



# **GROWING UP GREEN CHARTER SCHOOL I ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Growing Up Green Charter Schools (“GUGCS” or the “School”) supports children to be conscious, contributing members of their community through a rigorous, anti-racist, anti-bias, curriculum and an engaging green culture. Graduates of GUGCS will be prepared to attend high-performing schools where their interdisciplinary academic foundation, knowledge of sustainability, and strong sense of self sets them apart as leaders and social justice advocates of the future.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

At GUGCS, we envision an inclusive and diverse school community that places students powerfully at the center of their education through authentic, relevant and rigorous learning experiences, grounded in inquiry; a community that is devoted to doing the work needed to create a space where equity in regards to race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, gender, and ability, is a given. GUGCS graduates will be innately curious learners, open-minded thinkers, compassionate critics, productive problem-solvers, and passionate challengers of the status quo who embrace differences instead of finding them divisive. GUGCS graduates will take action to promote a more environmentally sustainable future. A growth mindset will define how graduates view themselves and others in the context of learning, adversity, and the world around them. GUGCS graduates will be prepared to be leaders of the future.

## **CORE VALUES**

Kindness - Collaboration - Courage - Social Justice



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### **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The most up to date version of the GUGCS School Calendar can be found on our website [here](#).

### **THE SCHOOL DAY**

GUGCS hours are 8:00 am to 3:15pm. The school doors open every morning at 7:30am.

Students who arrive at the classroom after 8:00 are marked as tardy. Dismissal time is 3:15 pm.

### **VISITORS**

A receptionist or security officer is stationed at the front door from 7:00 am until 7:00 pm. All visitors must show a valid form of identification, sign in with the security officer, and wait at the security desk until a staff member is ready to retrieve them. All visitors must enter through the main/front door on 28th Street. For safety reasons, visitors are not allowed to go to any room other than the security desk or main office (unless an alternate arrangement has been made, or if the visitor is attending a school event). It is required that you schedule an appointment and have it confirmed with GUGCS staff prior to arrival. All visitors must be arranged prior with the school leaders, operations team, dean, counselor, coordinator, or teacher.

### **CUSTODY & PICK UP POLICY**

We understand that custody matters can be complex and emotionally challenging. However, our school is legally required to remain neutral in all custody disputes. Unless a court-issued legal document (such as a custody order or restraining order) is on file explicitly stating that a parent or guardian does not have rights to access or pick up their child, we are mandated to release the child to either listed legal guardian.

To ensure student safety and legal compliance:

- **Both parents/guardians listed on the child's birth certificate or school records have equal rights** to pick up their child unless legal documentation states otherwise.
- The school **cannot enforce verbal agreements, informal arrangements, or custody schedules** unless they are part of a signed and court-issued legal document.
- It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide **updated and certified court documents** regarding custody restrictions or modifications.
- Unless restricted by a court order, **both parents have the right to receive information about their child's education**, including report cards, progress reports, and school events.
- If a custody issue becomes disruptive to the school environment, we may request that all communication regarding the matter be handled through legal representatives.



Please help us prioritize the safety and well-being of your child by ensuring all legal documents are on file with our main office. For questions or to submit documents, please contact the Director of Operations for your child's campus.

### **DRESS CODE**

Students at GUGCS are expected to wear the school uniform each and every day (with the exception of spirit days which are scheduled by the school and will be communicated in advance). Students are expected to wear GUGCS polo shirts and khaki pants, shorts or skorts. Students may also wear blue sweaters and fleece jackets/vests with the GUGCS logo. No other sweaters or sweatshirts are permitted, including hooded sweatshirts. Sandals of any kind (open-toed and open-heeled) and shoes with wheels are not permitted. Shoes must have a closed toe and a closed heel. Shoes are worn during daily recess time and PE classes, so sneakers or sturdy shoes are strongly encouraged. Hats may not be worn in the school building with the exception of religious or cultural head coverings. Please make sure all clothing items are clearly labeled with your child's name in permanent marker or name label. If a student is out of uniform, the main office, dean, or teacher may reach out to the student's family. Students who are out of uniform repeatedly may be asked to: 1. Remove their non uniform sweaters or sweatshirts, 2. Change into a uniform provided by the school, 3. Get picked up to change and return to school.

School uniforms are for sale through French Toast. All shirts and sweaters must have the GUGCS logo embroidered on the left side. Logo patches are not permitted on shirts in place of the embroidered GUGCS logo.

- If a child arrives at school out of uniform, the family will be called by the office and is expected to bring the student's uniform to school immediately.

Families are required to send to school an extra set of clothing (shirt, socks, underwear, and pants) labeled with the student's first and last name in case of accidental spills or incidents. If the extra set of clothing is used, families must replace this set the following day.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

A lost and found cabinet/rack is housed in the cafeteria. The lost and found bin holds any materials that are found in the school building. If your child has lost an article of clothing at school, come check for it the same day or the next day at the latest. The lost and found bin is emptied weekly and unmarked clothes, lunchboxes, water bottles, or any other personal items are donated to charity. GUGCS is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Please label your child's clothing and check the lost and found when an item is lost.



### **BREAKFAST**

Breakfast is served from 7:30am - 7:55am and is free for all students. Children eating breakfast enter the building and go directly to the cafeteria upon arriving at school. Hot breakfast service ends at 7:55am. After 7:55, students are offered a cold breakfast which they may eat in their classrooms. We strongly encourage all students who eat breakfast at school to arrive before 7:55 am.

### **DROP OFF**

The morning drop-off period is from 7:30-8:00 am. Families arriving before doors open must wait outside of the entrance with their children. Students are not allowed in the building prior to school doors open. Parents must wait outside with children until the building opens. Unless a parent/guardian has a scheduled appointment, parents/guardians are not allowed up to classrooms or the main office before 8:00am.

Families are welcome to join their child's class for Morning Meeting between 8:00–8:30 a.m., up to one day per week. To ensure a smooth start to the school day, families are asked to sign up at least one day in advance. Sign-ups may be completed by contacting the child's teacher via ParentSquare or by emailing [gugupdates@gugcs.org](mailto:gugupdates@gugcs.org). At the conclusion of Morning Meeting, families should exit the classroom quietly by 8:30 a.m., and no later than 8:40 a.m. Please note that this time is dedicated to instruction and preparing students for the day. The school kindly asks that families do not use this opportunity to meet with teachers. If parents would like to schedule a conference, they must reach out to their child's teacher to arrange a separate time.

Parents/guardians who intend to remain in the building for any reason must have an appointment.

Students are expected to come to school on time daily. Students who are late will be marked as tardy for the day after 8:00 am and parents will receive an automated notification: excessive lateness impacts a child's academic learning and social emotional development so it is critical that children are on time to school each day.

Kindergarten through 4th grade students **MUST** commute **WITH** an adult to school. Parents of 5th grade students who allow their child to commute to school on their own must fill out an authorization form and submit it to the main office.

There is no parking available on-site. Please be mindful of time and space when dropping off in the morning. Additionally, please adhere to all traffic signs and signals while dropping off and picking up your



child. Cars should not idle or double-park in front of our school during arrival. Any car that parks illegally in front of our school will be subject to fines/towing fees from the NYPD.

For the safety and security of our students and staff, no one is allowed into the school building from 8:45am to 3:15pm unless they have an appointment. All appointments must check in with security before being allowed access upstairs. Upon checking in, please go directly to the main office where the teacher or GUGCS staff member will meet you. Parents are not allowed to go directly into their child's classroom to pick up or have unscheduled meetings with a teacher or administrator.

### **DISMISSAL**

Dismissal is at 3:15pm or at 1:00pm on early dismissal days. Please refer to the school calendar for early dismissal days. All students are dismissed via yellow bus service or are picked up by an authorized person over 14 years of age. A primary method for dismissal must be selected at the start of the school year.

Students who depart from school by bus will be escorted to their bus by GUGCS faculty. Families at GUG picking up children may wait outside until the dismissal process officially starts and will be called into the building (or play yard) for dismissal at 3:15pm (or 1:00pm on half days).

Teachers escort to connect the child with the appropriate family member or caregiver. Students will only be released to authorized persons over the age of 14 and listed on the emergency contact form. Please contact the office in writing to amend any dismissal information.

Families must notify the office by 12:00pm by online form, phone call or email if they want their child on the pickup list. Informing the teacher will not suffice. Children will not be added to the daily pick up list without permission from a parent or guardian after 12:00 pm.

### **EARLY PICK UP**

All approved early pick-ups must occur before 2:30 pm for full days and 12:00pm for early dismissal days. You must sign your student out in the main office. We cannot release your child to anybody that is not on the authorized emergency contact form. Additionally, a student may not sign him/herself out of school during the school day. If a student has consent to leave on their own, and the family needs them to leave early for whatever reason, the student must be picked up and may not leave on their own prior to 3:15pm.

*Students are not permitted to return to the School's site for after-school clubs, activities, or sports, if they have left early for the school day.*

### **LATE PICK UP**



All students who are designated as pick up must be picked up by 3:30pm. Parents/guardians must notify the school if they are running more than 10 minutes late. At 3:30 pm, all parents/guardians will be notified if we have not heard from them. The School will also contact any additional contacts, including emergency contacts, if the primary pick-up person cannot be reached. Any students who have not been picked up by 3:45pm, without any update or notice from a parent, guardian, or family member, will automatically join the Legacy After School program for that day. Even with notice, the School reserves the right to place any child who has not been picked up by 3:45pm into Legacy After School. This will be billed to the family at a cost of \$45 for the day. If a child is not picked by the end of the program time (5:45pm), additional fees will be incurred from Legacy After School. Any student that is not picked up by 6:00pm, without any update or notice from a parent, guardian, or family member, will be escorted to the local police precinct. It is extremely important that all students have several working phone numbers on file for all parents, guardians, and emergency contacts, particularly for situations like this.

### **BUSING**

GUGCS does not provide bus service. Yellow bus service is provided through the Department of Education's Office of Pupil Transportation. OPT provides busing to all students in K-2, provided they live within a ½ mile and 5 miles of the school. Bus service and eligibility varies based on distance from school to stop for students in grades 3-5. Bus service begins on September 3rd, 2024.

Information about bus routes and stops will be distributed in late August / early September. Please note that if you elect to have your child ride the bus, he/she will be put on the bus each day after school; frequent changes and alternate schedules will not be permitted. OPT assigns the bus stops based on your home address. Therefore, you must use the same assigned stop in the morning and afternoon; requests for changes may only be permitted with documentation (change of address or legal order).

If you would like to file a complaint about bussing at any point during the school year, please contact the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) directly at 718-392-8855. Additionally, please let the operations team know that you have file a complaint so the school can support you.

### **BUS OFFENSES**

Riding the bus is a privilege and appropriate behavior is expected on the bus at all times. Bus behavior concerns and offenses are to be reported directly to the bus company, OPT (718-392-8855). GUGCS is not responsible for the behavior of students while riding the bus and we will be unable to investigate or address concerns that arise. OPT oversees all bus companies contracted by the Department of Education. GUGCS has very little control over student behavior that occurs on the bus. If you have a concern regarding behaviors that occur on the bus please contact OPT directly at 718-392-8855.

GUGCS holds annual bus safety meetings reviewing OPT's expectations for students on the bus and sends home information for families to review with their children to ensure proper behavior on the bus.



Students are reminded of expectations throughout the year. GUGCS will not meet with individual students or investigate incidents or address parent complaints regarding bus behavior unless we receive a formal incident report from OPT which clearly describes the driver or escort's witnessed account.

If a student does not conduct himself/herself properly on a bus, the bus driver is expected to bring such misconduct to the School Leader's attention by providing an official bus incident report of misconduct that was witnessed by the bus driver. Once the school receives the bus incident report we will rely solely on that report and apply the consequences outlined below in our bus behavior matrix. We will not investigate the incident but rather will take disciplinary action based ONLY on the bus driver's witnessed account. The main office will notify parents of the appropriate consequence based on the matrix below and will also receive written notification. If you disagree with the account provided by the bus driver you should reach out to the bus company to file a complaint and if you have concerns related to incidents that occurred on the bus that were not witnessed by the bus driver or that the school did not receive a bus incident report for then you should contact the bus company.

It is important to remember that riding the bus is a privilege and you should take the necessary steps to educate your child on how you expect them to behave on the bus. If a student is suspended from the bus due to their misconduct then it is the student's parent or guardian's responsibility to ensure that his/her child gets to and from school safely. A student subjected to a suspension from transportation is not entitled to a hearing.

As a school we firmly believe having a bus attendant on the bus would help alleviate misconduct on the bus and we continue to encourage parents to advocate to the bus company directly to increase adult supervision on the bus. We understand the bus elicits strong emotions from all parents involved when there are bus issues that arise; however, we do not have oversight on the bus and we are not responsible for bus behavior so we encourage you to raise your concerns with the bus company directly.

At GUGCS, we believe that safety on the bus is our number one priority. On the bus, we expect students to be respectful and positive community members. Please see below for an outline of the expectations for bus behavior. Please also review these expectations with your child.

#### Growing Up Green Elementary School Bus Expectations:

- Follow the directions of the bus driver at all times
- Enter and exit the bus quietly and safely
- Stay safely seated in seats at all times with seatbelt on
- Keep hands, feet, and other body parts to oneself
- Keep all personal items (book bag, materials) to oneself
- No throwing objects on or out of the bus



- Speak quietly and not disturbing the driver or peers
- Respect all peers- no bullying, teasing, or profanity
- Never vandalize or damage school or bus property
- Always report misbehavior on the bus to a GUGCS staff member so that the school can follow up

With safety in mind, the following steps will occur when expectations are not met.

- **First Infraction:** Any student who is not safe on the bus will receive *a **two day** bus suspension to begin the afternoon of the incident.* This means if your child is misbehaving when they get off the bus in the morning, they will not be allowed to ride the bus home that afternoon, nor the following day. The same will happen if they misbehave during the afternoon ride.
- **Second Infraction:** Any student who is not safe on the bus *a second time* will receive *a **one-week** bus suspension to begin the afternoon of the incident.* This means if your child is misbehaving when they get off the bus in the morning, they will not be allowed to ride the bus home that afternoon, nor the following day.
- **Third Infraction:** Any student who is not safe on the bus *a third time* will receive *a **minimum two-week** bus suspension to begin the afternoon of the incident.* This means if your child is misbehaving when they get off the bus in the morning, they will not be allowed to ride the bus home that afternoon, nor the following day.
- **Fourth Infraction:** Any student who is not safe on the bus *a fourth time* will not be allowed to ride the bus again until an in-person meeting is held with school leadership, the student, and families. Following the meeting, school leaders will use their discretion to determine the length of bus suspension.

Please support us in keeping your children safe on the bus by:

- Speaking to your child about the importance of keeping their seatbelt fastened and staying in their seats while they are on the bus.
- If your child tells you about an incident on the bus, please call the Office of Pupil Transportation - (718) 392-8855 - and file a complaint. This complaint will be forwarded to us and we can investigate in school. Please then email [gugupdates@gugcs.org](mailto:gugupdates@gugcs.org) with the complaint number, so we can begin the investigation as quickly as possible.

### **MEDICAL/NURSE'S OFFICE**

A nurse is on duty at all times for students that become ill or need to see the nurse for various reasons. The school nurse functions as the manager of healthcare in the building. As a manager of health care,



the school nurse is responsible for delivering mandated health services, serves as a health counselor, and a health educator for the school and community. Parents/guardians must update each student's record with current information including: medications that their child is currently taking, long-term medication therapy, medication that has been discontinued, recent hospitalizations for medical treatment or surgery, routine immunization and booster information and any medical need for change in a child's medical status.

If a student becomes ill, is involved in an accident, or is injured in any way during the school day, they must tell a staff member immediately, obtain a pass, and report directly to the nurse's office. If a student is unable to walk to the nurse's office, the nurse will be called to report to the student for transport. Any student that enters the nurse's office must wear a mask.

If a student is injured in a way that affects their mobility or class participation in Physical Education, a note from the student's doctor must be kept on record in the nurse's office. Students sitting out for a medical reason are still expected to attend class and are still responsible for the content taught.

#### **RECESS AND OUTDOOR PLAY**

GUGCS believes (and the research clearly shows) that children benefit from vigorous exercise, and must be given the opportunity to play outside whenever possible. To this end, unless it is snowing or there is ice on the playground, low temperatures will not be a barrier to outdoor play, as long as children are appropriately dressed. Parents, please ensure that you prepare your children for the weather, so they are warm and comfortable for at least 30 minutes of outdoor time, regardless of the season. GUGCS utilizes logical consequences at recess in order to promote the safety of all students.

#### **LUNCH AND CAFETERIA**

All students eat lunch in the cafeteria. Hot lunch is served daily to students. Alternatively, students may bring their own lunch from home. Home lunches must be as healthy as possible and must not include any snacks on the unacceptable GUGCS list (see following section). Families are encouraged to pack lunches in reusable containers and bags instead of plastic or paper bags to prevent waste. Students who bring their own food (breakfast, lunch, or other) will not have access to hot water nor a microwave. This is for safety reasons. School food lunches may only be served with all components (i.e. students may not receive just milk or fruit from the school food program).

