



GROWING UP GREEN CHARTER SCHOOLS

MIDDLE SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

(For LIC/GUG1 and Jamaica/GUG2 Campuses)

MISSION STATEMENT

The Growing Up Green Charter School (“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 Middle Schools' hours are 8:00 am to 3:15 pm. School doors open every morning for breakfast at 7:35 am. Any student arriving after 8:05 am will be marked late. Dismissal begins at 3:10 pm and is concluded by 3:30 pm (unless a bus arrives late to our building).

SCHOOL CLOSINGS & 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), [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.

VISITORS & MEETING WITH STAFF

A security officer is stationed at the front door of the school from 7:00 am – 7:00 pm. All visitors must show a valid form of identification and sign in with the officer. For safety reasons, visitors are not allowed to go to any room without first checking in at the security desk.

It is mandatory to schedule an appointment with staff in advance. Parents are not permitted to go to classrooms unless they have an appointment and are escorted by school personnel. If you have a problem or concern, please call the office to make an appointment and we will work to meet with families as soon as possible. All visits must be arranged with the proper staff member prior to showing up at the school.

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.

MORNING DROP OFF & BREAKFAST

Free breakfast is provided for all students during the designated breakfast time period in the morning. Students are expected to eat breakfast in the designated location (cafeteria or gym) and finish eating by 8:00am, when the school day officially begins and students transition to class. Students who arrive late to school should not expect to eat outside breakfast at school and should report directly to class. Students are expected to follow the school's code of conduct during drop-off and arrival to school. Students may not leave once they arrive on school property (school property includes any block that is in contact with the school building); cell phone use is not allowed at any time while in the building. Please be mindful of time and space when dropping off in the morning. Parking is not permitted in front of the school between 7am - 4pm. Priority is always given to school buses for drop off and pick up, as well as emergency vehicles.

In the event that a student is late to school, and requests a school breakfast, one will be provided for the student to quickly eat before being sent directly to class.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal starts at 3:10 pm unless otherwise stated. Please refer to the school calendar for early dismissal days. Dismissal is at 1:00 pm on all early dismissal days. All students are dismissed either via



yellow bus service, pick up (by an authorized person over 14 years of age), or travel home independently with advanced parent/guardian permission. A primary method for dismissal must be selected at the start of the school year and will be honored daily unless the family denotes a change within the appropriate time frame.

Students departing from school will follow their corresponding dismissal protocol below:

- **Leave on own** - Students leaving on their own must have written parental consent provided to the main office. Any student that does not have said permission will not be allowed to leave on their own.
- **Pick up** - Families picking up their student(s) may wait outside the building. Students will only be released to authorized persons over the age of 14 and listed on the emergency contact list.
- **Yellow Bus** - Students that have been assigned a bus will be escorted to their bus by a member of the faculty.

Students departing from school will be escorted to their bus by faculty. Families that are picking up their child may wait outside of the building. Students will only be released to authorized persons over the age of 14 and listed on the emergency contact list.

For any changes to your student's daily dismissal please contact the office in **writing** (note or email) or phone call to amend **any** dismissal information by 12:00 pm, changes suggested after 12:00 pm cannot be guaranteed to be honored in order to ensure safe dismissal for all students.

Families must notify the main office by 12:00 pm via email and phone call if they want their child on the pick up list. Informing a teacher, your child directly or advisor 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.

For the safety and security of our students, staff and building, no one is allowed into the building after 3:10pm dismissal time, unless they have a pre-scheduled appointment. All appointments must check in with security before being allowed access to the building. If your child has forgotten an item in their classroom or locker, they may retrieve it the next day.

Students participating in after school clubs or sports may not leave the building under any circumstances. If a student is a spectator to a sporting event they may stay in the school building with written consent from their parent or guardian.

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.



We recognize that many of our students walk home by themselves or with friends. We strongly encourage all students to ensure they are making good choices during dismissal time and ensuring that they are avoiding conflict with any students that attend our school or neighboring schools. Any behavioral issues that violate our school code of conduct that occur on school grounds or near the vicinity of our school grounds will be addressed by our Deans of Students and students can receive logical consequences for these actions. Additionally, if staff members determine that students are being unsafe during dismissal the school reserves the right to have students remain in school after 3:30pm as a logical consequence. Parents will be notified via phone or email if such safety concerns are identified.

