, and their enthusiasm coming to school each day. A lesson taught through discovery is a lesson remembered and this is the journey our teachers strive to take our children on each day.

GHA cultivates an inclusive community

GHA believes in cultivating an inclusive community by exposing students to an abundance of ideas, views, beliefs, customs, stories, and other individual and collective expressions. We believe that such expressions elicits an internal response, a spark of interest, that in turn motivates students to ask questions, pursue knowledge, and compare what is learned with established ideas. We do not teach children how to believe, we teach them how to think.

...that creates a child-centered learning environment.

At GHA children are at the center of learning and inquiry, with their questions and ideas at the heart of the curriculum. We believe that people of all ages are motivated to learn deeply and vigorously when their own questions drive their learning. GHA's smaller class size and the close interaction that ensues between student and teacher in this setting, is central to each child's development. Teachers make it a priority to fully understand each child and what they care about. In this environment, children are provided more individual academic support inspiring them to continuously improve. But more importantly, the teacher easily recognizes each child's strengths and weaknesses and adjusts instruction to push them beyond what they thought possible. GHA is more than classrooms, it is a community of dedicated, compassionate teachers, staff, and volunteers along with the natural surroundings that continue to teach us all.

Academic excellence and compassionate, responsible citizenship anchor our approach to lifelong learning.

GHA's focus has been and always will be on student achievement in the classroom. Our students are consistently challenged to develop the skills necessary to be inquisitive, reflective, caring, ethical, and contributing citizens to the community.

For children to be compassionate, we need to surround them with compassion and kindness. GHA is a nurturing, kind environment rich with acceptance, tolerance, and empathy. Compassion and kindness are not directly taught but are modeled by adults and are inherent in the positive relationships between and among all members of our community.

As children need to be taught how to read and write, so they must understand what it means to be a responsible citizen. It is only through guidance and modeling by caring adults that children learn to be honest and thoughtful, to stand up for their principles, to care about others, to act responsibly, and to make sound moral choices.

GHA, being an elementary school, sets the foundation for further learning. Our approach to teaching ensures that children learn the basics but we also provide opportunities for each child to become an independent learner who has the skills and habits associated with lifelong learning. Beginning in preschool, children are challenged to understand the connection to and implication of what they learn and are able to apply what they learn in new contexts. They are confident and competent learners who have the proficiencies to be successful in any educational situation they encounter in their future.

In Gig Harbor Academy's 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.

Educational Affiliations

Gig Harbor Academy is a member of the Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS). NWAIS assists schools in fulfilling their commitment to provide children a high-quality educational experience by offering extensive professional development for teachers, Board members, and administrators, a nationally recognized accreditation process, and a collegial network of independent schools within the northwest region. Gig Harbor Academy is currently a subscriber school to NWAIS. It is part of the current strategic plan, as set by the Board of Directors, to become an accredited member of NWAIS by 2018.

Gig Harbor Academy is approved by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in the state of Washington as a private school. Compliance with OSPI regulations requires all private schools to submit four reports annually in the following categories: Annual Private Education Approval, Weapons Report, Annual Private School Personnel and Enrollment Reports (P105B) and Private School Participation in Federal Programs. By filing these reports, Gig Harbor Academy is sanctioned by the State of Washington as an approved educational institution, meeting state guidelines and requirements. This sanction has no bearing on curricular requirements, state testing or standards.

Non-Discrimination & Disability

Gig Harbor Academy is an equal-opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, religion, ethnicity, marital status, pregnancy, physical disability, gender, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status and all other classes or characteristics protected under the laws of the State of Washington in employment or in the administration of its educational program, admissions policies, financial aid program, or other school-administered programs. Discrimination against any individual, employee or student, because of the presence or absence of any of these attributes will not be tolerated and will be grounds for dismissal. Any questions in regard to this policy should be directed to the Head of School.

Gig Harbor Academy will comply with all the non-discrimination provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), specifically prohibiting discrimination against qualified disabled applicants who may be able to meet the job descriptions posted for any available positions. The school will endeavor to provide "reasonable accommodations" for any employee or student that meets the criteria of the job description/requirements for admission and is not an undue hardship on the school.

PARENT & STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Developing Responsible Behavior

Rather than have a discipline policy, GHA builds positive relationships among children and adults and together, design age-appropriate responses to undesirable behaviors with the intent of developing responsible behavior in children. It is our practice to engage children in learning strategies for developing more acceptable behaviors. If, after working with the child and parent, certain behaviors are still not positive, natural and logical consequences designed to help the child learn more acceptable behaviors will be applied.