All families must complete the NYS lunch form, regardless of whether or not your child participates in the school lunch program. Although breakfast & lunch are free for all students, these forms are issued by the state and federal governments and are used to determine which students qualify for free, reduced and full-price lunches and are also used to qualify the school for various grants and other programs. Please note, GUGCS does not determine eligibility; guidelines are determined by income and based on



the standards set by NYC and NYS. If your income changes throughout the school year, you may fill out a new lunch form to qualify for updated eligibility.

### **SNACK**

At times, the School will provide snacks for students. The School will provide general snacks, but cannot accommodate individual snack requests for food preferences, allergies, or intolerances. Families are welcome to send their child with healthy, individual snacks as needed.

Students have a mid-morning or afternoon snack. At Growing Up Green Charter Schools, snack is done communally. Each family is asked to sign up once a month to bring snack in for their child's whole class. At the start of the school year, teachers inform parents about how they can sign up for classroom snack. Please remember to coordinate with the classroom teacher and make arrangements for freshness when bringing perishable foods for snack. Snacks will be provided by the School as needed.

| Acceptable GUGCS Snacks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Unacceptable GUGCS Snacks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh fruit</li> <li>• Fresh vegetables</li> <li>• Yogurt</li> <li>• Cheese sticks</li> <li>• Pretzels</li> <li>• Mini applesauce</li> <li>• Raisins</li> <li>• Rice cakes (flavored preferred)</li> <li>• Granola or granola bars</li> <li>• Baked crackers (Wheat Thins, Saltines, Goldfish)</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• 100% Juice</li> <li>• Dried Fruits (apricots, pineapples, apples, etc.)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candy</li> <li>• Gum</li> <li>• Donuts</li> <li>• Cookies</li> <li>• Snack Packs Snack Cakes (Little Debbie, Hostess, etc.)</li> <li>• Cake or Cupcakes (even for birthday celebrations)</li> <li>• Rice Krispies Treats</li> <li>• Soda</li> <li>• Gatorade/Sports drinks</li> <li>• Yogurt with cookie/candy topping</li> <li>• Sugared juice/drinks/Kool Aid</li> <li>• Iced Tea/Sweet tea</li> <li>• Chips (Doritos, Potato Chips, Takis, etc.)</li> </ul> |

The GUGCS Healthy Snack Policy helps our students learn healthy eating habits, fosters a community of sharing and reduces sugar-induced behavior disruptions during learning times. We do not serve snacks that are on the unacceptable list and students are not allowed to eat any unacceptable item that is sent to school. This policy is strictly enforced. Please remember to coordinate with the classroom teacher if you plan on bringing in perishable foods for snack so they can make arrangements for freshness. Families who send unhealthy class snacks will be notified and the snack will be sent home unopened.

### **ACCOMODATING FOR ALLERGIES / LIMITATIONS**



Families must inform the School Nurse and their Child's Teacher if their child has an allergy. Classroom teachers inform families if there are students in the class with food allergies. If you are alerted by your classroom teacher of an allergy in the classroom (i.e. nuts, etc.), you must avoid providing snacks containing this ingredient for the safety of all students in the classroom. Nut-free (or other restriction) classrooms will be on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the students in the class and their health needs.

Classroom teachers will inform families as soon as possible if your child's classroom is a nut-free environment.

### **BIRTHDAYS AND SPECIAL DAYS**

GUGCS celebrates birthdays on dates scheduled at the discretion of the teacher. On this day, families are invited to prepare an activity and/or bring a healthy snack to the student's class to celebrate the child. Please make sure you communicate with the classroom teacher prior to the day to set up arrangements for an appropriate time toward the end of the celebration day. **Goodie bags and balloons are not permitted at school birthday celebrations. Healthy snacks are encouraged at birthday celebrations.**

Students may not distribute invitations at school to outside birthday parties or other celebrations/events unless the whole class is invited.

Families who bring in food that does not follow the school's healthy foods policy may be asked to bring the food home.

### **HOLIDAYS**

In light of the school's philosophy, GUGCS recognizes and celebrates the diversity of our school's population. However, holidays are not a specific part of the state standards or our curriculum. If there is a holiday or tradition that your family wishes to share with the class, please contact your child's teacher.

### **CORE VALUES**

GUGCS has a green school culture in which students are held to universal expectations to create a community of learners who feel empowered to do their best at all times. By adopting school-wide expectations students know what is expected of them in all areas of the school regardless of what teacher is with them. These core values of Kindness, Collaboration, Courage, and Social Justice are addressed on a daily basis and integrated into our curriculum with the hope that they are embedded in the student's way of life both in the walls of Growing Up Green Charter Schools and in the world outside.

We believe in the importance of highlighting these behaviors within our school and encouraging our students to aspire to meet the core values every day. Additionally, we teach how these core values can be applied to student's actions towards their school, friends, adults, community, and the environment.



### **INCLUSIVE TEACHING MODELS**

GUGCS adheres to an inclusive educational model, meaning that students with and without disabilities participate and learn in the same classrooms together. Inclusive education is based on the principle that every child and family is valued equally and deserves the same opportunities and experiences. We also understand that every child learns in different ways, all of which can be supported through quality inclusive education and collaboration with our teachers and staff. GUGCS also believes that when children are educated together in this type of inclusive environment, positive academic and social outcomes occur for all children involved. Families may not choose which type of classroom their child is in.

All GUGCS classrooms fall into one of the following categories:

### **INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM**

Inclusive classes are taught by one lead teacher, or one lead teacher and one associate teacher, or two co-lead teachers. Inclusive classes are composed of students with and without disabilities. Classroom teachers collaborate with their grade team colleagues and curriculum coordinators to plan differentiated instruction that suits each learner in the class. Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) who are placed in inclusive classrooms are typically seen by Related Services providers or a Special Education-certified Learning Specialist for specialized instruction as per each child's IEP.

### **INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING (ICT) CLASSROOM**

Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes are co-taught by one general education teacher and one Special Education teacher in order to provide a supportive setting for all students. ICT classes follow the general education curriculum and allow for a smaller student-to-teacher ratio and increased opportunities for small group work. For students with disabilities, the ICT classroom allows them to be educated with the full-time support of a Special Education teacher (for core classes including ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies), ensuring that their learning needs are met through the necessary modifications and/or adaptations and they are progressing towards their individualized learning goals.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS & REPORT CARD SYSTEM**

At GUGCS, we focus on cultivating students' love of learning, challenging students, and academic growth. Report cards are an important part and reflection of the kind of learning we do here. Knowing their importance for both students and teachers, we must ensure that our reports are equitable for all students and reflect our kind of learning. To do this, we use a mastery based grading system. This system ensures our grading practices are equitable and reflect what students know and are able to do.

### **What is Mastery Grading?**

- Mastery Grading is a system of reporting progress that accurately reflects student learning and is based on students demonstrating understanding, or mastery, of the knowledge and skills they



are expected to learn as they progress through their education. This is different from traditional grading, which focuses on the type of assignment (homework, quiz, test) students complete.

- Formative assessments are opportunities for students to get feedback on their progress as they practice and develop their understanding of the learning goals. This feedback is key to helping students grow.
- Summative assessments serve as the main tool for determining if students are meeting learning goals. Students complete summative assessments intermittently throughout the school year and progress will be communicated to families. They allow students opportunities to demonstrate understanding of learning goals.

#### **How Grades Are Determined for Classes?**

| <b>Grade</b>                                    | <b>Level of Mastery</b>                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>4</b><br>Consistently Exceeding Expectations | Independently demonstrates a level of understanding and mastery beyond the learning goal, skill, or concept without any support from the teacher.                                                |
| <b>3</b><br>Meeting Expectations                | Demonstrates master of the concept, skill, or learning goal independently with very limited teacher support.                                                                                     |
| <b>2</b><br>Approaching Expectations            | Approaching Expectations - Has multiple gaps in understanding of the skill or concept.                                                                                                           |
| <b>1</b><br>Requires significant support        | Requires significant, 1:1 teacher support in order to partially meet the learning goal. Little to no evidence of understanding the concept, and is unable to demonstrate the goal independently. |

#### **Family Communication**

- Our goal is to prioritize clear and ongoing communication with families and students, in conjunction with providing time for students to practice, grow, and work towards learning goal mastery.
- We will use designated times throughout the year to provide more formal academic check-ins that include current learning goal scores and rich, descriptive comments. These will happen at six points throughout the year.

#### **3 Report Cards**

- November, March, June
- Families will receive a Report that includes scores for all priority skills taught up until that point, as well as detailed comments about student progress.

#### **Family Conferences**

- In November and March we will have Family Conferences.



- Conferences will serve as a time for the student, and family to meet to discuss learning progress and social emotional progress during a scheduled meeting time.
- These will align with two of the Progress Reports.

#### **End of Year Report Card**

- Report Cards will be distributed during the last week of the school year

#### **How can I support my students at home?**

- Ask them about what they are learning in each class.
- Help your child build strong work habits (completing assignments as they are assigned, asking questions when they need assistance, completing work in a focused/quiet space when possible, etc.)
- Be in touch with your child's teacher
- Review Progress Reports when they are shared and attend Family Conferences to learn about your child's progress.

#### **MARKING PERIODS, REPORT CARDS, & CONFERENCES**

Progress reports will be distributed 3 times throughout the year. With two of the progress reports, there will be a family conference that is mandatory for the families to attend. All conference dates will be remote learning days for students. The final report card will be distributed to students during the last week of school. Family Conferences will be held on the following dates:

Conference #1: November 23 + 24, 2026

Conference #2: March 5, 2027

At family conferences, families will schedule an appointment with their child's teachers to review overall academic and social progress.

#### **HOMEWORK**

##### **PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK**

The purpose of homework is to practice strong work habits. Research suggests that the greatest benefit to early childhood homework is in developing good study habits, fostering positive attitudes toward school, and reinforcing the idea that learning takes work at home and at school. Students should be able to complete homework tasks on their own, though parents are often encouraged to participate in particular components. Assignments reinforce previously covered class material and help inform parents about what is taught in class. If a student has trouble completing homework, parents should contact the classroom teacher for support and possible differentiation. Teachers are always open to conversations about how to make homework the most successful it can be for each individual family; if homework is negatively impacting life at home, please reach out to your child's teacher to discuss plan modification. All students are expected to read books or have books read to them nightly. Lower School students (K-2) bring their book baggy home each night. It is expected that the book baggy is brought back to school



each morning with all books inside in good condition. Students in grades 3-5 will take independent reading books home nightly. Students in all grades are expected to bring books to and from school each day. Students are expected to read for at least 20 minutes each night. If your student is unable to read independently, an adult is expected to read with them for 20 minutes a night at home.

### **HOMEWORK DIFFERENTIATION**

Homework may be differentiated at times in various ways to attempt to meet the needs of all students. As a result, some math problems, spelling words, etc. may not look the same from child to child in the same grade or class.

### **HOMEWORK PRACTICE**

To prepare students for homework routines and to set up successful habits, the first few weeks of homework will be completed at school during school hours. At curriculum night, classroom teachers will review expectations and routines for homework.

GUGCS believes in a strong home-to-school connection and wants all families to be an active part of each student's academic life, as this connection consistently brings about the most success in students.

### **STATE EXAM OPT OUT PROCEDURES**

Each year, students in grades 3rd-8th will take the NYS Mathematics & ELA State exams. If a parent/guardian would like to have their child opt out of one or both exams, parents must email school leadership expressing their desire to opt out of state exams.

In the email they must specify the following information:

- Student's Full Name
- Student's Grade
- Name of Test for (ELA, Math, Science)

The email will prompt someone from the assessment team or school leadership to reach out to the requesting family to set up a meeting to discuss the opt-out option.

### **STUDENT LAPTOP POLICY**

#### **Laptop usage:**

**Overview:** At GUGCS, technology is used to support and enhance the learning experiences of all of our students. For that reason, the Schools have laptops available for use during classes. School-issued laptop devices are to be used for educational purposes, including projects, class work, homework, research, and reading. These laptop devices are property of the Schools and should be treated with care at all times. It is expected that Students (with the support of their families) treat these devices properly and use them



only for school-related purposes. All laptops must remain in school at all times, unless they are loaned out for a designated purpose\*. The use of laptop devices provided by GUGCS is a privilege permitted at the Schools' discretion and the Schools reserve the right to suspend use at any time, without notice, for any reason deemed necessary. Additionally, GUGCS reserves the right to monitor and examine any technology records, data, or documents on a Schools-issued device at any time deemed necessary.

**Borrowing a Laptop:** A student may NOT borrow a laptop from a classroom cart to take to another class, lunch, recess, or home. The only exception to this is for remote learning days. Prior to any remote days, families will complete a request google form (once for the year) to request a laptop for their child to use at home. The form will indicate that the device must be brought back to school on the next in-person school day. Devices will be distributed by teachers/operations team members at the end of the day prior to a remote learning day, and will be collected back the morning after returning to in person school. Families that borrow the device are responsible for damages that happen to devices while they are outside of the school building, and will incur a fee of up to \$400 per device if it is broken, lost, damaged, or stolen. Students should have no expectation of privacy on any GUGCS devices.

**Google Suite:** As a student at GUGCS, all students will have a "GUGCS" email account created for them, and will have access to Google Suite, which includes but is not limited to, Documents, Slides, Sheets, Gmail, & Google Classroom. By having your student at GUGCS, parents and guardians agree to have their child use all of the aforementioned platforms and agree to the terms and conditions outlined by those programs.

**Student Expectations:** GUGCS expects all students to treat the Schools' devices with care and respect at all times, and to report any physical issues or digital issues immediately to a teacher, dean, Schools leadership, or member of the operations team. GUGCS expects students to:

- Only use the device and charger provided by the Schools.
- Only use your GUGCS email and google account on any Schools device.
- Refrain from altering the physical device/charger (no stickers, engravings, marker, etc.).
- Avoid eating/drinking near the device.
- Avoid touching the screen.
- Keep all keys on the keyboard intact (do not remove).
- Keep the laptop in your sight and do not leave it unattended.
- Keep your accounts safe and secure by not sharing your password to your email and google account.
- Make Schools appropriate choices when using your school email account, searching the internet, and creating documents (ie. no inappropriate/sexual/explicit/violent language, not visiting inappropriate/sexual/explicit/violent websites, etc.).
- Refrain from downloading or altering any software or programs on the device.
- Do not remove, alter, or damage labels from devices.



- School-issued devices or login credentials (i.e.: GUGCS student email accounts) may not be used for personal use, or any other use outside of school-designated purposes.
- All content created, sent, or distributed via a GUGCS-issued student email account, or on GUGCS-issued devices, should be not considered private and may be searched if there is reasonable suspicion of an issue.

**Suspension of Use of the Laptop:** GUGCS encourages and expects all students and families to adhere to the policies laid out above. GUGCS reserves the right to suspend student laptop use for any reason that goes against these policies, or against any items outlined in our Family Handbook and Student Code of Conduct.

Possible reasons for loss of laptop use include, but are not limited to:

- Using a laptop for inappropriate, sexual, explicit, or violent searches, sites, emails, photos, videos or documents.
- Bypassing the Schools' technology filter by using a virtual private network or other means.
- Accessing another student or staff member's email or google account.
- Using a laptop for any bullying, harassment, or unkind interactions.
- Repeated, constant, or purposeful damage to laptop (ie. peeling labels, removing keys, throwing the device, etc.).
- Any other issue that the Schools leadership team finds inappropriate, unkind, or unsafe.
- Accessing other GUGCS networks other than the one designated for student use.
- Any cyberbullying may result in suspension of a student's GUGCS-issued student email account and/or the ability to use a GUGCS-issued laptop device.

### **Agreement of Policy**

Students and their parents/guardians are expected to review this policy in detail each school- year and ensure they understand all items outlined in this policy.

All students of Growing Up Green Charter Schools agree to abide by this policy and all other applicable GUGCS policies and regulations governing the use of a Schools laptop device. Students understand that there is no expectation of privacy when using any School device . Students further understand that any violation of this or any other Schools policy may result in loss of user privileges and/or disciplinary action.

All parents/guardians of GUGCS students agree that their child(ren) shall comply with the terms of these policies and other applicable GUGCS policies and regulations governing the use of Schools' laptop devices. GUGCS parents/guardians give permission for their child(ren) to use the Schools' laptop device and/or to access the Schools' computer network and the Internet and shall be ultimately responsible for monitoring their child(ren)'s use of the Schools' technology and the Internet. Parents/Guardians



understand that, despite GUGCS's best efforts, it is impossible for GUGCS to restrict access to all offensive and controversial materials. Parents/Guardians agree to release from liability, indemnify, and hold harmless GUGCS and their respective directors, officers, employees, contractors, representatives and agents against all claims, damages, and costs that may result from my child(ren)'s use of the Schools' laptop devices or the failure of any protection measures used by GUGCS, except as may result of such parties' gross negligence or willful misconduct. Further, parents/guardians accept full responsibility for supervision of their child(ren)'s use of their access account, the Schools' laptop devices and the Internet if and when such access is not within the Schools' physical facilities.