Early Pick Up: We encourage all early pick-ups to occur before 2:00 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.

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 3:30pm, 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 4:30pm, 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

Growing Up Green Charter Schools **does not** provide bus service. Yellow bus service is provided through the Department of Education's Office of Pupil Transportation. Bus service and eligibility varies based on distance from school to stop for students in grades 3-6. See [Transportation Eligibility](https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/transportation/bus-eligibility) page (<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/transportation/bus-eligibility>) for more information. Students who receive special transportation as denoted by their Individualized Education Plan will receive busing as well.

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, they 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 busing at any point during the school year, please contact the Office of Pupil Transportation directly at 718-392-8855.

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). OPT oversees all bus companies contracted by the Department of Education and, unfortunately, each middle school 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. The school is not responsible for the behavior of students while riding the bus and we will be unable to investigate or address concerns that arise. At the beginning of the year we hold bus safety meetings reviewing OPT's expectations for students on the bus and we send home information for families to review with their children to ensure proper behavior on the bus. Throughout the year we hold bus safety meetings to remind students of expectations; however, we 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 themselves properly on a bus, the bus driver is expected to bring such misconduct to the school'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 Dean of Students will notify parents of the appropriate consequence based off the matrix below and will also receive written notification via email or letter format. 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.

It is important to reiterate that as a school GUGCS is not responsible for behavior on the bus and we only apply consequences based on bus driver accounts of reports of misconduct that are provided to us in the form of bus incident reports. 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. 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.

Bus Consequence Matrix

Bus Incident Report Indicates	Safety Concern	Consequence
● Student engaged in a physical fight that indicates student engaged in any of the following actions: hitting, kicking, punching, biting, etc.	● Endangering safety of themselves and others ● Distracting bus driver	● Responsive disciplinary measure (up to 2 days of bus suspension) ● Notification of parents.
● Student touched another student in a way that was deemed inappropriate or made other students feel uncomfortable.	● Endangering safety of others ● Distracting bus driver	● Responsive disciplinary measure (up to 1 day of bus suspension) ● Notification of parents
● Student was out of his/her seat walking around the bus.	● Endangering safety of themselves ● Distracting bus driver	● 1st & 2nd Offense: Bus safety class during recess or conference with student and/or family. ● 3rd Offense: Possible 1 day bus suspension ● Notification of parents
● Student threw an object on the bus.	● Endangering safety of themselves, and others ● Distracting bus driver	● 1st & 2nd Offense: Bus safety class during recess or conference with student and/or family. ● 3rd Offense: Possible 1 day bus suspension ● Notification of parents
● Student made inappropriate comments or gestures directed at the bus driver or another student	● Distracting bus driver	● 1st & 2nd Offense: Bus safety class during recess or conference with student and/or family. ● 3rd Offense: Possible 1 day bus suspension ● Notification of parents
● Student was screaming on the bus	● Distracting bus driver	● 1st & 2nd Offense: Bus safety class during recess or conference with student and/or family. ● 3rd Offense: Possible 1 day bus suspension



		• Notification of parents
• Other incidents that are reported that we deem are safety violations not listed above	• Endangering safety of themselves and others • Distracting bus driver	• 1st & 2nd Offense: Bus safety class during recess or conference with student and/or family. • 3rd Offense: Possible 1 day bus suspension • Notification of parents
• Student brought a weapon on the bus	• Endangering safety of themselves and others	• Multiple days suspended from the bus • Notification of parents

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.

Emergency Contact Information:

Emergency contraction information is added or updated in Alma registration each year. These forms need to be filled out completely and returned to the nurse as soon as possible. To ensure all students' safety and access to parents, we request that parents remember to notify the school of any changes of student health information and contact information.