Teachers ensure that classroom behavior policies align with the mission of the school. Classroom management is the responsibility of the classroom and/or specialist teacher and they ensure that their classroom behavior methods align with the mission and values of the school.

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
- Follow all rules with regard to safety, emergency procedures and playground guidelines
- Treat everyone with respect
- Take responsibility for their actions
- Come to school with an attitude of cooperation

Parents are asked to:

- Support the faculty and staff in matters related to school and classroom attitudes and behavior.
- Become active partners in helping develop responsible behaviors.

There may be times when student behavior requires the intervention by the Head of School. In such instances, the Head of School, in partnership with the teacher and parent, will determine the consequences of the inappropriate behavior. The school will attempt to work with the child and parent to rectify any severe behavior issues. However, if, after three interventions, the child's behavior is still unacceptable, the Head of School and parent will discuss whether or not GHA is an appropriate fit for the child.

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

- Physical and verbal aggression
- Bullying behaviors
- Cheating, lying or stealing
- Defiant attitude, disrespect or disobedience
- Harassment of any kind

Playground Rules

A fundamental rule at Gig Harbor Academy is to play fair, share and treat others with kindness and respect. The following specific rules must be followed for reasons of safety:

- 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. Tag games can sometimes cause hurt feelings or minor injuries and are discouraged.

General Expectations Anywhere on Campus

- Treat the buildings, equipment, and all the property with care.
- Walk inside the buildings and on sidewalks.
- 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.

Solving Problems/ Communicating With the Teacher

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 behavior issue, etc. If such a situation arises, the following communication process will serve to expedite the matter:

- Meet with the teacher or staff member who has firsthand information about the matter. This discussion will be confidential and known only to the parties that are involved. In most situations, this discussion will bring resolution to the matter. All teachers and staff members at Gig Harbor Academy are genuinely interested in assisting parents with their concerns.
- If the discussion between parent and teacher/staff member does not result in a solution, then the parent and the teacher will 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.

Parent/Child Conversation

We ask that parents of all students go over the matters related to community behaviors during the first week of school. The behaviors listed below are most influential in helping a child succeed in school and make friends.

Student Behaviors and Attitudes that Lead to Success in School are:

- Being respectful of others and positively engaging with schoolwork.
- Being courteous, kind, and cooperative in attitude, language, and actions.
- Refraining from use of profane language and learning what bullying means and choosing not to do it.
- Abiding by the expectations of the school as presented in this handbook and those presented by the teachers.

Parental Involvement in the Educational Process:

Research has continually shown that parent involvement in the education of their child(ren) leads to their success and confidence in the classroom. Regardless of the age of your child, he or she will want your help to make their school life successful. The more interest you show in your child's learning, the more motivated and positive he or she will be towards school and homework. Your child will learn how to relate his or her learning to the real world by following your examples. Together, you and your child can take the knowledge he or she learns at school and apply it in the home setting.

Talk Together

Your child is a unique individual who has important things to share with you about his or her school day. Set aside a time each day for your child to talk about his or her daily experiences. Daily conversations will help improve your child's vocabulary, self-expression, and self-esteem.

Encourage Creativity

As your child matures they become less dependent on their imagination and try to make sense of their world by becoming interested in the rules, rituals, and routines that govern their lives. Creativity is the substance of discovery. Creativity comes from brainstorming different solutions to the numerous issues we encounter each day. Listen to your child's ideas and help your child develop these ideas through drawing, writing or role-playing. Your child will become more creative if you encourage him or her to think outside the box.

Read Together

Depending on your child's age and aptitude, reading to him or her or having them read to you is critical to their intellectual development. Even if your child can read independently, they will still benefit from hearing good books and stories read aloud to them.

Working at Home

Set aside a quiet time each day for your child to work on reading or completing homework. Find a place in your home where your child will be free from distractions. Depending on the age of your child, use a timer to set a work period, a short break, and then a completion period for the work. If your child seems overwhelmed, talk with his or her classroom teacher. Homework is meant to reinforce learning, so you want the time spent on it to be stimulating, not frustrating, for your child.

Parent Volunteers

GHA relies on parents throughout the school year to lend support in a variety of ways. Volunteer opportunities are often addressed in the weekly electronic newsletter or at School Family Network (SFN) meetings. Volunteering in the classroom is typically organized by the classroom teacher with parents of their grade directly.