### **STUDENT ABSENCES**

#### **TARDIES**

Students are expected to come to school on time daily. The school day starts at 8:00am and students should arrive at their classrooms at that time. Students are marked late at 8:00 and will be given late passes by the security team. All late students receive an automated notification to their homes. Excessive tardiness can impact academic learning and is taken very seriously.

#### **ABSENCES**

Students are expected to maintain 95% attendance throughout the school year. If your child is absent, please call or email the main office by 8:30am to inform of this absence. You also must email your child's classroom teacher to inform them. Make sure to identify yourself, your child, the class your child is in, and the reason for absence. If you have medical documentation for a student's absence please submit it to the main office. In the event that your child is absent for 3 or more consecutive days, parents are required to provide written documentation concerning the absences. Please note all absences, despite a phone call, may not be considered excused. Excused absences may require documentation (medical appointment, religious observance, legal order, etc.). The office follows up with parents when a child is absent from school. Students are responsible for making up all missed assignments while absent.

During absences, you may request to pick up homework and class work or have work sent home with a sibling or friend. Work requests should be called into the office (or emailed to the classroom teacher) by 9:00 am and will be available for pick up at the end of the school day. If a student will be absent for a longer period of time due to vacation or another circumstance, classroom teachers must be given three days' notice via email or written note to compile work.

Students are responsible for meeting with teachers upon return from an absence to get make up classwork, homework, quizzes, tests, projects, etc.

Please note that completing assignments outside of school does not replace an absence or count as being present at school.



In order to maximize student learning, GUGCS expects students to be present for a majority of the school day. GUGCS believes that regular attendance is essential to our educational program and is directly correlated with academic achievement. Accordingly, if students leave very early or arrive very late, GUGCS reserves the right to mark students as absent.

- Students who arrive at school after 12:30pm may be considered absent.
- Students who leave school prior to 11am may be considered absent.

*\*In the event of a high number of absences, particularly those in a consecutive order and those without a sufficient notice or reason, GUGCS staff may need to call the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to open a case for chronic absenteeism.*

#### **COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES RE: ATTENDANCE**

Teachers, office staff, and school leaders may reach out to you when your child is absent to discuss their plans to return to school, how they will be expected to make up assignments, and to check in on how your student is doing. The Operations Team sends notices to families as an alert when a pattern of excessive absences and/or tardiness takes place. The purpose of this communication is to ensure that families understand the seriousness we place on student attendance, and how detrimental excessive absences or tardiness can be in a child's social and academic development. It is important to note that your child should be in school at all times unless there are extenuating circumstances such as an illness or religious holiday. Please note that if your child is excessively absent from school without excuse the school may be required to report educational neglect to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR). Please see the Attendance and Tardy Letter Protocol below:

#### **Absences:**

- <5 absences - Family receives a phone call from the school.
- 5 absences – Family receives letter notifying of absences and may receive a phone call.
- 10 absences – Family receives letter with appointment time to meet with school staff.
- 15 absences – Family receives certified letter with appointment time to meet with School Leader

#### **Lateness:**

- 5-10 latenesses - Family may receive a phone call from the school
- 20 latenesses – Family receives letter notifying of number of days tardy
- 30 latenesses – Family receives letter with appointment time to meet with school staff.
- 40 latenesses - Family receives certified letter with appointment time to meet with School Leader

Please be advised that "excused" absences are still considered absences on your child's record. The difference between an "excused" and "unexcused" is that we have an explanation as to why these absences happened (i.e. sickness, death in family, surgery). It is important that all parents hand in doctors notes as soon as possible to the main office to account for excused absences. If a student misses



10 consecutive days of school, or more than 20 days of school, the school may commence an investigation as to why the student has been absent.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES**

It is the mission of GUGCS to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of all learners in the school community. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires appropriate services to be administered in the “least restrictive environment” appropriate for a student’s needs. Therefore, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are included in the classroom to the fullest extent appropriate and teachers are obligated to make accommodations and modifications to meet the needs of the child.

GUGCS provides the following special education programming for students mandated through an IEP:

- Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT): One general education teacher and one special education teacher co-plan and co-teach a group of students, both with and without disabilities, for core classes including ELA, math, science, and social studies.
- Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS): A special education teacher provides out of classroom instruction to students requiring intensive support in acquiring foundational skills.
- Counseling Services: In addition to providing high quality academic instruction we must also provide support for our students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs. One of the ways we support social and emotional growth in our students is by providing counseling services. We have several school counselors on staff who are available to provide individual and group counseling services. School counselors provide emotional guidance to our students, help students process emotions that may be inhibiting their academic focus, encourage our students to implement healthy coping strategies into their daily lives, and provide behavioral management strategies.

GUGCS also coordinates the following mandated IEP related services through agency providers:

- Speech and language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Hearing services
- Paraprofessional service

The responsibilities of teachers for students with IEPs and/or 504 plans include:

- To read and comply with all student IEPs or 504 plans
- To provide students with appropriate modifications, accommodations (including testing accommodations) and specifically designed instruction (SDI)
- To provide instruction that targets individual annual goals and monitor progress toward these goals
- To actively participate in yearly IEP meetings



### **Successful Students Committee (Student Support Team)**

In order to collaboratively support all of our learners, GUGCS deans, counselors, and the Director of Support Services Regularly within grade-level **Successful Students Committee (Student Support Team)** meetings. Classroom teachers may refer students of concern based on current academic performance, learning characteristics, and/or social & emotional wellbeing. During SSC meetings, strategies are discussed to support student learning and identify individualized growth goals. Families will be notified by their classroom teacher in advance if their child is being referred to SSC. Students may receive additional interventions without family consent.

SSC follows the Response to Intervention (RtI) model to ensure that any struggling learner is first referred to SSC and that the staff has provided and documented tiered levels of increasing instructional support.

### **504 Accommodations Protocol**

Growing Up Green adheres to all policies and procedures as defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) in order to provide various accommodations for qualifying students with disabilities. Students who may be in need of accommodations are evaluated by a school-based 504 team, composed of various staff members including classroom teachers, school counselors, the school nurse, and administrative staff.

Eligible students are provided accommodations or modifications within a written 504 Accommodation Plan that outlines the specific accommodations the student will receive.

All family requests for 504 accommodations must be submitted in writing to the school to the attention of the Director of Support Services. Upon receipt of an initial written request, the 504 team will schedule a 504 Assessment Meeting within 30 days. If your child comes to GUGCS with a pre-existing 504 Plan, the 504 team will conduct a new evaluation within 30 days of the student's transfer. The 504 team will notify the parent or legal guardian of its decision in writing. If the 504 team determines the student has a disability that affects his or her learning, the 504 team will refer the student to the CSE (see below) for evaluation for special education services. The 504 team takes into consideration all relevant information when making a determination as to whether a student qualifies as an individual with a disability, as defined under Section 504 including: reports, evaluations or medical diagnoses provided by the student's parents, student grades, disciplinary referrals, health information, standardized test scores, and informal teacher/provider observations. All Section 504 plans are reviewed annually.

### **Special Education Services**

As a charter school, the New York City Department of Education is the Local Education Agency for special education and the DOE Committee on Special Education (CSE) is responsible for a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The CSE is responsible for the evaluation, development of the



appropriate IEP, and holding IEP meetings. The CSE involves GUGCS staff, teachers and providers in this process.

Under state and federal law, only specific people may make a referral for Initial Evaluation, including a custodial parent or guardian. A school staff member may also make a request for initial referral. Any initial referral received from a parent/guardian must be in writing. Please direct all inquiries and requests regarding evaluations to the Director of Support Services at your respective campus.

Once a referral has been made, families will be contacted by CSE and will be asked to sign a Consent for Initial Evaluation form. The evaluations will determine the child's skills, abilities, and areas of need that affect his or her school performance, including involvement in the general education curriculum. Families will also be asked to provide the school and/or CSE with a recent physical examination of the child as well.

Once a child's evaluation is completed, the family will be invited to attend a CSE meeting along with the IEP team, including the relevant staff of Growing Up Green and a representative of the CSE. All team members share information and work together to determine whether the child classifies as a student with a disability. If the student qualifies, the IEP team determines which special education services, accommodations, and annual goals are necessary to best meet their individual needs. Measurable annual goals will be reported on each marking period by your child's academic and or related service providers. Families will receive a written progress report measuring their child's progress toward meeting their annual IEP goals during report card distribution.

After a child has received special education services, the IEP team holds an **Annual Review** meeting to review the child's progress once per year. Additionally, he or she may be referred for what is called a **Reevaluation**. In this case, the team will review current data and determine whether new evaluations should be conducted. In addition, a **Mandated Three-Year Reevaluation** must be completed once every three years with a school psychologist, including the option of conducting updated assessments. If the family or school believes that special education services are no longer required, a Reevaluation meeting may be requested at any time in order to consider declassification from special education services.

### **English Language Learners**

In keeping with state and federal law, GUGCS offers English as a New Language (ENL) services to all grade levels for English Language Learners (ELLs) who are limited in English proficiency. GUGCS offers additional instruction and support for ELLs based on their most recent New York state English language assessment; either the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) or the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). A licensed ENL instructor gives academic support and/or instruction to ELLs through a push-in and/or pullout model. Students will remain eligible to receive ENL support services until they meet the exit criteria required by New York State: scoring "commanding" on the NYSESLAT.



### **PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

GUGCS believes that the success of each student depends on clear parent teacher communication. Communication will take a variety of forms. All parents, guardians, and family members are responsible for reading all communications that the school sends out via Parent Square or via email.

1. Weekly Classroom Communication: Each week, classroom teachers provide parents with a weekly update about the curriculum being covered in class, special events, projects, and field trips via newsletter and/or blog.
2. Parent Square: School Leaders, Teachers, Administrators, and Office Staff will communicate with families via our communication platform, Parent Square. This will be in email, text, and call form, as well as via the Parent Square application. Families are expected to read and review all communication from Parent Square.
3. Parent-Teacher Conferences: Formal parent teacher conferences take place in the fall and in the spring during which each family meets with the classroom teacher to set up learning goals and review student progress. Conferences are mandatory for all families to attend. Beginning in second grade, students are expected to attend the conference with their family. Additional conferences can be scheduled on an as-needed basis. Families who wish to meet with teachers or administrators outside of formal conference dates must schedule an appointment at least 24 hours ahead of time. Teachers and administrators are NOT available to meet with families during the instructional day unless a scheduled appointment has been made.
4. Email/Written Communication: Parents and teachers also communicate through written notes, phone calls, and email. Email is the preferred method of written communication. All teachers can be reached through their GUGCS email account; please see the online directory. Teachers strive to reply to parent emails within 48 hours.
5. Notification of Teacher Qualifications: Parents of each student have a right to information about the professional qualifications of their student's classroom teachers. Qualification information includes, at a minimum:
  - a. Whether the teacher has state certification for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
  - b. Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
  - c. Undergraduate and graduate degrees, by field or discipline and any other certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree;
  - d. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

The School requires that all students maintain at least one emergency contact name and phone number on file. This number must be for a different individual than the primary guardian, in case of an emergency.



### **PARENT REMINDERS**

GUGCS appreciates working with families and considers them an integral part of our school community. We ask that parents/guardians be mindful of a few reminders while on our school campus.

1. Parents/guardians must leave the school building by 8:40am (if they have previously signed up for morning meeting and have been invited to visit)..
2. When parents/guardians have a scheduled appointment with a classroom teacher or administrator they must go directly from the lobby security desk to the main office and wait for the teacher or administrator to come or be escorted by an office employee to the meeting destination.
3. Parents/guardians must stay at the security desk when picking up a child from after school; parent/guardians may not go into the building to pick-up a child unless it is an emergency.
4. Parents/guardians may ONLY use the staff bathrooms. It is not permitted under any circumstances for parents/guardians to use student bathrooms.
5. Parents/guardians may not use the parking lot at any time.
6. Use of the outdoor recess yard and cafeteria after school hours is prohibited.
7. If any family would like to observe a classroom during instructional time or would like for an outside provider (such as a medical doctor or therapist) to observe a student during instructional time, a request must be submitted for approval to the School Leader(s).

Visitors (Parents, family members, guests, or any other visitors) that are on site at the school must remain polite, respectful, and courteous to all others at all times. Visitors should model the expectations we expect students to display by being kind and refraining from yelling, arguing, fighting, or any profane, threatening, or harassing language. Visitors may not approach or interact with students other than their own child without prior authorization from school leadership. Any visitors, including parents and legal guardians, who do not exhibit proper behavior on site may be restricted from the school building at the discretion of school leadership, in accordance with GUGCS policy, and with written notice provided. In the event of any physical violence towards others, or refusal to follow policy, law enforcement may be contacted.

**Pet Policy:** With the exception of licensed service animals, no animals or pets are allowed to be brought on the School premises for any reason.

### **PARENT ACCESS TO BUILDING**

GUGCS' open door policy enables families to drop off students in classrooms, take part in morning meetings, attend special events, and be present to help at the school with permission. We consider this access an important part of who we are as a school and the value we place on family involvement. However, if an issue occurs which deems it necessary to limit the access of a parent/guardian/visitor to the school due to concerns about an individual's conduct, we will provide a notification in person and/or



in writing. The reasoning behind this decision is to limit access to our building and the time period for such restrictions will be outlined.

### **Recording**

Students, families, and guests, are not allowed to record or film at any time while on school grounds or in the surrounding property areas (ie. playground, parking lot, sidewalk). The only exceptions to this would be at student or family events, at the School's discretion, such as a graduation ceremony.

### **MANDATED REPORTERS**

All GUGCS employees are mandated reporters under the state social services law and are obligated by the law to report any concerns regarding possible child abuse, maltreatment, or neglect when there is reasonable cause to suspect them. GUGCS employees do not make judgments regarding whether or not such concerns are occurring but rather fulfill their legal responsibility by calling the Mandated Reporter Hotline. The Mandated Reporter Hotline team makes a determination on whether opening an ACS case is warranted based on information provided.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY EXPECTATIONS**

In all academic environments, students are responsible for their own work. At GUGCS, we pride ourselves in teaching our students trust, honesty, and integrity. Any type of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Logical consequences will be implemented for any actions that jeopardize academic integrity.

Plagiarism: According to mirriam-webster.com, plagiarism is "the act of using another person's words or ideas without giving credit to that person." Simply put, to plagiarize is to give the impression that you have thought or written something that you really obtained from another source, which includes any source on the Internet. Plagiarism is a form of cheating.

Examples of Plagiarism include:

- Copying material word for word without putting it in quotation marks and crediting the author.
- Paraphrasing information without giving credit to the author.
- Changing some words but including the initial thought in your piece.

Cheating:

- Cheating on a school test, quiz or assignment by using another student's work or allowing someone else to copy your work.
- Turning in work (including homework) that is another person's as your own.
- Knowing and willingly allow someone to turn in your work (including homework) as their own.



## **PROMOTION CRITERIA**

Below is a list of requirements that determine promotion criteria for students to advance to the next grade level. Promotional decisions are taken into account using a combination of the factors below. If a student is at risk of retention, families will receive a “Promotion in Doubt” letter at Parent Teacher Conferences in November and/or March.

Students are considered “At-Risk” if they are not meeting GUGCS grade level academic, social, and emotional benchmarks and expectations.

A student is considered “Promotion in Doubt” if they do not meet at least 2 out of the 3 following criteria (outlined below):

- Academic standards
- Social / Emotional development standards
- Attendance
  - For the purposes of promotion in doubt (“PID”), the School approximates that 3 tardies is similar, or equivalent, to an absence.

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Academic</b>           | <p>Meets GUGCS curricular grade level standards as determined by performance on classwork and as determined by the results of the formative and summative assessments. <b>Must meet 2 of the following 3 standards to have met the “Academic Standards” portion of the promotional criteria:</b></p> <p><i>June Reading Levels:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Kindergarten:</b> Reading Level D or above</li> <li>● <b>1st Grade:</b> Reading Level J or above</li> <li>● <b>2nd Grade:</b> Reading Level N or above</li> <li>● <b>3rd Grade:</b> Reading Level Q or above</li> <li>● <b>4th Grade:</b> Reading Level T or above</li> <li>● <b>5th Grade:</b> Reading Level V or above</li> </ul> <p><i>Writing Ability: average above a 2 on unit assessments and/or exit tickets.</i></p> <p><i>Mathematics: average above a 2 on unit assessments and/or exit tickets.</i></p> |
| <b>Social / Emotional</b> | <p>Meets developmentally appropriate social standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Kindergarten:</b> Manages Emotions, Develops Friendships, Follows Rules and Expectations, Takes Responsibility for Behavior and Choices</li> <li>● <b>1st Grade:</b> Regulates Energy and Engagement, Demonstrates Perseverance, Develops Friendship Skills, Listens and Follows Rules</li> <li>● <b>2nd Grade:</b> Manages Emotions, Demonstrates Perseverance, Demonstrates Friendship Skills, Listens and Follows Rules</li> <li>● <b>3rd Grade:</b> Resolves Conflicts, Demonstrates Perseverance and Effort</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |



|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>4th Grade:</b> Resolves Conflicts, Demonstrates Perseverance and Effort</li> <li>● <b>5th Grade:</b> Resolves Conflicts, Demonstrates Perseverance and Effort</li> </ul>                                                                   |
| <b>Attendance</b> | <p>Maintains 90% or higher attendance, is absent for fewer than 18 days*.</p> <p><i>Note - this is the minimum criteria for promotion purposes; GUGCS expects a minimum 95% attendance rate.</i></p> <p>*Absence number for promotion criteria takes into account tardies as well.</p> |

Teachers meet families in the fall and/or spring to discuss student academic progress within interventions and to discuss further necessary supports. Families of students performing below grade-level and receiving support and interventions shall receive an update of the child's level of achievement. At this time, the referral process for Special Education Services may be discussed.