Medications:



A completed and signed Medical Administration Form (“MAF”) is required on file for the School Nurse to store and administer any medication on site. The school will not store or administer any medication without proper authorization and documentation from a medical doctor. This form is required for all medications, including Over the Counter (OTC, allergy, etc.). In addition, all medication must have the original prescription label issued by the pharmacy. Allergies are noted in the student’s medical file, based on the information provided by the parent and the doctor at the date of enrollment or after. A student is not allowed to attend field trips or participate in gym activities if their MAF form is not up to date.

DRESS CODE

At Growing Up Green Charter Schools, we want to give our students the opportunity for expression, but within school guidelines. Students are expected to **wear the school uniform each and every day**. With that in mind, please see below for proper uniform requirements. All uniform shirts and sweaters must have the Growing Up Green Charter Schools logo on the left side.

If your child arrives at school out of uniform, families will be called by the school and are expected to bring the student’s uniform to school. If students are repeatedly out of uniform, families will be notified and a follow up meeting may be scheduled to discuss next steps and possible consequences. If a student repeatedly chooses to be noncompliant with our uniform policy, it may result in disciplinary action. Additionally, students must be mindful of appropriate length and tightness when choosing clothes to wear to school, making sure they are representing themselves in a school-appropriate manner.

Growing Up Green Middle School Uniform Information

The information below outlines the requirements for the middle school uniform. All items can be purchased from French Toast via their online store/website.

- **Website:**

- www.frenchtoast.com using the corresponding school code found below:
- G1MS (Long Island City) - QS5XYAS
- G2MS (Jamaica) - QS61EHQ

- **Uniform Tops**

- Navy polo (short sleeve) with GUGMS logo
- Navy fleece full zip with GUGMS logo

- **Bottoms**

- Any solid-colored pants, shorts, or skorts (such as khaki, joggers, or sweatpants)
 - Not overly tight
 - No prints or logos
 - No leggings or jeans



- **Shoes**

- Any shoes/sneakers (must be close-toed). Any open toed shoes, (ie. crocs, slides, sandals, or equivalent items), are not allowed under any circumstances.

LOST AND FOUND

A lost and found storage cabinet/rack is kept for any materials that children have lost and are found in the school building. Please label your child's clothing, books, and items. The school is not liable for any items that are misplaced throughout the day, but will make every effort to support families in finding the items.

The Lost and Found is emptied several times throughout the year and unmarked items are donated to charity.

LUNCH AND CAFETERIA PROCEDURES

All students eat lunch in the cafeteria on a daily basis. Lunch is delivered daily to the building and served 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 snack list. **If students bring their own lunch, it must be nut-free.** 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.

Families are encouraged to pack lunches in reusable containers and lunch bags (instead of plastic or paper bags) to prevent waste. School lunches may only be served with all components (i.e. we cannot serve just milk or fruit).

All families *must* complete a [lunch form online](#), regardless of whether or not your child participates in the school lunch program.

Guidelines for Cafeteria Behavior

1. We expect students to display their best manners and self-disciplined behavior in our cafeteria. All students are expected to treat each adult and other classmates with respect. Actions such as throwing food, drinks, or any other objects within the school cafeteria or in the hallways are unacceptable. Students who engage in these types of behaviors will receive appropriate logical consequences.
2. Books and other classroom items should be placed in lockers prior to entering the lunchroom.
3. Table conversations should be kept at a reasonable level so that they do not disturb or interfere with the conversations of other classmates.
4. Students are to remain seated during the lunch period, except when directed to empty their trash and to return their trays to the designated collection area.



5. Anyone needing to leave the cafeteria during the lunch period, must first obtain permission and secure a pass provided by a staff member.
6. Students are responsible for keeping the area at their tables clean and for removing all trash, food, and trays. Brooms, dustpans, paper towels, and mops are available for the use of anyone who spills food that cannot be easily cleaned by hand. Everyone needs to take part in keeping our cafeteria clean.
7. Students may not take open food or drinks that cannot be sealed out of the cafeteria.
8. Five minutes before the end of the lunch period a staff member will signal the cleanup routine to the students. Students should be in their seats as a staff member checks their table. The table group will be dismissed as soon as the area is determined to be clean.