School Family Network (SFN)

School Family Network (SFN) is the parent volunteer group responsible for organizing snack sales, hot lunch, Pumpkin Carve, teacher birthdays and a variety of family fun activities. Gig Harbor Academy relies on the strong network of volunteers to coordinate a variety of essential activities and events throughout the year.

Expectations

It is the expectation of GHA that SFN helps support the school's mission and contribute to a positive and collaborative environment for families, students and staff. The president acts as the manager, delegating tasks and monitoring the calendar of events, but is not expected to "do it all". SFN works best when it is a group effort.

Meetings

Meetings are held the first Wednesday of every month, beginning in September, at 9:00AM in the library. The last meeting of the year is traditionally held off-site. The president creates the meeting agenda and runs the meeting at a reasonable pace, allowing for conversation and feedback but also being aware of time and staying on pertinent topics. A brief summary of the meeting is reported in the weekly newsletter the following day.

Volunteer Positions

SFN volunteer positions are typically filled at the first meeting of the year. Class representatives are a key position to fill, as they communicate directly with classes on a regular basis. Reliable volunteers are key factors in SFN success throughout the year.

Revenue

SFN is a self-funded entity, with a designated line item/class in the school's annual budget. Sources of revenue for SFN include: hot lunch, snack/popcorn sales and family fun events. It is recommended that the president regularly request a copy of the Profit and Loss statement from the Business Manager to keep track of expenses throughout the year. It is common for SFN to end the year showing a profit. This budget overage is then designated to be used in high need areas which all students will benefit from.

Fundraising

Like most private, independent schools, Gig Harbor Academy relies on various fundraising efforts throughout the school year to supplement tuition revenue. Historically, GHA holds an annual auction in the spring which is organized by parent volunteers and attended by the GHA parent community. Additionally, a capital campaign is also presented to the school community and organized by the Development Committee members of the Board of Directors. These fundraising efforts either contribute directly to the school's operating budget or to a specific need as determined by the Board and Head of School.

Driving Policy

Parents volunteering to drive on Gig Harbor Academy field trips are asked to provide the following information to the main office at least 1 week prior to the scheduled trip:

- Copy of driving record, as reported by the Washington State Department of Licensing. Record is obtained at www.dol.wa.gov, and retained in the main office for 1 year from date of issue.
- Copy of current driver's license.
- Copy of current automobile insurance.
- Signed Authorization for Use of Private Vehicle form.
- Completed and signed release of information to perform criminal background check.

Driving behaviors that often come to light through a driving record 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 and but not limited to.
- 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. If there is a concern, parents will be contacted to learn of any circumstances that might influence the decision.

Student Attire

Gig Harbor Academy asks parents and students to use their best judgment with regard to attire, which is both appropriate and functional for school. Please keep in mind the following dress code parameters GHA requires of its students in all grades. These guidelines are established with the best interest of the school community in mind.

- Shoes must be closed (toe and back), no flip flops or Crocs™ for safety reasons
- Tank tops are allowed, but no spaghetti straps
- Shorts must be fingertip length or worn with leggings underneath
- Images on clothing and backpacks must be age appropriate and free of violent images

Gig Harbor Academy spirit wear is always acceptable and is encouraged to be worn on Fridays to show school spirit. Information on obtaining spirit wear is available in the main office.

ACADEMICS

Curriculum

GHA is committed to providing the highest quality of education to all students. One way to provide a quality education is with an effective curriculum that reflects high standards and high expectations. Thus, GHA has developed age appropriate content standards that reflect what students should know and be able to do for each grade level. But even the most challenging standards cannot make schools and students successful without the support of parents.

Classroom teachers instruct in the four major curriculum areas: reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Specialist teachers instruct the additional subject areas of Spanish, physical fitness, art, music, and technology (K-5). Each grade level has specific content and skill standards that serve as the framework for instruction. GHA has compiled a Parent Guide to Academics for all grade levels and this booklet is distributed at GHA's Curriculum Night. If, at any time, a parent has specific questions about GHA's curriculum, please see either your child's classroom teacher or the Head of School.

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. Reading to your child is strongly encouraged at any age.

Classroom teachers will explain their homework plan at Parent Orientation. It is intended that homework 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, but please keep in mind that these are approximate times and may fluctuate with the projects being done:

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

Report Cards

GHA reports student learning on a semester basis. Report cards are issued two times during the year and sent to parents via email (Kindergarten through 5th Grade). A report card is given after the first semester, mid January, and the second at the end of the school year. There are two parent conferences during the school year, one in October and the other in March. The purpose of these conferences is to discuss the academic achievement and social development of your child. For Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten, report cards are given at Parent/Teacher conferences held twice during the year.