At the end of the school year, parents may voice their preference about their child's promotion; however, students may not be retained or promoted solely by request of the parent. All final decisions regarding promotion are made by the administration, in consultation with the child's teacher. A final decision will be made about a child's promotion by mid-June. GUGCS will not evaluate children at the end of the summer in order to determine promotion.

The school leader with support from the Executive Director will make final decisions on all promotions and retentions, and can, in specific situations, make exceptions to the protocol above if they deem fit.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Students go on many field trips throughout the year. In order to be able to attend trips, students must be able to follow the directions of all adults who work with GUGCS at all times, as any one of the adults may be responsible for their safety. If we feel that a child poses a safety concern due to difficulties in following adult directions, the School will schedule a meeting or phone call with the family to discuss the field trip. If for any reason a child is not able to attend a field trip, the child will be placed in another classroom for the day with appropriate work. If a child demonstrates unsafe behavior the morning of a trip they may not be permitted to attend the trip and you will be notified that your child will be placed in another location while their class is on the trip.

For Overnight Field Trips (Grade 4 and above), there may be additional requirements in place to determine student participation. Parents will be notified if their child has any additional requirements to meet prior to the overnight trip or if the school determines a student is unable to participate in the trip for any reason.

If you are a trip chaperone, please understand that your child/group must meet the same behavioral, work, and healthy snack expectations on the trip as all GUGCS students, and should not have special



privileges, including trips to gift shops, food vendors, etc. Parents are welcome to suggest field trip ideas to their classroom teacher. All field trips directly coincide with the current particular unit of study.

### **Parent Chaperone Guidelines**

Before the trip:

- Make sure you are willing and physically able to take part in all activities involved in the field trip.
- Notify the classroom teacher at least 24 hours in advance if you realize that you can no longer serve as a chaperone. Without notice, the trip may be canceled for the students. We must ensure a certain number of chaperones in order to exit the building.

On the day of the trip:

- Be on time!
- Dress appropriately for the type of field trip.
- Siblings of your enrolled child and/or other children who are not students at our school are not permitted to join you on bus/train transportation to the trip or on the trip itself.
- **Cell phones should only be used for emergency situations to call the teacher – no texting, games, videos, social media, etc.**
- All student discipline concerns should be addressed by the teachers.
- Do not purchase souvenirs, snacks, or meals during the trip - even for your own child.

### ***Safety Concerns***

- Introduce yourself to your small group, and make sure they know your name.
- Always stay with your group.
- If you need to step away from your group for a moment, let another adult know.
- **No smoking, vaping, of any substance (tobacco, marijuana, etc).**
- **No drinking of alcoholic beverages.**
- Because of possible allergies, do not provide food to children during any part of the trip.
- Don't hesitate to ask the teacher questions if you are not sure what to do in a given situation!

### **TEACHER GIFTS AND TEACHER REQUESTS**

Gifts to teachers or other school personnel from students or their families are not expected at any time during the school year. Gifts from individual students or their families to teachers or other school personnel should be limited to token expressions of affection and appreciation (for example, homemade cards, baked goods, or inexpensive purchased items).

In compliance with NYS law, gifts from individual students or families to teachers or other school personnel must be limited in value or cost to \$75.00. In lieu of individual giving, the School encourages families to participate in the annual school fundraiser held by the PTO.



Teacher Requests: Families may not submit a teacher preference for their child's next class. GUGCS administrators create class groupings based on the needs of the entire grade.

### **TOYS, CELLULAR PHONES, ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

GUGCS is not responsible for the damage, theft, or loss of any student personal items that are brought on site, including, but not limited to, backpacks, phones, headphones, technology devices, glasses, books, and toys.

GUGCS strongly encourages all students to leave their personal electronic devices at home. In the event that personal electronic devices are brought to school, all policies below apply.

In accordance with [New York State Law](#), personal cell phones, smart phones, and other internet-enabled electronic devices are not allowed to be used in school at any point during the day, from start to finish, except under special circumstances outlined in the NYS law\*. This policy applies at all times while on school property, including arrival, dismissal, and after-school activities, such as clubs or sports. This policy also applies on all school field trips. These devices must be turned in according to the protocols outlined below.

*The **devices** that are not allowed to be used are as follows:*

- Cell phones
- Smart phones
- Smart watches
- Tablets/iPads/iPods
- Personal laptops
- Personal chromebooks
- Kindles
- AirPods/Earbuds/Headphones
- Smart glasses (meta glasses, or anything equivalent)
- All other internet enabled electronic devices or anything with similar functionality

*The **devices** that **MUST** be **registered** and **turned in** are as follows:*

- Cell phones
- Smart phones
- Smart watches
- Tablets/iPads/iPods
- Personal laptops
- Personal chromebooks
- Kindles
- All other internet enabled electronic devices or anything with similar functionality



*\*Exceptions to this policy, under the law, are as follows:*

- Authorization by a teacher, principal, or the school district, charter school, or BOCES for a specific educational purpose.
- Instances where necessary for the management of a student's healthcare.
- Usage in the event of an emergency.
- Usage for translation services.
- Usage on a case-by-case basis, upon review and determination by a school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor, for a student caregiver who is routinely responsible for the care and wellbeing of a family member.
- Additionally, the policy may not prohibit the use of an internet-enabled device where it is included in the student's individualized education program (IEP) or section 504 plans.

#### Elementary School Collection Protocol

Students must turn in their devices each day during morning meeting (or when they arrive at school, if arriving after morning meeting) to their classroom teachers. Each elementary school classroom has a secure lock box that teachers will use to store student devices. If a student is leaving early, teachers will ensure they receive their device back before leaving. All storage boxes will remain locked throughout the entirety of the school day. GUGCS encourages all students to ensure that devices remain in silent/off mode throughout the day. If a student is leaving early, they may pick up their device from the main office upon leaving for the day.

#### Logical Consequences for Devices

If a student is found to have a device with them (regardless of whether or not the parent/guardian reported that the student would be bringing a device to school), a logical consequence will be applied. Additional and more severe consequences will be applied in the event that the student was **using** the device during the school day, and/or if this happens on a recurring or repeated basis.

*If a student is found with a device during the school day, it must be turned in immediately and parent/guardian will be notified promptly.*

Possible logical consequences for device possession or use include, but are not limited to^:

- Parent/guardian pick up of device
- Discipline referral
- Written reflection
- Lunch, recess, after-school, or other in-person reflection period
- Parent/guardian/family phone-call and/or in-person meeting
- Community project
- Other logical or restorative consequence as deemed necessary



Taking photos or videos with cellular devices, or cameras that are unapproved by the school, during the school day or at school activities or functions, is prohibited. In addition, students uploading or posting photos or videos to the Internet, which were taken on school premises and without the school's prior written permission, will be subject to disciplinary action at the school level. Concerns regarding "cyber bullying" or inappropriate use of the Internet in school will also be addressed at the school level, and students involved may be subject to disciplinary action. It is a parent's responsibility to monitor their student's use of the Internet and social media outside of school. It is a parent's right to report any Internet behavior, in school or out of school, to law enforcement.

#### Notification of Device Ownership

During registration or annual re-registration, families must indicate if their student has a device that they will be bringing to school. If a student obtains a device after the parent/guardian has already completed this form, families must email the main office team to indicate this change immediately. If a student will no longer be bringing a device to school after the parent/guardian has indicated they were bringing one, families must also email the main office team to indicate this change.

Device registration must include the following information. This information is collected in the registration form, or should be included in any messaging to the main office team about a change in device ownership (ie. obtaining a new device, switching to a different device model, etc.):

- Brand/make of phone (ie. Apple, Samsung, etc.)
- Model (ie. iPhone 15, Galaxy S7, etc.)
- Color/Case/Descriptors (ie. bright green case, back of phone is yellow, etc.)
- Student Cell Phone Number (please note this will not be shared and is only case for emergency purposes)

#### Student/Family Communication During School Day

Students are not permitted to call parents from their cell phones during the school day and if there is an issue that arises and the parents need to be notified, the family will be contacted by an administrator. We encourage families to reinforce this message with their child and ask that students refrain from contacting them throughout the school day.

Parents/guardians who need to communicate with their child should choose one of the following options. ***Please note that these communication methods should only be used for urgent or serious matters.***

1. Call the main office and ask to speak to their child (while providing context of why).
2. Email your child's teacher(s), advisor, dean, counselor, main office, school leader, or other administrator to pass along a message.



3. Visit the school's Main Office in person and ask to speak to their student (while providing context of why).

#### **Waiver of Liability**

The school is not responsible for lost or damaged cellular phones or other electronic devices. By sending a student to school with a cellular phone or other electronic device, parents/guardians assume the risk and responsibility of loss or damage to their child's device. GUGCS will not reimburse families for lost or damaged devices under any circumstances.

#### **MEDICATIONS, ALLERGIES, AND OTHER**

A completed and signed Medical Administration Form (MAF) is required on file before the School Nurse will store and administer any medication on site. GUGCS will not store or administer any medication without proper authorization and documentation from the Doctor. If the MAF is not provided for a chronic issue, the student will not be able to participate in recess, gym, or field trips until the form is provided to the school nurse. This form is required for all medications, including Over the Counter (OTC, allergy, etc.). Allergies are noted in the student's medical file, as well as in the classroom and cafeteria, based on the information provided by the parent and the doctor at the date of enrollment or after. GUGCS follows all New York City Department of Education policies concerning health and wellness.

#### **SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS**

GUGCS follows New York City Department of Education decisions on weather-related school closings and delays. Please monitor all communications from GUGCS for information on school closings and delays. For school closings, GUGCS may opt to switch to remote learning in place of in-person instruction.

In addition to providing you with the yearly school calendar, you will have the option to sign up to receive automated calls and written alerts, with specific calendar information related to your student, via Parent Square. Reminder email alerts may be sent and fliers may also be sent home. The school's website ([www.gugcs.org](http://www.gugcs.org)), [Facebook page](#), and instagram ([instagram.com/growingupgreennyc](https://www.instagram.com/growingupgreennyc)) will be updated to relay critical information. We will also send notifications via our communications platform, ParentSquare.

#### **DISCIPLINE**

All GUGCS students are expected to follow school rules and expectations. We have support in place for students who may have difficulty following expectations and we layer interventions to help students take responsibility for their own actions; however, there are logical consequences for students who are unable to follow school rules and expectations. At GUGCS we align our disciplinary procedures to the Responsive Classroom program. Responsive Classroom focuses on building relationships and working with students to teach strategies for self-regulation. One purpose of discipline is to enable students to



learn to change by examining their attitudes and actions. The interventions in place are layered to help students take responsibility for their own actions.

### **Classroom management**

*Take a Break* – Each classroom has a designated place for students to regroup and fix their behavior so they can successfully rejoin the class activity or assignment. Take a Break is an appropriate first step for students who are calling out, off task, disruptive, unable to follow directions, or simply need a few moments of quiet to regain focus.

*Buddy Classroom* – If “Take a Break” is not a successful solution, students are asked to Take a Break in another “buddy” classroom. Sometimes a change of setting is all a student needs to get back on track. Other times it is helpful for a student to complete his or her work in another classroom. Each teacher has established a relationship with a buddy teacher and students are taught how to enter a buddy classroom, where to sit once they have arrived, and how long to stay (typically a maximum of ten minutes, but it can vary). A Buddy Classroom is an appropriate step for students who are repeatedly calling out, off task, disruptive, unable to follow directions, etc., and/or Take a Break did not work.

*Logical Consequences* – Operating within our Responsive Classroom framework, GUGCS believes that consequences for children should be logical and tied to the action. Classroom teachers are able to provide logical consequences within the classroom setting at their own discretion for more minor behavior infractions. Logical consequences for actions may include students being asked to clean a mess they made, fix something they broke, write an apology note to a classmate or teacher, etc.

*Problem Solving Conferences* - Students who are struggling with meeting behavioral expectations in the classroom setting may be asked to engage in a problem solving conference with their classroom teacher. The focus of the problem solving conference is to identify the problem behaviors and come up with mutually agreed upon ways for both the teacher and the student to work to fix the problem.

*Student Culture Skill Building and Conflict Mediation Sessions* - Students who are engaging in repetitive disruptive behaviors, who are experiencing conflicts with their peers that are leading to contentious situations, or who may be in need of learning new skills to improve behavior may be required to attend a student culture skill building or conflict mediation session with our Deans of Students. These practices are part of our logical consequences model and seek to help our students understand the impact of their actions and ways they can change behavior to be more successful in the school setting. The purpose of these sessions is to help students support each other and educate students on strategies to use to make positive changes.

Dean Referrals: If classroom management strategies are unsuccessful in helping a student fix behavior, or a student is unsafe, a Dean Referral may be warranted. Teachers complete a Dean Referral by checking



off the behavior or incident that occurred and communicating with the dean. Students may be asked to complete a reflection sheet and answer questions such as, “What happened?” and “How were you feeling at the time?” Developmentally appropriate reflection sheets have been created for upper- grade and lower-grade students.

- Once a student has received a Dean Referral, the behavior concern is considered to be more serious. In addition to completing a reflection sheet, the student’s teachers and Dean of Students will contact the student’s parents and a parent meeting may be set-up to discuss the student’s actions and logical consequence. If a child receives 3 or more Dean Referrals in the course of a school year the Dean of Students will consult with the Counseling Department and supportive staff to develop and implement appropriate behavioral interventions and supports for the student in the classroom. Deans & teachers work to develop comprehensive positive behavior supports for each individual student that is tailored around that student’s needs and may include any or all of the following: positive check-ins with staff members, developing sensory or exercise breaks, providing in-classroom accommodations, conducting a functional behavioral assessment and individualized behavior intervention plan, and/or recommending outside or in school additional evaluations or counseling services.
- Depending on the severity or frequency of the Dean Referrals, students may have reflection time either before or after dismissal, may be excluded from special events or activities, receive short term removal from the classroom, or may receive in-school or short term suspensions or out-of-school or long term suspensions

Throughout any of these infractions, we believe family school communication is essential to the success of the child. Throughout the year families may request a conference call or meeting with the Dean of Students or other GUGCS staff and administrators. Families who wish to meet with teachers or administrators must schedule an appointment 24 hours ahead of time. Teachers and administrators are NOT available to meet with families during the instructional day unless a scheduled appointment has been made. Please note that at any time if your child is acting in a manner that is unsafe to themselves and those around him you may be called to pick up your child due to safety concerns. In serious instances, if you are unable to pick up your child in a timely manner and we are concerned about their safety we will contact medical personnel and/or law enforcement. Our goal is always to keep children safe and learning to the best of their ability.

### **GUGCS Discipline Code**

GUGCS clearly states school rules in all classrooms and expects all students to follow rules. We will issue disciplinary consequences related to student conduct and behavior that breaks our school rules while on school property, traveling to or in attendance at a school-sponsored or school-related event or activity, whether on or off campus. GUGCS may also enforce disciplinary consequences for certain other conduct that breaks our school’s rules that relates to, affects, or shares a nexus with the school, its students or its



employees, regardless of when or where the conduct occurs, including conduct that occurs online or via social media.

a. Code of Conduct/Discipline Policy

The GUGCS code of conduct/discipline policy provides due process while allowing GUGCS to take necessary actions in the best interests of the student body. Discipline will not be imposed without an investigation and an opportunity for the student to provide his/her position. In more severe circumstances where a long-term suspension or expulsion is sought, students are entitled to a more substantial hearing with more extensive due process protections.

Student Disciplinary Code: Admitted students and families are given clear expectations and understandings of the rules for how students are to conduct themselves in school, while participating in school activities, and traveling to and from school. A list of non-negotiable rules is posted in all classrooms, as well as reviewed by the classroom teacher whenever they deem it necessary.