* Those who choose to violate any cafeteria expectations will receive appropriate logical consequences in accordance with the school discipline code.

HEALTHY FOOD POLICY

The Healthy Food Policy helps our students learn healthy eating habits, and fosters a community of sharing and reduces sugar-induced behavior disruptions during learning times. We do not serve foods 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.

****Unhealthy snacks will be confiscated and NOT returned to students. ****

Acceptable Foods	Unacceptable Foods
● Fresh fruit ● Fresh vegetables ● Yogurt ● Pretzels ● Mini Applesauce snack packs ● Goldfish, Cheese-Its, Cheese Nips, or similar crackers ● Dried Fruits (apricots, pineapples, apples, etc.) ● Mini Boxes of Raisins ● Rice Cakes (popcorn) ● Granola or Granola Bars (not chocolate flavored) ● Baked crackers, Wheat Thins, Saltines ● Water & Seltzer, all unsweetened flavors	● Soda (including sport drinks) ● All Juice (Arizona Iced Tea, Snapple Iced Tea, etc.) ● Candy of any kind (including chocolate) ● Donuts, cookies, cakes ● Snack cakes (Little Debbie, Hostess, etc.) ● Chips (Doritos, Potato Chips, Cheese puffs/balls, takis, etc.) ● Cake or Cupcakes (even for birthday celebrations) ● Gum



BIRTHDAYS & SPECIAL DAYS

Birthdays and special days may be celebrated during morning Advisory periods. If a parent would like to celebrate a birthday or special day, please reach out to your child's advisor to arrange this. **Birthday cakes, cupcakes, and ice cream as well as goodie bags and balloons are NOT permitted at school birthday celebrations.**

OUTDOOR RECESS POLICY

The school 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, the policy for outside recess is as follows: 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 20 minutes of outdoor time, regardless of the season.

HOLIDAYS

In light of the school's philosophy, GUG 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, please contact your child's advisor or the School Leader.

SCHOOL CULTURE

The school has a school culture in which we hold each student to the same expectations and 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. Students are asked to reflect on their relationship to self, their relationship to others, their relationship to their school community, and their relationship to our global community and how their actions and choices affect these four areas. We begin the year by creating a school-wide social contract that reflects on these relationships and fosters a positive learning community. Additionally, these four areas are addressed on a daily basis through advisory structures, discipline structures, grade wide assemblies and special events, 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 and relationships within our school and encouraging our students to aspire to meet these core values every day. The School continues to build on the work of our core values (Kindness, Collaboration, Courage, Social Justice) that students learn about in the elementary school.



MARKING PERIODS, REPORT CARDS, & CONFERENCES

Progress reports will be distributed three times throughout the year and will be discussed at Family Conferences. Report Cards will be distributed three times throughout the year at the end of each marking period. During Family Conferences, students, families, and staff will present their current progress and set goals for the remainder of the marking period. All conference dates will be paired with asynchronous days of school. 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: October 23, 2026

Trimester #1 Ends: December 4, 2026

Conference #2: February 5, 2027

Trimester #2 Ends: March 19, 2027

Conference #3: May 14, 2027

Trimester #3 Ends: June 25, 2027

At family conferences, families will have the opportunity to meet with individual teachers to discuss academic progress or concerns for specific classes.

GRADING SYSTEM

Overview: At Growing Up Green Charter Schools, we focus on cultivating students' love of learning, challenging them, and supporting their academic growth. Grades and grading are an important part of, and a reflection of, the kind of learning we do at GUGCS. Given their importance to both students and teachers, we must ensure that grades are equitable for all students and reflect our approach to learning.

Grades are determined on a 100-point scale, with a strong emphasis on **summative** and **formative** assessments, to measure mastery. In alignment with mastery-based grading principles, students have the opportunity to resubmit assignments or retake assessments before the end of a unit to demonstrate progress toward the unit's learning goals.