Progress reporting is done on a scale from 1-4 (Kindergarten – 5th Grade):

- 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.

Specialist Teacher Grades

Report Cards for art, music, Spanish and physical education are given by the specialist teachers. 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.

Standardized Testing

Gig Harbor Academy administers the ERB (Educational Records Bureau) Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP), a nationally recognized standardized test widely used in private, independent schools throughout the United States and internationally. The CTP is an online assessment platform and is administered in 2nd – 5th Grades in the spring of each academic year. 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.

Attendance

Regular attendance is important for student success. Please let the main office know if your child will be absent due to sickness or commitments outside of school. If you know in advance that your child will miss school, please notify your classroom teacher as early as possible.

Physical Education

Fitness participation is required of all students who are scheduled for PE time. Exercise and awareness of healthy behaviors play a critical role in a child's ability to fully benefit from school. PE 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 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 occur.

All students are requested to dress appropriately for extensive physical activity on their scheduled fitness days. **Students should wear tennis or sports shoes (no cleats). Students wearing shoes that are inappropriate will be asked to sit out.**

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 the main source of transportation on field trips. As supervisors on field trips, parents are asked to carry out these responsibilities:

- Provide the teacher with your cell phone number for arrangements and emergencies.
- Help the students in your group to accomplish their learning goals for the trip as requested by the teacher.
- 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.
- No pets on field trips.
- Siblings or other relatives and friends are not able to accompany the class on field trips.
- Please honor the car assignments determined by the teacher. These arrangements are carefully and thoughtfully planned out for specific reasons.
- Ensure students are securely fastened in car seats (if applicable) with seat belts at all times while in the vehicle.
- Contact the school and teacher immediately if you become lost or delayed in traffic.

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 discussions 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.

After School Enrichment

GHA offers its students the opportunity to expand their horizons through a variety of after school programs throughout the academic year. The programs are designed by the school's Enrichment Coordinator to accommodate a range of ages, abilities and interests. After school enrichment programs are generally taught by members of the GHA faculty and offered to families for a specified fee per program.

Summer Program

Gig Harbor Academy's extensive summer program offers typically three 1-week sessions including camps of all varieties and interests. The program is developed and managed by the Enrichment Coordinator, which is offered to both GHA families and non-GHA students. Fees are established on a per program basis and vary from year to year.

Snacks and Lunches

Students Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 5 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. In the interest of time, we ask that students do not bring foods that require more than one minute of heating time.

There are two opportunities for children to purchase hot lunches:

- Hot Lunch Program is available to students Kindergarten - Grade 5 and delivered on Tuesdays.
- Pizza Program is available to students Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 5 and delivered on Thursdays.

Order forms are available in the main office.

Supplies

With the exception of music recorders (4th and 5th grades), all school supplies are provided by GHA. Periodically throughout the year, teachers may request particular small items for special events or projects.

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 Parent Orientation. Other class celebrations for rewards, etc. may also be held. Information about these activities will be shared with parents by the classroom teacher.

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 providing any treats for your child's class). **All party invitations/thank you letters should be mailed from home - not distributed at school.**

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.

Siblings in the Classroom

Volunteering in your child's classroom is encouraged. This may take many different forms depending on teacher and grade level needs. 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 and/or on field trips.**

HEALTH, SAFETY & EMERGENCY INFORMATION

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 members of our school community. Parents are expected to keep the school informed of illness, injury and medications throughout the school year. Please contact the main office with any current conditions your child may be experiencing, medications administered at home or dietary restrictions/changes.

Immunizations

It is a requirement of OSPI that Gig Harbor Academy keep current and accurate records of student immunizations and exemptions on file at all times. Please keep the main office current with your child's immunization records. It is imperative we receive a **Certificate of Immunization** or an **Exempt from Immunization** form for all new students. Parents of students with an Exempt from Immunization form on file will be notified throughout the year if the school experiences a breakout of any serious illness in which the child's immune system would be compromised.

Sickness & Injury

Please keep your child home if:

- There are signs of a cold, flu or rash.
- Your child is experiencing diarrhea.
- Vomiting or a fever has occurred within 24 hours.
- Your child has pink eye or an eye discharge.
- Your child has a sore throat, mucous-producing cough, or nasal discharge.