Failure to comply with the rules will result in disciplinary action. In all disciplinary matters students have the right to present their version of the relevant facts and circumstances. Based on the severity of the violation, disciplinary actions range from an extended reflection period to exclusion from extracurricular activities, to short and long term suspensions and, in the most extreme circumstances, expulsion. Law enforcement agencies may be contacted when needed to preserve safety. Disciplinary actions for students with disabilities will be handled in a manner consistent with applicable special education law.

| Discipline            | Implementation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Short-Term Removal    | Determined by Dean of Students and School Leaders; a student may be removed from classroom environment for a period of up to <b>two hours</b> . This is different from taking a break out in a buddy classroom.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Short-Term Suspension | Determined by the School Leaders, and Dean of Students; a student may be removed from school for a period of up to 10 days.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Long-Term Suspension  | Determined by the Executive Director, School Leaders, and Dean of Students; a student may be removed from school for a period of more than 10 days. For suspensions longer than 10 days, the School will convene a hearing and make a suspension recommendation to a Hearing Officer. Hearing officers are determined by our School Leader and are required to be individuals that are not involved directly with the student. |

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Expulsion | Determined by the Executive Director, School Leaders, Dean of Students, and the Board of Trustees; a student may be removed from the school permanently. When seeking expulsion, the School will convene a hearing and make a recommendation to a Hearing Officer. Hearing officers are determined by our School Leader and are required to be individuals that are not involved directly with the student. |
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### Extracurricular Activities

Students that participate in extracurricular activities must follow relevant school rules and behavioral expectations. They are required to wear their uniforms, do their school/homework, and obey the disciplinary code at all times. If a student has behaved inappropriately and should be excluded from a team or activity, a teacher or staff member may suggest this to their program supervisor and exclusion or non-exclusion will be determined. Families will be notified if their child is at risk of being excluded from a team or an activity and/or when exclusion has been deemed appropriate due to the student's behavior.

### Gun Free Schools Act

Under the federal Gun Free Schools Act, suspension of a student is mandatory if the student brings a firearm to school, for a period of at least one year. The Executive Director may modify the length of the suspension or expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

### Tiers of Misconduct

| <b>TIER 1</b><br>Behaviors that are more minor in nature but detract from the learning of students and negatively impact the classroom community.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>TIER 2</b><br>Behaviors that are more serious in nature that violate the school's code of conduct or create a disrespectful environment and warrant a dean referral.                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>TIER 3</b><br>Serious behaviors that endanger the safety of others or the student and demonstrate disrespect for staff, students, and/or school community.                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>TIER 4</b><br>Behaviors that are extreme in nature and create a serious threat to the safety of students or others in the school.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Examples:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Verbally disruptive.</li> <li>● Unwillingness to follow directions.</li> <li>● Refusal to participate or complete work.</li> <li>● Unsteady body in the classroom.</li> <li>● Verbally hurt a classmate's feelings or intentionally said something unkind to others.</li> <li>● Any other negative</li> </ul> | <b>Examples:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Threatened or was verbally aggressive towards another person.</li> <li>● Repeated unwillingness to follow directions that has not been corrected after in classroom consequences have been applied.</li> <li>● Cheated on quizzes/ tests/projects.</li> <li>● In unassigned area without permission.</li> </ul> | <b>Examples:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Intentionally physically harming others.</li> <li>● Stole or knowingly used stolen property.</li> <li>● Left assigned room without permission.</li> <li>● Using inappropriate or offensive language towards a teacher or a peer.</li> <li>● Vandalizing school property causing minor</li> </ul> | <b>Examples:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attempting to run out of the building,</li> <li>● running around the school, or running away from adults</li> <li>● without stopping.</li> <li>● Physically assaulting staff members or</li> <li>● threatening to assault staff members.</li> <li>● Endangering the</li> <li>● physical safety of</li> </ul> |

|                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| behaviors that a classroom teacher feels distracts from the learning environment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physically harmed another as a result of being unsafe.</li> <li>• Repeated behaviors listed in Tier 1.</li> <li>• Any other negative behaviors that a staff member believes violates the school's code of conduct or create a disrespectful environment.</li> </ul> | <p>damage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging in behavior that is considered bullying or harassing towards other students.</li> <li>• Refusal to be in the classroom</li> <li>• Steal, attempt to steal, or possess property known by the student to be stolen</li> <li>• Trespass on school property</li> <li>• Abuse school property or equipment</li> <li>• Engage in acts of sexual harassment, including but not limited to physical contact or offensive sexual comments</li> <li>• Repeated behaviors listed in Tier 1 &amp; Tier 2.</li> <li>• Any other negative behaviors that a staff member feels endangers the safety of others or the student and demonstrates disrespect for staff, students, and/or school community</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• another by the use of force or threats of</li> <li>• force, which</li> <li>• reasonably places the victim in fear of</li> <li>• imminent bodily injury</li> <li>• Possessing tobacco, electronic cigarettes, or alcohol</li> <li>• Making a false bomb threat or pulling a false emergency alarm</li> <li>• Possessing, using, attempting to use, or transferring any firearm, knife, razor blade, explosive, mace, tear gas, or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to a student at school</li> <li>• Commit or attempt to commit arson on school property</li> <li>• Possess, sell, distribute or use any alcoholic beverage, controlled substance, imitation, or marijuana on school property or at a school-sponsored event</li> <li>• Vandalize school property causing major damage</li> <li>• Repeated behaviors listed in Tier 2, or 3.</li> <li>• Any other negative behaviors that a staff member feels create a serious threat to the safety or students.</li> </ul> |
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**Potential Consequences**

| <b>TIER 1</b> | <b>TIER 2</b> | <b>TIER 3</b> | <b>TIER 4</b> |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|



|                                             |                                                              |                                          |                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Take a break                                | Dean Referral and automatic visit to Dean of Students Office | Automatic Dean Referral                  | Automatic Dean Referral                                 |
| Buddy Break.                                |                                                              | Time spent out of classroom setting      | Time spent out of classroom setting                     |
| Logical Consequences in the classroom       | Logical Consequence as deemed appropriate                    | In School or Out of School Suspension    | Out of School Suspension<br>Immediate pick up by parent |
| Loss of privilege of class trip or activity | Time spent out of the classroom setting                      | Loss of privilege or repair as warranted | Expulsion                                               |
| Parent phone call or meeting request        | Parent phone call or meeting request                         |                                          |                                                         |
| Problem Solving Conference                  | Early pickup                                                 |                                          |                                                         |
| Mediation                                   |                                                              |                                          |                                                         |

\*Logical consequences are determined on a case-by-case basis, and all listed consequences may not apply.

***Due Process for Suspensions and Expulsions:***

If at any time a student commits any infraction that may warrant an in school or out of school suspension, the student has the right to present their version of relevant facts and circumstances. Parents will be notified by phone or email that their child has committed a behavioral infraction that warrants a suspension and an informal conference will be set up to discuss the suspension. Parents will receive written notification of any infractions leading to a suspension at their informal conference, or via certified mail (in their dominant home language). The informal conference should occur in person, but can occur via phone if families are unable to come in for a meeting. However, if the student's presence in the school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process, the informal conference shall take place as soon as possible after the suspension is reasonably practicable. Parents may not be represented by legal counsel at this conference. Parents will have the opportunity to discuss the relevant facts pertaining to the suspension, and present your child's defense to the allegations leading to the suspension.

Students who have been suspended for more than ten consecutive days or who are subject to expulsion have a right to a formal hearing and GUGCS will provide the student and parent/legal guardian with written notice of the disciplinary infraction that warrants the suspension or expulsion. At the formal hearing, you and your child may be represented by legal counsel, may offer evidence and challenge evidence submitted by the school, and may present witnesses and cross-examine witnesses against your child. Parents whose first language is other than English may request that a translator be present.



The hearing officer may place reasonable restrictions on the conduct of the hearing, including the length of presentations. At the end of the hearing, the hearing officer may issue a decision immediately or may wait until a later date to communicate a decision. The hearing officer shall send written communication of the decision to the parent or guardian of the student. A record of the hearing will be maintained by GUGCS.

Parents or legal guardians have the right to appeal suspension and expulsion decisions. If you wish to appeal, you must do so in writing to Matthew Greenberg, Executive Director at [greenberg@gugcs.org](mailto:greenberg@gugcs.org). The Executive Director will notify the Board of Trustees and arrange for the Board of Trustees to hear the complaints of the appealing party at the next available board meeting. The Executive Director shall notify the appealing party of the location, date, and time of the hearing before the Board of Trustees. In accordance with Education Law §28554, the decision of the Board may be appealed to GUGCS' authorizer, the Board of Regents, New York State Education Department's Charter School Office using the information below:

Charter School Office  
NYS Education Department  
89 Washington Avenue  
Room 5N Mezz,  
Albany, NY 12234

or via email to: [charterschools@nysed.gov](mailto:charterschools@nysed.gov)

***Provisions to Implement Alternative Instruction Options:***

Students removed for a period of ten days or fewer will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule by which to complete missed assignments and/or tests during the time of the suspension. GUGCS will provide additional alternative education instruction for a minimum of two hours for each school day during the out-of-school suspension. Instruction for each student shall be sufficient to enable the student to make adequate academic progress. Students removed for a period of more than ten (10) days will be provided with instruction by one or more of the following individuals in consultation with the student's teacher(s): teacher aides, individuals within a contracted facility. Instruction will take place in one of the following locations: the student's home, a contracted facility (school district in the location of the student), or a room that is used by GUGCS as a suspension room. All provisions of services during removal will be determined on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the needs of the suspended child.

***Provisions for Students with Disabilities:***

Growing Up Green Charter School complies with all applicable laws that pertain to students with disabilities, including the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Dean of



Students, School Leader and Executive Director have the authority to suspend or remove a student as a disciplinary action.

***Rights that apply to students with a disability:***

School personnel may, for not more than 10 school days either consecutively or cumulatively in an academic year, suspend a child with a disability under IDEA who violates a code of student conduct. Consistent with applicable law, such a suspension will be carried out without regard to the student's disability.

A student not specifically identified as having a disability but about whom the school, prior to the behavior which is the subject of the disciplinary action, has a basis of knowledge—in accordance with 34 CFR 300.534—that a disability exists may also be disciplined in accordance with the due process and other provisions applicable to students identified as having a disability.

Before a student may be suspended for more than 10 school days either consecutively or cumulatively in an academic year, he or she must be referred to the CSE of the district of residence for a manifestation determination review (MDR). If the CSE determines that the behavior that violated the student code of conduct was not a manifestation of the child's disability, school personnel may apply the disciplinary procedures to that child with a disability in the same manner and for the same duration as it would to children without disabilities, except that the school must provide services to that child as described below under Services.

If the CSE determines that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the school must either:

1. Conduct a functional behavioral assessment, unless the school had conducted a functional behavioral assessment before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for the child; or
2. If a behavioral intervention plan already has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior.

***Services***

The education service requirements for students with disabilities during the first 10 days of suspension in a school year are the same as they are for students without disabilities.

A child with a disability who is removed from the child's current placement for more than 10 school days must: 1. continue to receive educational services, so as to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP; and 2. receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment, and



behavioral intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not happen again.

### ***Manifestation Determination***

Within 10 school days of any decision to seek suspension of a student with a disability who has already been suspended for 10 school days consecutively or cumulatively within an academic year because of a violation of the code of student conduct, the CSE with input from the school and the parent, must review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine: 1. If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability; or 2. if the conduct in question was the direct result of the school district's failure to implement the child's IEP.

If the CSE determines that either of those conditions was met, the conduct must be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

If CSE determines that the conduct in question was the direct result of the school district's failure to implement the IEP, the school must take immediate action to remedy those deficiencies.

### ***Special Circumstances***

Whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of the child's disability, school personnel may remove a student to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting, or IAES, (determined by the child's CSE) for up to 45 school days, if the child:

1. carries a weapon to school or has a weapon at school, on school premises, on transportation to or from school, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the school;
2. knowingly has or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on transportation to or from school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the school; or 3. has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on transportation to or from school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the school.

The School may take disciplinary action pertaining to the use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol against any student who has a 504 plan who is currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs or in the use of alcohol to the same extent that the School would take disciplinary action against non disabled students. The due process procedures afforded under Section 504 do not apply to disciplinary action for the use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol. However, a student who is eligible for special education under the IDEA should have a manifestation determination review conducted to address any use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol if such conduct could result in a change of placement.



### **SEARCHES/INSPECTIONS**

A student and/or the student's belongings may be searched by a school official if the official has a reasonable suspicion to believe that a search of that student will result in evidence that the student violated the law or a school rule. Items which are prohibited on school property, or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be removed from the student by school authorities.

Student storage and desks remain the property of the school, though the school is not responsible for books, clothing, or valuables left in student storage areas or desks, nor do the students have any expectation of privacy in any storage that is the property of GUGCS. A student shall not place or keep in a storage area or desk any article or material which is of a non-school nature and may cause or tend to cause the disruption of the mission of the school.

The following rules shall apply to the search of school property assigned to a specific student and the seizure of illegal items found therein:

- School authorities will make an individual search of a student's locker or desk only when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is in the possession of an item which is prohibited on school property or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process.
- Searches shall be conducted under the authorization of the School Leader or his/her designee.
- Items, which are prohibited on school property, or which may be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process, may be removed from student lockers or desks by school authorities.

### **INTERNET POLICY**

GUGCS recognizes the rights of students, faculty, staff, and employees who want to participate in online social networking. Our social networking and internet guidelines are designed to create an atmosphere of goodwill, honesty, and individual accountability. GUGCS students should always keep in mind that information produced, shared, and retrieved is a reflection on them and the school community. When accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, podcasts, or other social media relating to the school or school activities, we expect students to keep the following guidelines in mind. **Failure to meet or follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.**

Taking photos or videos with cellular devices, or cameras that are unapproved by the school, during the school day or during school activities and functions, is prohibited. In addition, students uploading or posting photos or videos to the Internet that were taken on school premises and without the school's prior written permission, will be subject to disciplinary action at the school level and the student will be asked to remove those images. Concerns regarding "cyber bullying" or inappropriate use of the Internet impacting the school will also be addressed at the school level, and students involved may be subject to disciplinary action. It is a parent's responsibility to monitor their child's use of the Internet and social



media, outside of school. Actions by a student online that break school rules and negatively impact the school environment may subject the student to disciplinary consequences by the school. Please refer to New York State Laws regarding cyber bullying and harassment on the Internet, as certain situations may be subject to punishment by law. It is a parent's right to report any Internet behavior, in school or out of school, to law enforcement.

### **Social Media/ Internet Guidelines**

We expect GUGCS students to set and maintain high ethical standards in their use of social networking and internet searches. Since social media reaches audiences far beyond the community, students must use social sites responsibly and be accountable for their actions. Social media use, including use outside of school hours, has the potential to disrupt the school learning environment and can be in violation of GUGCS policies.

If a student has a concern regarding a social networking page or account, they should immediately contact the Dean of Students, School Counselors, School Leaders, or another adult within the GUGCS community.

GUGCS students should be mindful of their behavior on social media and should conduct themselves with respect for themselves and others in the GUGCS community. Failure to meet or follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

1. GUGCS reserves the right to request school-related images or content posted without written permission to be removed from the internet.
2. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity, i.e. changing or posting on someone's social media account.
3. When responding to others, remember to be respectful and avoid comments that may be hurtful.
4. Avoid profane, obscene, or threatening language.
5. Users should keep their passwords secure and never share passwords with others. If someone tampers with your blog, email, or social networking account without you knowing about it, you could be held accountable.
6. Cyber bullying is considered an act of harassment, if the school is made aware of repeated online harassment students will be subject to disciplinary action.
7. Students should exercise caution when conducting online searches, making sure that they are not seeking out inappropriate sites and information when using school computers and laptops.

### **HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, BULLYING, AND DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT POLICY**

GUGCS is a community in which respect for others is an integral value. In accordance with state and federal law, the school provides equal educational opportunities for all of our students without regard to



race, religion, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or socio-economic condition.

We believe strongly in the inherent dignity of each member of the community. Therefore, we cannot tolerate any instance of harassment, intimidation, or bullying that targets or impacts any member of our community.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity. It protects victims of sexual or gender-based bullying and harassment and survivors of gender-based violence. Protection from the discrimination on the basis of sex includes protection from being retaliated against for filing a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

Growing up Green is committed to complying with Title IX and enforcing school policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex. Matthew Greenberg, the Executive Director of Growing Up Green Charter Schools, serves as the Title IX Coordinator for Growing Up Green Charter Schools.

If a student feels that he or she has been a victim of any sexual harassment, he or she or his or her parent/legal guardian should contact the Title IX Coordinator using any of the following information:

Matthew Greenberg Executive Director Phone: 347-642-4306

Email: [greenberg@gugcs.org](mailto:greenberg@gugcs.org)

Or to the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html>

Office for Civil Rights, New York Office

U.S. Department of Education 32 Old Slip, 26th Floor

New York, NY 10005-2500

Telephone: 646-428-3800

Fax: 646-428-3843

Or email: [OCR.NewYork@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.NewYork@ed.gov)

G1 ES (LIC) Dignity Act Coordinators

Bari Mimoun

[mimoun@gugcs.org](mailto:mimoun@gugcs.org)

Natalia Gomez

[gomez@gugsc.org](mailto:gomez@gugsc.org)

G2 ES (Jamaica) Dignity Act Coordinators

Casey Smith

[csmith@gugcs.org](mailto:csmith@gugcs.org)



### **Sexual Harassment**

The U.S Department of Education defines sexual harassment in the following terms: “Sexual harassment is conduct that: 1. is sexual in nature; 2. is unwelcome; and 3. denies or limits a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from a school’s education program.

Sexual harassment can take different forms depending on the harasser and the nature of the harassment. The conduct can be carried out by school employees, other students, and non-employee third parties, such as a visiting speaker. Both male and female students can be victims of sexual harassment, and the harasser and the victim can be of the same sex.