Components of a Unit of Study

- **Learning Goals** are the central concepts and skills that students need to learn in each unit. They are created using grade-level and content-level standards. Each Unit of Study in all classes will have 3-5 learning goals. Learning goals will be shared with students and families at the start of each Unit of Study in all classes. Learning goals will not be graded directly but will guide communication about which skills students are mastering and areas for growth.
- **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. Formative assessments will make up 30% of the total weighted grade.



- **Summative assessments** are the main tool for determining whether students are meeting learning goals. Each Unit of Study will incorporate 1-2 summative assessments (tests, projects, essays, etc). They provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of the learning goals. Summative assessments will make up 50-55% of the total weighted grade.

Progress Reports and Report Cards:

Students will receive a progress report at the midpoint of each trimester (3), and a report card following the end of each trimester (3):

- Progress report grades are considered still in progress and may be improved before the end of the marking period.
- Trimester report card grades are final for each marking period.
- Students have the opportunity to resubmit assignments or retake assessments before the completion of any unit.
- Final grades will be the average of all trimester grades.

Equivalent Mastery Scale:

Numerical Score	Level of Mastery
90 to 100	Comprehensive mastery
80 to 89	Substantial understanding
70 to 79	Partial understanding
55 to 69	Not enough evidence of understanding



How Are Grades Determined for Classes?

Category	Weight	Sample Components
Summative Assessments	ELA / Math → 50% Social Studies, Science, & Specials → 55%	Unit assessments Essays Projects Labs Major writing tasks Performance tasks
Formative Assessments	30%	Quizzes Exit tickets Class assignments Practice tasks Discussion-based written responses
Homework	10%	—
Work Habits & Participation	5%	Note-taking Engagement in discussions Preparedness Completion of class routines Academic participation Showing work/strategies Productive collaboration
LFLB/Benchmark Assessments	ELA / Math → 5% Social Studies, Science, & Specials → 0%	—

Looking Forward Looking Back Interim Assessments:

- To guide instruction and provide students with targeted support, we administer three interim assessments in math and ELA throughout the year.
- 5% of the converted scores from these interim assessments will be used to determine trimester grades in **math** and **ELA**.

Family Conferences

- Conferences will serve as a time for the advisor, student, and family to meet to discuss learning goal progress and work habits
- There will also be a time for families and students to meet with teachers for all classes to discuss progress and areas of growth.



- These will align with three of the Progress Reports.

End of Year Report Card

- Report Cards will be distributed during the last week of the school year and will show the average of trimester grades.

How can I support my student at home?

- Ask them about what they are learning in each class.
- Review the learning goal progression rubric sent out at the start of each unit and ask the teacher/your student questions about what is happening in 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 advisor at least once a week.
- Review Progress Reports when they are shared and attend Family Conferences to learn about your child's progress.

HOMEWORK

Homework assignments are not new learning and are designed to enhance what the student has been exposed to in class and provide multiple opportunities for practice. Homework completion and the implementation of study and organizational skills creates lifelong learning habits. The purpose of homework is to build responsibility, self-discipline, and create a home-school connection.

Homework includes, but is not limited to; work not finished in class, completion of assignments, review of concepts taught, working on long-term projects, and studying for upcoming tests and quizzes. Students should be able to complete work on their own. These assignments will help students plan and practice time management. Parents should be aware of the due dates for their assignments to help students with their time management skills. Homework completion is shared with families in GUG's student information system, Alma.

In addition, students are expected to be reading at home every night for at least twenty minutes. Students have the opportunity to borrow books for our school's lending libraries so books are always available.

We will offer opportunities during the day in advisory and enrichment, and during our after-school programming, to provide students with time, space, and support to complete homework.



Homework Differentiation: Homework may be differentiated 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.

STUDENT ABSENCES/TARDINESS & HOMEWORK FOR ABSENTEES

Students are expected to maintain 95% attendance throughout the school year. If your child is absent, please call or email the main office by 9:00am to inform of this absence. Make sure to identify yourself, your child, your child's advisor, and the reason for absence. In the event that your child is absent for 3 consecutive days or more, you are required to provide written documentation concerning the absences. Please note all absences, despite a phone call, are not considered excused. Even though excused absences require documentation (medical appointments, religious observance, legal order, etc.), they are still counted towards the total number of absences. Parents will be notified by someone from the office when their child is absent from school. Students are responsible for meeting with teachers upon return from an absence to get makeup, 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.