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 Emergency Contact Release form will be contacted.

Please reinforce with 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 Emergency Contact Release form.

Lice

Lice outbreaks are common among children and can be easily transmitted from one child to another. If your child has head lice or has been potentially exposed to head lice, please contact the office immediately. When treated properly and checked regularly, students may be permitted to return to class upon an inspection by the main office. The primary objective is to prevent the spreading of lice to fellow students. If lice are discovered at school, the appropriate measures will be taken to prevent the lice from spreading and parents will be provided with treatment instructions.

Medication Guidelines

It is best if student medication can be administered at home. However, 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.**
- A Medication Distribution Form must be on file in the office for administering medication and must be signed by both a parent and physician for prescription medicine. The form is available through the front office. The school will record each administration of medication on the Medication Distribution and Record of Administration log at the time of its administration by the individual who gave the medication.

- 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. 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, the school be provided with all necessary medications and paperwork.

Emergency Preparedness

Students and staff practice fire drills, earthquake drills and lockdown drills throughout the school year. Fire drills are conducted monthly; earthquake and lockdown drills are conducted several times a year. Classrooms are equipped with emergency clipboards containing information to aid teachers in the event of an emergency. Emergency exit maps are posted in every room on the GHA campus and reflect the most efficient route to exit the building and arrive at the designated emergency meeting area (the playfield).

In the event of an actual emergency, natural disaster, etc., GHA has emergency preparedness supplies meant to assist the school community until students are picked up. There is a \$10 fee per student charged annually in September to maintain these supplies.

In case of an emergency during school hours, Gig Harbor Academy will use as many of the regular communication channels, including media outlets, social media and phone, to reach parents. Parents are asked to rely on these channels for information in the event of an emergency in the area.

School Closure

Although early dismissal is unusual, we do encourage you to anticipate the local weather situation and do what is best for you, your child, and/or your child's carpool. No child will be released to an unknown person or anybody not listed on the Emergency Contact Release form.

Please provide the school with your cell phone number and cell phone carrier in order to receive emergency texts. The school will use all communication channels available at the time of the emergency to reach parents.

School Closure Announcements

In general, GHA follows the Peninsula School District (PSD) closures. However, some circumstances may apply to PSD that do not pertain to Gig Harbor Academy. Information regarding school delays and closures will be posted and announced as soon as possible, with the safety of the GHA community as the main priority. News outlets, social media, emergency text messages and email are all methods by which the information will be communicated. No news from GHA means school is operating on its regular schedule. Please use your best judgment and make decisions that are best for your commute and conditions in your area.

RE-ENROLLMENT, FINANCIAL AID & EARLY WITHDRAWAL

Re-Enrollment:

Current families are given re-enrollment contracts in February of the academic year. Contracts are due (along with a non-refundable deposit) to hold each student's spot in class by early March. New applicants will be considered according to space availability per class. Current families are given priority before new students, followed by new families who are admitted on a first-come, first-served basis.

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. **Due to limited resources and the size of the school, financial aid is made available to children entering Kindergarten through Fifth Grade.** The awards that GHA offers are based on family need and are determined by the funds that the school is able to allocate each year. GHA does not offer merit or non-need based scholarships. Awards received do not need to be repaid.

To apply for financial aid, families must request a financial aid packet from the Admissions office or go online to www.gigarboracademy.org and select Financial Aid located in the Admissions tab. Requests for financial assistance are considered on a year-to-year basis. All applicants will be notified as soon as possible 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. All financial aid applications and decisions are kept confidential by the school at all times. Current financial aid applicants will be given first priority. Current families in the school, but new to financial aid, will be reviewed and considered next. Once all returning K-5 families are considered, the financial needs of new K-5 families will be considered.

Tuition Schedule/Late Entry

A student entering the school after the first day of instruction will be subject to the tuition schedule below. 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 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. Parents therefore agree to pay the tuition percentage indicated in **Schedule B** in the event of early withdrawal or dismissal.

Schedule B: Tuition Schedule/Late Entry

Date of Enrollment	% of Net Tuition Due
On or before September 30	100%
October 1-31	90%
November 1-30	80%
December 1-31	70%
January 1-31	60%
February 1-29	50%
March 1-31	40%
April 1-30	30%
May 1 to last day of school	20%

Withdrawals

In the event of early withdrawal, cancellation, or dismissal the parent or legal guardian agrees to pay the percentage of the full tuition and or remaining balance according to the dates shown on the Withdrawal Schedule below. Deposit will not be refunded under any circumstances.