The conduct can occur in any school program or activity and can take place in school facilities, on a school bus, or at other off-campus locations, such as a school-sponsored field trip or a training program at another location. The conduct can be verbal, nonverbal, or physical. Examples of sexual harassment may include but are not limited to:

- Unwanted touching or pinching
- Brushing up against someone deliberately
- Blocking or other physical intimidation
- Taunting, making slurs, or making jokes
- Making condescending remarks based on a person’s gender, gender identity or sexual orientation
- Following or stalking
- Gesturing obscenely or suggestively
- Leering or giving sexually suggestive looks
- Asking inappropriate or intrusive questions
- Making repeated and unwanted sexual propositions
- Displaying or transmitting offensive images or words
- Using the Internet for harassment

### **Response Procedures to Sexual Harassment Informal Procedures**

#### **Informal Procedures**

Any student who believes he or she is being sexually harassed is encouraged to clearly and promptly notify the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome. If for any reason a student does not wish to confront the offender directly, or if such confrontation does not successfully end the harassment, the student should notify any one or more of the following persons:



- A trusted adult staff member
- The school counselor
- The Dean of Students

Any student who is uncomfortable for any reason in bringing the matter to the attention of the above persons, should report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator or the Dignity Act Coordinator, or if that is not deemed possible, to the President of the Board of Trustees of Growing Up Green Charter School.

The best course of action in any case will depend on various factors. However, a student reporting sexual harassment under the informal procedures should be aware that the school may decide it is necessary to take action to address the harassment beyond an informal discussion.

### **Formal Complaint Procedures**

*Notification:* A student who believes he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment by any employee, agent, or other student of Growing Up Green Charter School should report the incident to the Dean of Students or School Leader. Any student who is uncomfortable for any reason in bringing the matter to the attention of the above persons, should report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator; the Dignity Act Coordinator; or the Executive Director. If that is not deemed possible, then the incident should be reported to the President of the Board of Directors of Growing Up Green Charter School.

Students are permitted to be accompanied by a friend, relative, guardian, or parent when making a claim of sexual harassment. If a parent of a student believes that his/her son/daughter has been subjected to sexual harassment, then (s)he should follow the above referenced reporting procedure.

*Description of Misconduct:* An accurate record of allegedly objectionable behavior is necessary to resolve a complaint of sexual harassment. All allegations of sexual harassment must be reduced to writing by either the complainant or the recipient of the complaint.

*Timeline for Reporting a Complaint:* – Prompt reporting of complaints is strongly encouraged. While there is no time limit for filing a formal complaint with the school, the accurate resolution of sexual harassment complaints will be expedited by the timely filing of claims. Further, a complainant should be aware that applicable statutes of limitations do constrain the time for instituting outside legal action.

*Complaint Investigation:* Growing Up Green Charter School will promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment in as confidential and sensitive a manner as possible and shall make every reasonable effort, consistent with the best interests of all parties concerned, to complete the investigation within thirty (30) days of receipt of the formal complaint. Regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed, or action is requested, the school will conduct a prompt, impartial, and thorough investigation to determine what happened and will take appropriate steps to resolve the situation.



The student submitting a complaint of sexual harassment and the alleged harasser shall be notified of the results of the investigation. Any administrator, teacher, employee, agent, or student of the School found to have engaged in sexual harassment of any student shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from employment for employees and agents, and up to and including suspension from school for students in accordance with New York State Education Law.

It may be necessary for the school to take interim measures during the investigation of a complaint. For instance, if a student alleges harassment by another student, the school may keep those students separated until the investigation is complete. If a teacher is the alleged harasser, it may be appropriate for the student to transfer to another class.

**Retaliation:** Growing Up Green Charter School will not retaliate against any student who files a sexual harassment complaint in good faith. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately. Any employee, agent, or student of the district found to have retaliated against a student for good faith reporting of sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension for students in accordance with New York State Education Law.

This policy shall constitute the grievance procedures required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 for complaints of gender discrimination within educational institutions receiving federal financial assistance.

### **Dignity for All Students Act Policy**

Growing Up Green Charter School and its Board of Trustees ("Board") are committed to providing a safe and productive learning environment within the charter school. In accordance with New York State's "Dignity for All Students Act" (DASA) the School is committed to promptly addressing incidents of harassment and/or discrimination of students that impede students' ability to learn. This includes bullying, taunting or intimidation in all their myriad forms.

The Dignity for All Students Act ("DASA"), defines incidents of discrimination or harassment as a single incident or a series of related incidents where a student is subjected to harassment and/or discrimination by a student or school employee on school property or at a school function that creates a hostile environment of such a severe or pervasive nature that it unreasonably interferes with a student's educational performance, opportunities, mental or emotional well-being, or causes a student to fear for his or her physical safety.

Growing Up Green Charter School strictly prohibits incidents of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination including, but are not limited to: threats, intimidation or abuse based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), sex, or any other protected characteristic. This restriction applies to school employees, students, parents, school contractors, or visitors on School Property and at School Functions. In addition,



any act of bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination and/or harassment at School Functions, which can reasonably be expected to materially and substantially disrupt the education process or a student's education is strictly prohibited.

#### **Definitions under DASA**

**School Property** means in or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot, or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public elementary or secondary school; or in or on a school bus.

**School Bus** means every motor vehicle owned by a public or governmental agency or private school and operated for the transportation of pupils, children of pupils, teachers and other persons acting in a supervisory capacity, to or from school or school activities, or, privately owned and operated for compensation for the transportation of pupils, children of pupils, teachers and other persons acting in a supervisory capacity to or from school or school activities.

**School Function** means a school-sponsored extracurricular event or activity.

**Disability** means (a) a physical, mental or medical impairment resulting from anatomical, physiological, genetic or neurological conditions which prevents the exercise of a normal bodily function or is demonstrable by medically accepted clinical or laboratory diagnostic techniques or (b) a record of such an impairment or (c) a condition regarded by others as such an impairment, provided, however, that in all provisions of this article dealing with employment, the term must be limited to disabilities which, upon the provision of reasonable accommodations, do not prevent the complainant from performing in a reasonable manner the activities involved in the job or occupation sought or held.

**Discrimination** means discrimination against any student by a student or students and/or employee or employees on school property or at a school function including, but not limited to, discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

**Emotional harm** that takes place in the context of "harassment or bullying" means harm to a student's emotional well-being through creation of a hostile school environment that is so severe or pervasive as to unreasonably and substantially interfere with a student's education.

**Employee** means any person receiving compensation from a school district or



employee of a contracted service provider or worker placed within the school under a public assistance employment program, pursuant to title 9-B of article 5 of the Social Services Law, and consistent with the provisions of such title for the provision of services to such district, its students or employees, directly or through contract, whereby such services performed by such a person involve direct student contact.

**Gender** means a person's actual or perceived sex and includes a person's gender identity or expression.

**Sexual Orientation** means actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, or Bisexuality.

**Harassment/bullying** means the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyberbullying as defined in Education Law §11(8), that

- (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being;
- (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; or
- (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or
- (d) occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property.

For purposes of this definition, the term "threats, intimidation or abuse" shall include verbal and non-verbal actions.

**Cyberbullying** means harassment/bullying, as defined above, through any form of electronic communication.

### **Harassment**

**Harassment** may include any behavior which threatens or intimidates another person, or which creates a hostile or offensive educational or social environment for students. Thus, harassment between students, between adults, from adult to student, or from student to adults cannot be tolerated.



Harassment is a form of discrimination and can take many forms. It may be, but is not limited to:

- Words, signs, gestures, offensive jokes, cartoons, pictures, posters, or digital media
- Postings or comments made online or on social media
- Email, jokes or statements, electronic downloads or files
- Pranks
- Psychological or physical intimidation
- Physical assaults, contact, or violence

Harassment is not necessarily sexual in nature; it may be based on an individual's physical appearance or personal characteristics. It may also take the form of other vocal activity including derogatory statements not directed to the targeted individual but taking place within their hearing. It may include displaying or circulating written material such as notes, photographs, cartoons, digital media, and/or articles of a harassing or offensive nature. Confirmed incidents of harassment, are considered violations of school policy and are subject to disciplinary action.

### **Bullying**

As part of our School's commitment to creating a safe environment, every student must respect the rights of others and ensure a school free from bullying in all its forms.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated over time. Bullying is a physical, verbal, or another intimidating act that causes physical or emotional harm to an individual or group. Online or cyber bullying is defined as any intentional electronic written or graphic act or series of acts by an individual directed at others, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive. Acts of bullying may have effects such as:

- Encouraging others to engage in bullying
- Instilling fear in the person being bullied
- Disparaging an individual's character
- Interfering with a student's education
- Creating a threatening school environment
- Disrupting school operations
- Taking, defacing, damaging, or destroying property

GUGCS has designed a multi-faceted approach to reducing bullying. Components include ongoing classroom practices, curricular intervention, and documentation. These measures are intended to help children build positive social skills, and are not intended simply to punish or take revenge.

However, when bullying behavior persists, disciplinary consequences will be enacted. All acts of



Bullying is prohibited. (See Tiers of Misconduct, above. Bullying is at a minimum a Tier 3 violation)

GUGCS makes documentation forms available for parents and students on the school's website. Students are invited to submit confidential reports of bullying incidents that they have been victims of or witnessed. Parents are encouraged to report bullying incidents that they hear about or observe, and those reports are further investigated by school staff.

### **Students' Rights**

No student shall be subjected to harassment by employees or students on School property or at a School function. Nor shall any student be subjected to discrimination based on the student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex, by School employees or students on School property or at a School function.

In addition, the School reserves the right to discipline students, consistent with our Code of Conduct, who engage in harassment of students off School property under circumstances where such off-campus conduct 1) affects the educative process; 2) actually endangers the health and safety of School students within the educational system; or 3) is reasonably believed to pose a danger to the health and safety of our students. This includes written and/or verbal harassment which materially and substantially disrupts the work and discipline of the School and/or which School officials reasonably forecast as being likely to materially and substantially disrupt the work and discipline of the School.

### **Dignity Act Coordinator**

The school has designated the school counselors as the Dignity Act Coordinators (DAC), also known as the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) Coordinator. The DAC is trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex. The DAC will be accessible to students and other employees for consultation and advice.

If you have been the target of such behaviors listed above or know someone who has, we encourage you to speak to a teacher, the school leader, or school employee. You may also reach out to the DAC for your child's GUGCS campus. School administrators, teachers, and other staff members, students or community members who have witnessed or have reliable information that a student has been subject to harassment, intimidation or bullying are required to report the incident to the DAC immediately.



| GUG1 Elementary, LIC                                                  | GUG1 Middle, LIC                                                       | GUG2 Elementary, Jamaica                                              | GUG2 Elementary, Jamaica                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Natalia Gomez<br><a href="mailto:gomez@gugcs.org">gomez@gugcs.org</a> | Amira Sharif<br><a href="mailto:sharif@gugcs.org">sharif@gugcs.org</a> | Casey Smith<br><a href="mailto:csmith@gugcs.org">csmith@gugcs.org</a> | Anastasia Khasanova<br><a href="mailto:khazanova@gugcs.org">khazanova@gugcs.org</a> |
| Bari Mimoun<br><a href="mailto:mimoun@gugcs.org">mimoun@gugcs.org</a> | Diana Lopez<br><a href="mailto:dlopez@gugcs.org">dlopez@gugcs.org</a>  |                                                                       | Nakia Richardson<br><a href="mailto:richardson@gugcs.org">richardson@gugcs.org</a>  |

### Reporting and Investigating

Any person who has been a victim or who knows of a potential incident of bullying, discrimination, or harassment is required to report it to the DAC. School employees who witness harassment, bullying, or discrimination, or receive a report of such harassment, bullying, or discrimination must verbally notify the DAC or the School Leader no later than one school day after the employee witnesses or receives a report of harassment, bullying or discrimination. School employees must also file a written report with the DAC and School Leader no later than two school days after making the verbal report. The content of the written report should be sufficient to allow the School or the DAC to investigate the allegation or report of violations of the Act. All school employees are expected to participate in the investigation of any allegation of violations of the Act.

Students may make reports of harassment, bullying, or discrimination to the DAC in person, by e-mail, or confidentially through other means.

After receiving a report of potential violation of the Act, the DAC will promptly investigate all complaints of bullying, either formal or informal, and take prompt corrective measures, as necessary. If, after an appropriate investigation, the School finds that this policy has been violated, prompt corrective action will be taken to end the harassment, bullying or discrimination, and eliminate any hostile environment. The School may also implement other remedial measures to ensure the existence of a positive school culture and climate, prevent recurrence of the behavior, and ensure the safety of the students. Measured, balanced, and age-appropriate responses to incidents of harassment, bullying or discrimination by students will be implemented and may vary in method according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors, if any. The school leader and DAC will promptly notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency if any harassment, bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct.

### Training and Awareness

The School will establish guidelines for training all staff about the requirements of the Act. Training will be provided each school year to raise staff awareness and sensitivity of bullying,



discrimination and/or harassment directed at students that are committed by students or school employees on School Property or at a School Function. Training will include ways to promote a supportive school environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination and/or harassment, emphasizing positive relationships. Any training or education about the Act will include demonstrations on prevention and intervention techniques to assist employees in recognizing and responding to bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination and/or harassment as well as ensuring the safety of the victims, and reducing and addressing problems of exclusion, bias, and aggression in the School.

Upon incidents of bullying, the School may hold additional training or disseminate educational material concerning the Act.

Teachers and students are encouraged to suggest to the DAC other methods and procedures for training and raising awareness about the Act.

School technology and School Functions may be employed to disseminate awareness of the Act.

Rules against bullying, discrimination and/or harassment will be included in the Parent-Student Handbook, publicized School-wide and disseminated to all staff and parents each year.

The School will annually review its Parent-Student Handbook and update it if necessary, taking into consideration the effectiveness of its provisions and consistency and fairness of its administration.

### **Teaching Students about Bullying**

School instruction will include a component on civility, citizenship and character education. Such component shall instruct students on the principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, respect for others, observance of laws and rules, courtesy, dignity and other traits which will enhance the quality of their experiences in, and contributions to, the community. The School will also incorporate instruction designed to reduce any instances of harassment, discrimination, or bullying into extracurricular or school-sponsored programs and activities.

Instruction will also be provided during the School year in the safe, responsible use of the Internet and electronic communications, which will be designed to reduce instances of bullying and cyberbullying.

### **Prohibition on Retaliation**

Growing Up Green Charter School and its Board prohibit any retaliatory behavior directed



against complainants, victims, witnesses, and/or any other individuals who participate in the investigation of allegations of harassment. All complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint in conformity with state law and School policies, who have acted reasonably and in good faith, have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind.

### **Reporting Requirements**

The School will annually report material incidents, data and trends related to bullying, discrimination and/or harassment which occurred during the school year to the Board of Trustees, and to the State Education Department. Such report shall be submitted in a manner prescribed by the Commissioner, on date as determined by the Commissioner

### **Disparaging or Offensive Language**

At Growing Up Green we strive to create a learning environment for all students to feel safe, supported, and heard. We value having a community that builds each other up and includes everyone. In alignment with our vision for this type of community we feel it is essential to educate students on what language is deemed inappropriate for the school environment and will not be tolerated by school staff. We have become aware of students using language that we feel is offensive, derogatory, or hurtful. We acknowledge that sometimes students have used such language in a way that they did not intend for it to have a harmful impact on others but we feel it is our job as educators to make certain we help them understand that when they do use such language it can have a negative impact on those around them whether they are aware or not. In an effort to be clear about which language we will not tolerate in school and which language may warrant disciplinary action we have created the following list so students and families are aware. Please note that we will teach these expectations to students and if some of the language is used for instructional purposes we will make sure to let students know it can be used for discussion in the learning environment but will not be tolerated when used directed towards another student in a joking or serious manner.

#### **Disparaging or Offensive Language includes but is not limited to:**

- Any language that is disparaging of others sexual identity;
- Any language that is disparaging of those with learning disabilities;
- Any language that is disparaging of gender, or sexually discriminatory;
- Any language that is meant to be racially, ethnically, or religiously discriminatory;
- Any gestures that are sexually explicitly or disparaging of another's culture, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual identity.

### **EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS**

Maintaining school safety for students and staff is at the forefront of our duty as an educational institution. We continue to practice various emergency drills throughout each school year, as preparation is the key to success in the event of any emergency.



### **Shelter In Place - Remain in the building.**

#### **When a CODE YELLOW announcement is made:**

- All activities in the building continue.
- Any activities taking place outside must stop and come back into the building.
- Teachers and students remain inside the building.
- No one is allowed to exit or enter the building.

### **Lock Down (Code Red) - Remain in Classroom**

#### **When a CODE RED announcement is made:**

- All activities stop and the students listen to the staff member's directions.
- Any students or other staff members in the hallways, stairs, etc. should go to the nearest classroom.
- All staff members secure their classrooms or areas they are in by locking the classroom door.
- Staff and students move away from the classroom door and remain silent.