Lateness:

Students are expected to come to school on time daily. The school day starts at 8:00 am and students should be arriving at their classrooms at that time. Students that are late will be marked as tardy for the day and parents will receive notification. Excessive tardiness impacts student learning and we take lateness very seriously.

The School Leaders send notices to families to alert them when we notice a pattern of excessive absences and lateness. 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:

- At 5+ absences: Mail home letter from School Leaders
- At 10+ absences: Mail home letter with a meeting appointment time with Assistant School Leader.
- At 15+ absences: Mail home CERTIFIED letter with a meeting appointment time with Assistant School Leader and the School Leader.*

**Lateness:**

- At 20 tardies: Mail home letter from School Leaders
- At 30 tardies: Mail home letter with a meeting appointment time with Assistant School Leader.
- At 40 tardies: Mail home CERTIFIED letter with a meeting appointment time with Assistant School Leader and the School Leader.*

*If a meeting is not arranged in a timely fashion, a certified letter will be mailed to your address on file to notify you of the concerns regarding attendance.

If a student misses 10 consecutive days of school or 20 days of school within a four-month period, the school shall commence an investigation as to why the student has been absent.

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.*

PERSONAL ITEMS, BOOKS & EQUIPMENT

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.

Bags: All school bags and personal items must be securely placed in student lockers. Students may not carry their school bags to classes or to the cafeteria during the school day. Book bags with wheels are not recommended because they will not fit into the lockers. Growing Up Green is not responsible for any lost or stolen items left in bags on hooks or in unlocked lockers.

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 school 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.

Graphing Calculator Usage:

Overview: At GUGCS, technology is used to support and enhance the learning experiences of all of our students. For that reason, the Schools may provide children with a graphing calculator that is to be used for educational purposes, including projects, class work, homework, and assessments. These 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 devices must be returned at the end of each school year and families are responsible for the cost of any damaged or missing devices. The use of graphing calculators 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.

Distribution & Return of Devices: Schools-issued graphing calculators will be distributed during the beginning of the school year. The Schools' leadership team and operations team will share details about the timeline for distribution and any other helpful information that students and families need to know. All devices will be returned during the last month of the school year in June. The Schools leadership team and operations team will share details about the timeline for return.

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:

- Store the calculators safely by closing it, and securing it within a backpack or bag, when traveling with it (to/from school, on the bus, etc.).
- Refrain from altering the physical device/charger (no stickers, engravings, marker, etc.).
- Avoid eating/drinking near the device.



- Avoid touching the screen.
- Keep all buttons intact (do not remove).
- When in use, keep the device in your sight and do not leave it unattended.
- Refrain from downloading or altering any software or programs on the device, unless authorized to do so by a teacher.
- Do not lend the device to classmates (or anyone else).
- Do not remove, alter, or damage labels from devices.

Family Expectations: Families are expected to support their child in meeting the expectations listed above. Families are also expected to communicate with the Schools in the event that their child's device is broken, damaged, or lost, or if their child comes across any inappropriate content on their device.

Additionally, families will be responsible for a fee of **\$100** for a calculator that is beyond repair or missing.

Damaged/Lost Devices: In the event that a calculator is damaged, the student/family member must notify the Schools immediately. In the event that a student's calculator cannot be repaired by the school, the student and family must meet with a member of the Schools leadership team to discuss proper handling protocols and next steps. Under no circumstances should a family member or student attempt to repair the device on their own.

**The Schools reserve the right to waive the replacement fee if the Schools deem that the damage or missing nature of the calculator were due to an unforeseen circumstance.*

Loss of Calculator Use: GUGCS encourages and expects all students and families to adhere to the policies laid out above. GUGCS reserves the right to suspend student calculator 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 calculator use include, but are not limited to:

- Using calculators for inappropriate, sexual, explicit, or violent searches, sites, emails, photos, videos or documents.
- Using a calculator for any bullying, harassment, unkind, or any other prohibited interactions.
- Repeated, constant, or purposeful damage to calculator (ie. peeling labels, removing buttons, throwing the device, etc.).
- Any other issue that the Schools leadership team finds inappropriate, unkind, or unsafe.