Tuition Schedule in Event of Withdrawal or Dismissal

Date of Withdrawal or Dismissal	% of Tuition Due
On or before June 1	0% (Deposit Only)
June 2 - July 15	25%
July 16 - September 2	50%
September 3 - October 31	75%
On or after November 1	100%

COMMUNICATION

Email

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. E-mail is also available for each classroom teacher, whose Gig Harbor Academy email address will be given to parents at the beginning of the school year. Faculty and staff email addresses are available at www.gigarboracademy.org.

The Common Link - Weekly E-Newsletter

This is the school's primary means of regular communication with families. The e-newsletter is distributed weekly to the email addresses that you have provided to the school. It is designed to provide families with a glimpse of school activities on the immediate horizon. It will also contain information that is relevant to a broad range of student and family needs. Information about fundraising, school events, SFN activities, volunteer opportunities, forms, and community happenings typically populate this newsletter.

Website

The Gig Harbor Academy website (www.gigarboracademy.org) contains current and pertinent information regarding the school, its mission, current faculty and program offerings. The website is maintained by the Director of Admissions & Marketing and is intended to represent GHA on the web in such a way that aligns with the school's vision and philosophy.

Social Media

Social Media has become a part of modern culture and a common communication tool in today's world. Gig Harbor Academy's presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter) is maintained by the Director of Admissions and Marketing. Postings to social media are frequent and generally kept to human interest features and brief informational updates.

Emergency Text Messages

GHA employs a school database system to house student/family data, as well as employee information, attendance, etc. In the event of a school delay, closure or need for immediate and direct communication with parents, GHA will send an emergency text message using the database. Parents provide the main office with the required information (cell phone number and cell carrier) in order to receive these text messages. Typically, a test of this system is conducted by the school in the fall of the academic year.

PARKING LOT PROTOCOL

STUDENT ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Doors open 10 minutes prior to instruction start time (listed below). Please arrive in time to allow your child ample transition time to begin their day. Students arriving late will be marked tardy; excessive tardiness will be addressed on an individual basis by the Head of School.

- Kindergarten – 5th Grade: 8:45AM
- Pre-Kindergarten: 9:00AM
- Preschool: program specific

Parking Lot

Safety is Gig Harbor Academy's primary concern with regard to the parking lot process. Upon entering the GHA campus, please observe the posted speed limit of 5 mph and refrain from cell phone use until parked in designated parking areas. Please stay in the marked safety zone and remain with your child(ren) at all times.

Parent parking is primarily the large gravel lot located to the left of Building C. Please follow the arrows, entering the lot to the right and use caution at all times when entering and exiting the parking area. No Parking zones include: the safety zone, carpool lane and the area in front of the mailbox.

Drop Off/Pick Up (Kindergarten – 5th Grade):

- A GHA staff member is present at all times during drop off and pick up. The staff member will assist all students being picked up in the carpool lane in line-up order. Students exiting the 4th/5th grade building will be dismissed by their classroom teacher.
- The carpool lane is clearly indicated and is the lane closest to the upper elementary buildings.
- Please form a single line in the lane at all times.
- Stay in the carpool lane, follow the flow of traffic and yield to thru traffic before exiting the lane.
- Remain in your car at all times when in the carpool line. Do not leave your car running and unattended at any time.

Drop Off / Pick Up (Preschool – Pre-Kindergarten):

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten students should remain with an adult during drop off and pick up and should not be left unattended on campus at any time.

Late Pickup

Students who are waiting to be picked up more than 10 minutes after dismissal time will be walked to the Childcare Center and should be picked-up there. The hourly drop-in rate will apply in this situation and will be charged to your GHA account.

Restrictions on Picking up a Child

Students will be released only to adults authorized by the parent/guardian, unless prior written permission is given. A staff member may ask for verification of identity from the second party if they are unknown to the school. Please call the main office with any changes to your authorized pick up list.



PARENT HANDBOOK

ACKNOWLEDGMENT SIGNATURE PAGE

I (we) have received and read the Gig Harbor Academy Parent Handbook. I (we) agree to abide by the expectations of Gig Harbor Academy as stated in the Parent Handbook and indicated by my/our signature(s) below.

Parent or Guardian (Print Name)

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian (Print Name)

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

PLEASE RETURN THIS PAGE TO THE MAIN OFFICE