### **Evacuation Drill - Go Outside**

#### **When an announcement is made and alarm sounds:**

- All activities stop and students listen to staff members.
- Any student in a hallway, stairs, etc. should go to the nearest adult, whether in a classroom, office, hallway, etc.
- Staff members make sure all windows are closed.
- Students form a line to leave the classroom.
- All classroom doors must be closed.
- Staff and students should walk rapidly and quietly to their designated exit and leave the building.
- All classes report to their designated area and take attendance.
- Students and staff will remain in the safe area until directed to return to their classrooms or move to another location.

**Hold** and **Hold-in-place** mean the restriction of movement of students and staff within the building while dealing with short-term emergencies.

**Secure lockdown** means students and staff remain inside school buildings that are locked and secured during incidents that pose an imminent concern outside the school.

### **FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT ("FERPA")**

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



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

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

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

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student under FERPA. Such a request must be made to the Campus Director in writing, clearly identify the part of the record the parent or eligible student wants changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading and should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

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

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

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

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another open-enrollment charter school, school district, or private school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. The School shall forward such records upon request from the requesting school or if the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student.



FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures.

#### The right to file a complaint

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

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

Parents are entitled to access to their student's medical records.

#### **Notice for Directory Information**

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

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks.

If you do not want the School to disclose any or all of the types of information designated below as directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the School in writing. You can opt out by emailing the Director of Operations, or by completing the FERPA Directory Information Opt-Out Form included with this handbook by no later than October 1st of each school year.

The School has designated the following information as directory information:



1. Student's Name
2. Student's Class
3. Student's Grade Level
4. Parent/Guardian Name
5. Parent/Guardian Telephone Number
6. Parent/Guardian Email

### **SURVEYS AND ACTIVITIES**

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

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

### **"Opting Out" of Surveys and Activities**

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

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

### **STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Growing Up Green Charter School shall not discriminate against or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, gender, gender identity, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, national origin, religion or ancestry. A school may not require any action by a student or family (such as an admissions test, interview, essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in order for an applicant to either receive or submit an application for admission to the school.



In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The following staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these requirements:

Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex: Matthew Greenberg, Executive Director/ 347-642-4306; [greenberg@gugcs.org](mailto:greenberg@gugcs.org)

Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of a disability: Matthew Greenberg, Executive Director/347-642-4306; [greenberg@gugcs.org](mailto:greenberg@gugcs.org)

### **VIOLATION OF LAW OR CHARTER COMPLAINT**

When families reach out with concerns, the school makes every effort to resolve these concerns at the school level. Families are first asked to meet in person with School Leaders. GUG prides itself on an open door policy that allows families access to School Leaders, who are often best equipped to handle the majority of family concern. If that meeting does not resolve the concern, additional meetings may be held with the Executive Director.

Pursuant to Education Law §2855(4), any individual or group may file a complaint regarding an alleged violation of the school's charter, the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act), the Charter Schools Act, New York State Law, or any other provision of law or the school's charter relating to the management or operation of the charter school to Matthew Greenberg, the Executive Director, as the designee for the Growing Up Green Charter School Board of Trustees. If the individual or group is dissatisfied with the Executive Director's decision, they may appeal directly to the Board of Trustees. If the complaint is against or involves the Executive Director, the complaint shall be made directly to the Board of Trustees of the School.

If families are not satisfied with the outcomes of these meetings, they are directed to file a formal complaint with the Board of Trustees. Families are asked to put their concerns in writing, addressed to the Interim Board Chair, Marc Greenberg and emailed to [magreenberg@gugcs.org](mailto:magreenberg@gugcs.org).

The Board then reviews the complaint, speaks with relevant members of staff, and drafts a written response to the families on behalf of the board. GUG then implements any remedial actions recommended by the Board's response.

If, after making a complaint to the Board, a family believes that the Board of Trustees has not adequately addressed the complaint, or if, after a reasonable period of time (within 7 days of the next board meeting), the Board of Trustees or its designee do not respond to the complaint, the family may then bring their complaint to Growing Up Green's authorizer, the Board of Regents, using the information below for the New York State Education Department's Charter School Office.



All complaints brought to the Board of Regents/Commissioner concerning charter schools must be submitted in writing to the State Education Department's Charter School Office, either via mail at:

Charter School Office  
NYS Education Department  
89 Washington Avenue  
Room 5N Mezz,  
Albany, NY 12234

or via email to: [charterschools@nysed.gov](mailto:charterschools@nysed.gov)

The subject line of the email should read: Complaint: [Name of School].

The contents of the letter/email should include:

- A detailed statement of the complaint including the provision of the School's charter or law that you allege has been violated.
- What, if any, response you received from the School's board of trustees (and the School's Charter Entity in the case of schools not authorized by the Board of Regents).
- Copies of all relevant correspondence between you and the School and you and the Charter Entity if applicable. (You should maintain copies of all correspondence and materials for your own files.)
- What specific action or relief you are seeking.
- Contact information for you – name, address, email address, telephone number.

#### **FIRE & EMERGENCY DRILL**

Our Building Response Team (BRT), made up of teachers and other staff, is responsible for teacher training and executing all safety drills. Drills – evacuation and lockdown - are held on a regular basis per Department of Education regulations. All fire and evacuation drills are laid out to staff and students each year and are practiced on a regular basis.

In case of an emergency, students and staff from each school will be evacuated in keeping with the designated location below if we are unable to return to our 39-27 28th Street (LIC) location:

- Academy of American Studies - 28-01 41st Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101

#### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

Purpose: This policy aims to provide clear guidelines for the ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies by students, staff, and educators at Growing Up Green Charter Elementary and Middle Schools. It is designed to foster an environment of integrity, safety, and educational excellence while leveraging AI to enhance learning and administrative processes.



**Scope:** This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, and administrators at Growing Up Green Charter Elementary and Middle Schools. It encompasses all AI tools and technologies used within the school environment, including but not limited to educational software, administrative systems, and personal devices used on school grounds.

1. Student Assignments:

- Students are prohibited from using AI tools to write papers, complete homework, or fulfill any assignments intended to assess their understanding and skills.
- AI detection tools will be employed to identify the use of AI-generated content in student submissions.
- If AI usage is detected in a student's work, disciplinary actions will be taken in accordance with the school's code of conduct.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- The use of AI tools will be periodically reviewed to ensure they are meeting educational goals and complying with this policy.

3. Incident Reporting:

- Any concerns or incidents involving the misuse of AI should be reported to school administrators immediately. This would lead to a thorough investigation as handled by the operations, legal, and HR departments at GUGCS.

| Good Ways to Use AI For Students                                                   | Prohibited Ways to Use AI For Students           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Accessing AI-powered educational videos.                                           | Using AI to write essays, homework, or reports.  |
| Research Assistance                                                                | Submitting AI-generated work as one's own.       |
| Employing AI for organizing and summarizing notes.                                 | Relying on AI for answers during exams.          |
| Engaging with AI tutors for subject help.                                          | Plagiarism                                       |
| Learning coding and robotics through AI platforms.                                 | Copying AI-generated content without credit.     |
| Time management tools                                                              | Claiming AI-created art or projects as original. |
| Experimenting with AI for art and music creation within an instructional capacity. |                                                  |



## **DATA PRIVACY & SECURITY**

This Policy addresses Growing Up Green Charter Schools' ("GUGCS" or, the "School") responsibility to adopt appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards and controls to protect and maintain the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of its data, data systems, and information technology resources.

GUGCS is committed to maintaining the privacy and security of student data and teacher and principal data and will follow all applicable laws and regulations for the handling and storage of this data by GUGCS and when disclosing or releasing it to others, including, but not limited to, third-party contractors. GUGCS adopts this policy to implement the requirements of Education Law Section 2-d and its implementing regulations, as well as to align GUGCS' data privacy and security practices with the National Institute for Standards and Technology Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity (Version 1.1).

### **Definitions**

As provided in Education Law Section 2-d and/or its implementing regulations, the following terms, as used in this policy, will mean:

- a) "Breach" means the unauthorized acquisition, access, use, or disclosure of student data and/or teacher or principal data by or to a person not authorized to acquire, access, use, or receive the student data and/or teacher or principal data.
- b) "Building principal" means a building principal subject to annual performance evaluation review under the provisions of Education Law Section 3012-c.
- c) "Classroom teacher" means a teacher subject to annual performance evaluation review under the provisions of Education Law Section 3012-c.
- d) "Commercial or marketing purpose" means the sale of student data; or its use or disclosure for purposes of receiving remuneration, whether directly or indirectly; the use of student data for advertising purposes, or to develop, improve, or market products or services to students.
- e) "Contract or other written agreement" means a binding agreement between an educational agency and a third-party, which includes, but is not limited to, an agreement created in electronic form and signed with an electronic or digital signature or a click-wrap agreement that is used with software licenses, downloaded, and/or online applications and transactions for educational technologies and other technologies in which a user must agree to terms and conditions prior to using the product or service.
- f) "Disclose" or "disclosure" means to permit access to, or the release, transfer, or other communication of personally identifiable information by any means, including oral, written, or electronic, whether intended or unintended.



- g) "Education records" means an education record as defined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and its implementing regulations, 20 USC Section 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99, respectively.
- h) "Educational agency" means a school district, charter school, board of cooperative educational services (BOCES), or the New York State Education Department (NYSED).
- i) "Eligible student" means a student who is eighteen years or older.
- j) "Encryption" means methods of rendering personally identifiable information unusable, unreadable, or indecipherable to unauthorized persons through the use of a technology or methodology specified or permitted by the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services in guidance issued under 42 USC Section 17932(h)(2).
- k) "FERPA" means the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and its implementing regulations, 20 USC Section 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99, respectively.
- l) "NIST Cybersecurity Framework" means the U.S. Department of Commerce National Institute for Standards and Technology Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity (Version 1.1). A copy of the NIST Cybersecurity Framework is available at the Office of Counsel, State Education Department, State Education Building, Room 148, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12234.
- m) "Parent" means a parent, legal guardian, or person in parental relation to a student.
- n) "Personally identifiable information (PII)," as applied to student data, means personally identifiable information as defined in 34 CFR Section 99.3 implementing the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 USC Section 1232g, and, as applied to teacher or principal data, means personally identifying information as this term is defined in Education Law Section 3012-c(10).
- o) "Release" has the same meaning as disclosure or disclose.
- p) "Student" means any person attending or seeking to enroll in an educational agency.
- q) "Student data" means personally identifiable information from the student records of an educational agency.
- r) "Teacher or principal data" means personally identifiable information from the records of an educational agency relating to the annual professional performance reviews of classroom teachers or principals that is confidential and not subject to release under the provisions of Education Law Sections 3012-c and 3012-d.
- s) "Third-party contractor" means any person or entity, other than an educational agency, that receives student data or teacher or principal data from an educational agency pursuant to a



contract or other written agreement for purposes of providing services to the educational agency, including but not limited to data management or storage services, conducting studies for or on behalf of the educational agency, or audit or evaluation of publicly funded programs. This term will include an educational partnership organization that receives student and/or teacher or principal data from a school to carry out its responsibilities pursuant to Education Law Section 211-e and is not an educational agency, and a not-for-profit corporation or other nonprofit organization, other than an educational agency.

- t) "Unauthorized disclosure" or "unauthorized release" means any disclosure or release not permitted by federal or state statute or regulation, any lawful contract or written agreement, or that does not respond to a lawful order of a court or tribunal or other lawful order.

#### **Data Collection Transparency and Restrictions**

As part of its commitment to maintaining the privacy and security of student data and teacher and principal data, GUGCS will take steps to minimize its collection, processing, and transmission of PII.

GUGCS will monitor its data systems, develop incident response plans, limit access to PII to GUGCS employees, interns, volunteers, independent contractors, and third-party contractors who need such access to fulfill their professional responsibilities or contractual obligations, and destroy PII when it is no longer needed.

Additionally, GUGCS will:

- a) Not sell PII nor use or disclose it for any marketing or commercial purpose or facilitate its use or disclosure by any other party for any marketing or commercial purpose or permit another party to do so.
- b) Ensure that it has provisions in its contracts with third-party contractors or in separate data sharing and confidentiality agreements that require the confidentiality of shared student data or teacher, or principal data be maintained in accordance with law, regulation, and GUGCS policy.

Except as required by law or in the case of educational enrollment data, GUGCS will not report to NYSED the following student data elements:

- a) Juvenile delinquency records;
- b) Criminal records;
- c) Medical and health records; and
- e) Student biometric information.



Certain federal laws and regulations provide additional rights regarding confidentiality of and access to student records, as well as permitted disclosures without consent.

### **Chief Privacy Officer**

The Commissioner of Education has appointed a Chief Privacy Officer who will report to the Commissioner on matters affecting privacy and the security of student data and teacher and principal data. Among other functions, the Chief Privacy Officer is authorized to provide assistance to educational agencies within the state on minimum standards and best practices associated with privacy and the security of student data and teacher and principal data.

GUGCS will comply with its obligation to report breaches or unauthorized releases of student data or teacher or principal data to the Chief Privacy Officer in accordance with Education Law Section 2-d, its implementing regulations, and this policy.

The Chief Privacy Officer has the power, among others, to:

- a) Access all records, reports, audits, reviews, documents, papers, recommendations, and other materials maintained by the School that relate to student data or teacher or principal data, which includes, but is not limited to, records related to any technology product or service that will be utilized to store and/or process PII; and
- b) Based upon a review of these records, require the School to act to ensure that PII is protected in accordance with laws and regulations, including but not limited to requiring the School to perform a privacy impact and security risk assessment.

### **Data Protection Officer**

GUGCS has designated an employee to serve as GUGCS' Data Protection Officer. The Data Protection Officer for GUGCS will be appointed (or re-appointed, as the case may be) at GUGCS' Annual Meeting at such other time annually as GUGCS may designate from time to time.

The Data Protection Officer is responsible for the implementation and oversight of this policy and any related procedures including those required by Education Law Section 2-d and its implementing regulations to develop and maintain a comprehensive Data Privacy and Security Program. The Data Protection Officer will serve as the main point of contact for GUGCS' Data Privacy and Security Program.

GUGCS will ensure that the Data Protection Officer has the appropriate knowledge, training, and experience to administer these functions. The Data Protection Officer may perform these functions in addition to other job responsibilities.

### **GUGCS Data Privacy and Security Standards**

GUGCS will use the National Institute for Standards and Technology Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity (Version 1.1) (Framework) as the standard for its data privacy and security



program. The Framework is a risk-based approach to managing cybersecurity risk and is composed of three parts: the Framework Core, the Framework Implementation Tiers, and the Framework Profiles. The Framework provides a common taxonomy and mechanism for organizations to:

- a) Describe their current cybersecurity posture;
- b) Describe their target state for cybersecurity;
- c) Identify and prioritize opportunities for improvement within the context of a continuous and repeatable process;
- d) Assess progress toward the target state; and
- e) Communicate among internal and external stakeholders about cybersecurity risk.

GUGCS will protect the confidentiality and privacy of student and teacher/principal PII while stored or transferred by:

- a) Ensuring that every use and disclosure of PII by GUGCS benefits students and GUGCS by considering, among other criteria, whether the use and/or disclosure will:
  - 1. Improve academic achievement;
  - 2. Empower parents and students with information; and/or
  - 3. Advance efficient and effective school operations.
- b) Not including PII in public reports or other public documents. The Data Protection Officer will, together with program offices, determine whether a proposed use of PII is not included in public reports or other documents, or otherwise publicly disclosed.
- c) Using industry standard safeguards and best practices, such as encryption, firewalls, and passwords.

The School affords all protections under FERPA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and their implementing regulations to parents or eligible students, where applicable.

### **Third-Party Contractors**

#### **GUGCS Responsibilities**

GUGCS will ensure that whenever it enters into a contract or other written agreement with a third-party contractor and the third-party contractor will receive student data or teacher or principal data from GUGCS, the contract or written agreement will include provisions requiring that confidentiality of shared student data or teacher or principal data be maintained in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, and GUGCS policy.



In addition, GUGCS will ensure that the contract or written agreement includes the third-party contractor's data privacy and security plan that has been accepted by GUGCS.

The third-party contractor's data privacy and security plan must, at a minimum:

- a) Outline how the third-party contractor will implement all state, federal, and local data privacy and security contract requirements over the life of the contract, consistent with GUGCS policy;
- b) Specify the administrative, operational, and technical safeguards and practices the third-party contractor has in place to protect PII that it will receive under the contract;
- c) Demonstrate that the third-party contractor complies with the requirements of 8 NYCRR Section 121.3(c);
- d) Specify how officers or employees of the third-party contractor and its assignees who have access to student data or teacher or principal data receive or will receive training on the federal and state laws and regulations governing confidentiality of this data prior to receiving access;
- e) Specify if the third-party contractor will utilize subcontractors and how it will manage those relationships and contracts to ensure PII is protected;
- f) Specify how the third-party contractor will manage data privacy and security incidents that implicate PII including specifying any plans to identify breaches and unauthorized disclosures, and to promptly notify GUGCS;
- g) Describe whether, how, and when data will be returned to GUGCS, transitioned to a successor contractor, at the GUGCS' option and direction, deleted or destroyed by the third-party contractor when the contract is terminated or expires; and

GUGCS will also ensure that the contract or written agreement with the third-party contractor includes a signed copy of the Parents' Bill of Rights for Data Privacy and Security.