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 calculator 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' calculator devices. GUGCS parents/guardians give permission for their child(ren) to use the Schools' calculator device 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 affiliates, officers, employees, contractors, representatives and agents against all claims, damages, and costs that may result from my child(ren)'s use of the Schools' calculator 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' calculator device and the Internet if and when such access is not within the Schools' physical facilities.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY EXPECTATIONS

In all academic environments, students are responsible for their own work. 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 [merriam-webster.com/dictionary](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary) , 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.
- Using Artificial Intelligence such as ChatGPT to create or revise student work.

**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 considered criteria that determine promotion criteria for students to advance to the next grade level:

- Passing grades in all classes
- 90% or above attendance
 - For the purposes of promotion in doubt ("PID"), the School approximates that 3 tardies is similar, or equivalent, to an absence.
- Appropriate social development
- Grade level achievement on interim assessments

Families may be notified of promotion in doubt status during Family Teacher Conferences. Families will be invited in for an end of year meeting to discuss the school's final decision regarding their child's promotion status in June.

Note: 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.

STATE EXAM OPT OUT PROCEDURES

Each year, students in grades 3rd-8th will take the NYS Mathematics & ELA State exams. Students in 5th grade also take the NYS Science exam. If a parent/guardian would like to have their child opt out of any of the aforementioned 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 (*5th grade only))

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.



REGENTS COURSES

In 8th grade, students will take two New York State Regents courses, Algebra and Living Environment*, culminating with exams in June. These courses give students an opportunity to earn high school credit early, and are in place of 8th grade math and 8th grade science. Students can earn up to four high school credits, two credits per course. This is based on the discretion of your child's high school and is determined by their score and the high school's policies. Earning these credits early will provide students with more choices for elective and advanced courses during their junior and senior years of high school.

In order to earn these credits, students must pass both the course and the Regents Exam. As with all our classes, it is the expectation that students are approaching these classes with dedication and effort. Advisors and teachers will be continuously checking in on student progress to ensure course requirements are being met. If a student does not pass the course for the year, and/or the Regents Exam, the student may retake the course in high school.

*As per state guidelines, students must complete 1200 minutes of hands-on laboratory experience with satisfactory laboratory reports in order to take the Living Environment Regents exam.

HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The High School Admissions process begins in September of the student's 8th grade year. Each student will receive a high school application in mid October and the application is due in December. On the application, students may list up to 12 high schools that they are interested and eligible for. In addition to grades, each school has its own criteria of how they accept students including attending tours, open houses, writing an essay, or an interview. Information for each school is provided in the High School Directory. Once applications are submitted, students will find out the results in March. They will only receive one match. If a student is matched to a school other than their first choice, students will be automatically placed on the waitlists to all schools above the school on the application where the student was matched. Any appeals will be directed to a Family Welcome Center. Questions or concerns regarding the high school admissions process, please reach out to the high school counselor.

The High School Admissions process begins during the early months of the students 8th grade year. Please note, each year the timeline of the process for high school applications changes slightly. The High School Placement Counselor will provide students and families with the necessary information and updates regarding the process through a weekly high school newsletter. During the Fall, students will receive a "Welcome Letter" from the Office of Student Enrollment which will include their Account Creation Code and Pin needed to create the parent/guardians MySchools accounts. The parents/guardians MySchools account will be used as the portal to apply to up to 12 public schools and programs. Application to specialized high schools require a test or portfolio submission. Charter high schools also require their own application process to be followed. .



FAMILY-STAFF COMMUNICATION

The School 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.