### **Third-Party Contractor Responsibilities**

Each third-party contractor, that enters into a contract or other written agreement with GUGCS under which the third-party contractor will receive student data or teacher or principal data from GUGCS, is required to:

- a) Adopt technologies, safeguards, and practices that align with the NIST Cybersecurity Framework;



- b) Comply with GUGCS' data security and privacy policy, Education Law Section 2-d and its implementing regulations, and applicable laws impacting the School;
- c) Limit internal access to PII to only those employees or subcontractors that need access to provide the contracted services;
- d) Not use the PII for any purpose not explicitly authorized in its contract;
- e) Not disclose any PII to any other party without the prior written consent of the parent or eligible student (i.e., students who are eighteen years old or older):
  - 1. Except for authorized representatives of the third-party contractor such as a subcontractor or assignee to the extent they are carrying out the contract and in compliance with law, regulation, and its contract with the School; or
  - 2. Unless required by law or court order and the third-party contractor provides notice of disclosure to NYSED, the Board, or the institution that provided the information no later than the time the information is disclosed, unless providing notice of the disclosure is expressly prohibited by law or court order;
- f) Maintain reasonable administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to protect the security, confidentiality, and integrity of PII in its custody;
- g) Use encryption to protect PII in its custody while in motion or at rest; and
- h) Not sell PII nor use or disclose it for any marketing or commercial purpose or facilitate its use or disclosure by any other party for any marketing or commercial purpose or permit another party to do so.

Where a third-party contractor engages a subcontractor to perform its contractual obligations, the data protection obligations imposed on the third-party contractor by state and federal laws and contract with GUGCS apply to the subcontractor.

If the third-party contractor has a breach or unauthorized release of PII, it will promptly notify GUGCS in the most expedient way possible without unreasonable delay but no more than seven (7) calendar days after the breach's discovery.

### **Click-Wrap Agreements**

Periodically, GUGCS staff may wish to use software, applications, or other technologies in which the user must "click" a button or box to agree to certain online terms of service prior to using the software, application, or other technology. These are known as "click-wrap agreements" and are considered legally binding "contracts or other written agreements" under Education Law Section 2-d and its implementing regulations.



GUGCS staff are prohibited from using software, applications, or other technologies pursuant to a click-wrap agreement in which the third-party contractor receives student data or teacher or principal data from GUGCS unless they have received prior approval from GUGCS' Data Protection Officer or designee.

GUGCS will develop and implement procedures requiring prior review and approval for staff use of any software, applications, or other technologies pursuant to click-wrap agreements.

### **Parents' Bill of Rights for Data Privacy and Security**

GUGCS will publish its Parents' Bill of Rights for Data Privacy and Security (Bill of Rights) on its website. Additionally, GUGCS will include the Bill of Rights with every contract or other written agreement it enters into with a third-party contractor under which the third-party contractor will receive student data or teacher or principal data from GUGCS.

GUGCS' Bill of Rights will state in clear and plain English terms that:

- a) Student PII will be collected and disclosed only as necessary to achieve educational purposes in accordance with State and Federal Law;
- b) A student's PII cannot be sold or released for any marketing or commercial purposes by GUGCS or any third-party contractor. GUGCS will not sell student personally identifiable information and will not release it for marketing or commercial purposes, other than directory information released by GUGCS in accordance with GUGCS policy;
- c) Parents have the right to inspect and review the complete contents of their child's education record;
- d) State and federal laws, such as NYS Education Law §2-d and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, protect the confidentiality of PII, and safeguards associated with industry standards and best practices, including but not limited to encryption, firewalls, and password protection, must be in place when data is stored or transferred;
- e) A complete list of all student data elements collected by the State Education Department is available for public review at the following website <http://www.nysed.gov/data-privacy-security/student-data-inventory> or by writing to Chief Privacy Officer, New York State Education Department, Room 865 EBA, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12234; and
- f) Parents have the right to have complaints about possible breaches and unauthorized disclosures of student data addressed. Complaints should be directed to (*Steve Viola, Chief Operating Officer, [viola@gugcs.org](mailto:viola@gugcs.org), or in writing, to Growing Up Green Charter School, ATTN: Steve Viola, 39-27 28th Street, Long Island City, NY 11101*). Complaints can also be directed to the New York State Education Department by mail to the Chief Privacy Officer, New York State Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12234, by email to [privacy@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:privacy@mail.nysed.gov), or by telephone at 518-474-0937. Complaints may also be



submitted online by using the form available at the following website <http://www.nysed.gov/data-privacy-security/report-improper-disclosure>.

- g) Parents have the right to be notified in accordance with applicable laws and regulations if a breach or unauthorized release of their student's PII occurs.
- h) Parents can expect that GUGCS employees who handle PII will receive annual training on applicable federal and state laws, regulations, educational agency's policies and safeguards which will be in alignment with industry standards and best practices to protect PII.

The Bill of Rights will also include supplemental information for each contract GUGCS enters into with a third-party contractor where the third-party contractor receives student data or teacher or principal data from GUGCS. The supplemental information must be developed by the School and include the following information:

- a) The exclusive purposes for which the student data or teacher or principal data will be used by the third-party contractor, as defined in the contract;
- b) How the third-party contractor will ensure that the subcontractors, or other authorized persons or entities to whom the third-party contractor will disclose the student data or teacher or principal data, if any, will abide by all applicable data protection and security requirements, including but not limited to those outlined in applicable laws and regulations (e.g., FERPA; Education Law Section 2-d);
- c) The duration of the contract, including the contract's expiration date, and a description of what will happen to the student data or teacher or principal data upon expiration of the contract or other written agreement (e.g., whether, when, and in what format it will be returned to the School, and/or whether, when, and how the data will be destroyed);
- d) If and how a parent, student, eligible student, teacher, or principal may challenge the accuracy of the student data or teacher or principal data that is collected;
- e) Where the student data or teacher or principal data will be stored, described in a manner as to protect data security, and the security protections taken to ensure the data will be protected and data privacy and security risks mitigated; and
- f) Address how the data will be protected using password protections, administrative procedures, encryption while in motion and at rest, and firewalls.

GUGCS will publish on its website the supplement to the Bill of Rights (i.e., the supplemental information described above) for any contract or other written agreement it has entered into with a third-party contractor that will receive PII from GUGCS. The Bill of Rights and supplemental information may be redacted to the extent necessary to safeguard the privacy and/or security of GUGCS data and/or technology infrastructure.



### **Right of Parents and Eligible Students to Inspect and Review Students' Education Records**

Consistent with the obligations of GUGCS under FERPA, parents and eligible students have the right to inspect and review a student's education record by making a request directly to the School in a manner prescribed by the School.

GUGCS will ensure that only authorized individuals are able to inspect and review student data. To that end, GUGCS will take steps to verify the identity of parents, guardians, or eligible students who submit requests to inspect and review an education record and verify the individual's authority to do so.

Requests by a parent, guardian, or eligible student for access to a student's education records must be directed to the School and not to a third-party contractor. GUGCS may require that requests to inspect and review education records be made in writing.

GUGCS will notify parents, guardians, and eligible students annually of their right to request to inspect and review the student's education record including any student data stored or maintained by the School through its annual FERPA notice. A notice separate from GUGCS' annual FERPA notice is not required.

GUGCS will comply with a request for access to records within a reasonable period, but not more than 45 calendar days after receipt of a request barring extenuating circumstances.

If the parent, guardian, or eligible student consents, GUGCS may provide the records electronically. GUGCS must transmit the PII in a way that complies with laws and regulations. Safeguards associated with industry standards and best practices, including but not limited to encryption and password protection, must be in place when education records requested by a parent, guardian, or eligible student are electronically transmitted.

### **Complaints of Breach or Unauthorized Release of Student Data and/or Teacher or Principal Data**

GUGCS will inform parents/guardians, through its Parents' Bill of Rights for Data Privacy and Security, that they have the right to submit complaints about possible breaches of student data to the Chief Privacy Officer at NYSED. In addition, GUGCS has established the following procedures for parents, guardians, eligible students, teachers, principals, and other GUGCS staff to file complaints with GUGCS about breaches or unauthorized releases of student data and/or teacher or principal data:

- a) All complaints must be submitted to the GUGCS' Data Protection Officer in writing, utilizing a complaint form available on GUGCS' website.
- b) Upon receipt of a complaint, GUGCS will promptly acknowledge receipt of the complaint, commence an investigation, and take the necessary precautions to protect PII.
- c) Following the investigation of a submitted complaint, GUGCS will provide the individual who filed the complaint with its findings. This will be completed within a reasonable period of time, but no more than 60 calendar days from the receipt of the complaint by GUGCS.



- d) If GUGCS requires additional time, or where the response may compromise security or impede a law enforcement investigation, GUGCS will provide the individual who filed the complaint with a written explanation that includes the approximate date when GUGCS anticipates that it will respond to the complaint.

These procedures will be disseminated to parents, guardians, eligible students, teachers, principals, and other School staff.

GUGCS will maintain a record of all complaints of breaches or unauthorized releases of student data and their disposition in accordance with applicable data retention policies.

#### **Reporting a Breach or Unauthorized Release**

GUGCS' Data Protection Officer will report every discovery or report of a breach or unauthorized release of student data or teacher or principal data within the School to the Chief Privacy Officer without unreasonable delay, but no more than ten calendar days after the discovery.

Each third-party contractor that receives student data or teacher or principal data pursuant to a contract or other written agreement entered into with GUGCS will be required to promptly notify GUGCS of any breach of security resulting in an unauthorized release of the data by the third-party contractor or its assignees in violation of applicable laws and regulations, the Parents' Bill of Rights for Student Data Privacy and Security, GUGCS policy, and/or binding contractual obligations relating to data privacy and security, in the most expedient way possible and without unreasonable delay, but no more than seven calendar days after the discovery of the breach.

In the event of notification from a third-party contractor, GUGCS will in turn notify the Chief Privacy Officer of the breach or unauthorized release of student data or teacher or principal data no more than ten calendar days after it receives the third-party contractor's notification using a form or format prescribed by NYSED.

#### **Investigation of Reports of Breach or Unauthorized Release by the Chief Privacy Officer**

The Chief Privacy Officer is required to investigate reports of breaches or unauthorized releases of student data or teacher or principal data by third-party contractors. As part of an investigation, the Chief Privacy Officer may require that the parties submit documentation, provide testimony, and may visit, examine, and/or inspect the third-party contractor's facilities and records.

Upon the belief that a breach or unauthorized release constitutes criminal conduct, the Chief Privacy Officer is required to report the breach and unauthorized release to law enforcement in the most expedient way possible and without unreasonable delay.

Third-party contractors are required to cooperate with the School and law enforcement to protect the integrity of investigations into the breach or unauthorized release of PII.

Upon conclusion of an investigation, if the Chief Privacy Officer determines that a third-party contractor has through its actions or omissions caused student data or teacher or principal data to be breached or released to any person or entity not authorized by law to receive this data in violation of applicable laws and regulations, GUGCS policy, and/or any binding contractual obligations, the Chief Privacy Officer is



required to notify the third-party contractor of the finding and give the third-party contractor no more than 30 days to submit a written response.

If after reviewing the third-party contractor's written response, the Chief Privacy Officer determines the incident to be a violation of Education Law Section 2-d, the Chief Privacy Officer will be authorized to:

- a) Order the third-party contractor be precluded from accessing PII from the affected educational agency for a fixed period of up to five years;
- b) Order that a third-party contractor or assignee who knowingly or recklessly allowed for the breach or unauthorized release of student data or teacher or principal data be precluded from accessing student data or teacher or principal data from any educational agency in the state for a fixed period of up to five years;
- c) Order that a third-party contractor who knowingly or recklessly allowed for the breach or unauthorized release of student data or teacher or principal data will not be deemed a responsible bidder or offeror on any contract with an educational agency that involves the sharing of student data or teacher or principal data, as applicable for purposes of General Municipal Law Section 103 or State Finance Law Section 163(10)(c), as applicable, for a fixed period of up to five years; and/or
- d) Require the third-party contractor to provide additional training governing confidentiality of student data and/or teacher or principal data to all its officers and employees with reasonable access to this data and certify that the training has been performed at the contractor's expense. This additional training is required to be performed immediately and include a review of laws, rules, and regulations, including Education Law Section 2-d and its implementing regulations.

If the Chief Privacy Officer determines that the breach or unauthorized release of student data or teacher or principal data on the part of the third-party contractor or assignee was inadvertent and done without intent, knowledge, recklessness, or gross negligence, the Chief Privacy Officer may make a recommendation to the Commissioner that no penalty be issued to the third-party contractor.

The Commissioner would then make a final determination as to whether the breach or unauthorized release was inadvertent and done without intent, knowledge, recklessness or gross negligence and whether or not a penalty should be issued.

#### **Notification of a Breach or Unauthorized Release**

GUGCS will notify affected parents, eligible students, teachers, and/or principals in the most expedient way possible and without unreasonable delay, but no more than 60 calendar days after the discovery of a breach or unauthorized release of PII by GUGCS or the receipt of a notification of a breach or unauthorized release of PII from a third-party contractor unless that notification would interfere with an ongoing investigation by law enforcement or cause further disclosure of PII by disclosing an unfixed security vulnerability. Where notification is delayed under these circumstances, GUGCS will notify



parents, eligible students, teachers, and/or principals within seven calendar days after the security vulnerability has been remedied or the risk of interference with the law enforcement investigation ends.

Notifications will be clear, concise, use language that is plain and easy to understand, and to the extent available, include:

- a) A brief description of the breach or unauthorized release, the dates of the incident and the date of discovery, if known;
- b) A description of the types of PII affected;
- c) An estimate of the number of records affected;
- d) A brief description of the School's investigation or plan to investigate; and
- e) Contact information for representatives who can assist parents or eligible students that have additional questions.

Notification will be directly provided to the affected parent, guardian, eligible student, teacher, or principal by first-class mail to their last known address, by email, or by telephone.

Where a breach or unauthorized release is attributed to a third-party contractor, the third-party contractor is required to pay for or promptly reimburse the School for the full cost of this notification.

The Data Protection Officer must annually report to the Board of Education on data privacy and security activities and progress, any changes to data privacy and security measures, the number and disposition of reported breaches, if any, and a summary of any complaints submitted pursuant to Education Law 2-d.

#### **Compliance with GUGCS Acceptable Use Policy For Technology and the Internet**

All officers and staff must comply with the School's Acceptable Use Policy when using the GUGCS' resources. Access privileges will be granted in accordance with the user's job responsibilities. Access privileges will be limited to the extent necessary to accomplish assigned tasks in accordance with GUGCS' mission and business functions. Access privileges will be discontinued for those who are no longer with GUGCS.

#### **Annual Data Privacy and Security Training**

GUGCS will annually provide data privacy and security awareness training to its officers and staff with access to PII. This training will include, but not be limited to, training on the applicable laws and regulations that protect PII and how staff can comply with these laws and regulations. GUGCS may deliver this training using online training tools. Additionally, this training may be included as part of the training that GUGCS already offers to its workforce. All officers and staff who have access to PII must complete this training annually.

#### **Notification of Policy**

GUGCS will publish this policy on its website and provide notice of the policy to all its officers and staff.



**THE CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE UPDATED PERIODICALLY. UPDATED VERSIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE SCHOOL'S WEBSITE, [WWW.GUGCS.ORG](http://WWW.GUGCS.ORG)**



# 2026-2027 Family Handbook

## Acknowledgement Form:

I have read the Growing Up Green Charter School Family Handbook and agree to comply with all rules. I understand that the content may be changed at any time and the school will notify me of these changes. I understand that it is my responsibility to read weekly teacher newsletters, attend parent teacher conferences, and any other meetings to discuss my child's progress.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

2026-2027 Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian #1 (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardian #2 (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian #1 (Signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardian #2 (Signature): \_\_\_\_\_



## **FERPA DIRECTORY INFORMATION OPT-OUT FORM**

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

**If you do not want the School to disclose any or all of the types of information designated below as directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, please complete and return this form to Steve Viola, Chief Operating Officer (viola@gugcs.org) by no later than October 1st of each school year.**

I understand that upon submission of this Form, the information checked cannot be released to third parties without my written consent or unless the School is required by law or permitted under FERPA to release such information without my prior written consent; and that the checked directory information will not otherwise be released from the time the School receives my Form until my opt- out request is rescinded. I further understand that if directory information is released prior to the School receiving my opt- out request, the School may not be able to stop the disclosure of my directory information.

☐ **CHECK HERE TO OPT OUT OF ALL DIRECTORY INFORMATION IDENTIFIED BELOW; or**

### **CHECK THE INDIVIDUAL BOXES BELOW TO SELECTIVELY OPT OUT OF CERTAIN DIRECTORY INFORMATION DISCLOSURE:**

- ☐ Student's Name
- ☐ Student's Class
- ☐ Student's Grade Level
- ☐ Parent/Guardian Name
- ☐ Parent/Guardian Telephone Number
- ☐ Parent/Guardian Email

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

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