- **Phone Communication:** Teachers will communicate with parents about patterns of missing assignments or low grades, or when academic concerns arise. Teachers or advisors will also reach out to acknowledge student successes.
- **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. *Please reach out to the Director of Operations if you need support in using Parent Square.*
- **Appointments:** Appointments can be scheduled on an as-needed basis. Families who wish to meet with teachers or administrators 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. Please note if you feel you have an urgent issue or request for the school please call before coming to the school building to arrange for an appointment and ensure that the person you need to speak with is available to address your concerns.
- **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 email account. A list of all teacher contact information will be distributed at Curriculum Night. Teachers will reply to parent emails within 48-hours Monday-Friday.
- **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; and
 - d. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Parents can obtain the professional qualification information described above each school year by contacting the HR Team.



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 ACCESS TO BUILDING

We welcome families to join us for a variety of events throughout the year, including Curriculum Night, Family Conferences, academic and social emotional workshops, and a variety of other events. If you would like to visit the school for other reasons, please reach out to the main office or school leaders with your request. We consider this access an important part of who we are as a school and we value our family involvement; however, it is important to note that if an issue occurs that makes us feel it is necessary to temporarily limit the access of a visitor to the school due to concerns about that individual's conduct, we will provide a notification in person and/or in writing. The reasoning behind our decision to limit access to our building will be outlined and the time period for such restrictions will be conveyed.

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.

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.

SUPPORT SERVICES

It is our mission to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of all learners in the school community. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires appropriate special education services to be administered in the "least restrictive environment" appropriate for a students' needs. Therefore, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are included in the general education classroom



to the fullest extent appropriate and teachers are obligated to make the appropriate accommodations and modifications in order to meet the needs of the child.

Growing Up Green Middle School follows an inclusive model for education, meaning that students with and without disabilities participate and learn in the same classrooms together. We understand that every child learns in different ways, all of whom can be supported through quality inclusive education and collaboration amongst our teachers and staff.

The School 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 push in or 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.

The School also coordinates the following mandated related services through agency providers:

- Speech and Language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Hearing services
- Paraprofessional services

The responsibilities of teachers for students with Individualized Education Plans include:

- To read and comply with all student IEPs or 504 plans
- To provide students with appropriate modifications and accommodations (including testing accommodations)



- To provide instruction that targets individual annual goals and monitor progress toward these goals · To actively participate in yearly IEP meetings

Successful Students Committee

In order to collaboratively support all of our learners, staff meets regularly within grade-level Successful Students Committee (SSC) meetings. Teachers or advisors may refer students of concern based on current academic performance, learning characteristics, and/or social & emotional well-being. During SSC meetings, strategies are discussed to support student learning and identify individualized growth goals. Families will be notified in advance if their child is being referred to SSC and are strongly encouraged to take an active role in the process. This may include attending the initial or follow-up meeting, discussing identified goals with your child, and/or ensuring support with homework and study routines.

504 Accommodations Protocol

The School 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, 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 (ATTN: 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 enters school with a pre-existing 504 Plan, the school-based 504 team will conduct a new evaluation within 30 days of the student's transfer.

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 diagnoses provided by the student's parents, student grades, disciplinary referrals, health information, standardized test scores, and informal teacher/provider observations.

Special Education Process

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) and New York State Regulations, only specific people may make a referral for an initial evaluation, while different individuals may make a Request for Initial Evaluation. Any initial referral received from a parent/guardian must be in writing. Please direct all inquiries and requests regarding evaluations to the School's Director of Support Services.



Once a referral has been made, families will be contacted by the District Committee on Special Education (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 where you will meet with the staff of Growing Up Green, along with a representative of the CSE. All team members share information and work together to determine whether your child has a disability and to request the special education services that are appropriate.

After a child has received special education services, an **Annual Review** meeting is held to review the child's progress. 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 the option of conducting updated assessments.

MultiLingual Learners

In keeping with state and federal law, the School offers English as a New Language (ENL) services to all grade levels for MultiLingual Learners (MLLs) who are limited in English proficiency. The School 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 pull-out 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.

FIELD TRIPS

Students take many field trips throughout the year. During registration and subsequent re-registrations, one of the forms you complete is a Field Trip form which provides blanket consent for your student to attend all trips planned for their grade for the year. Additional forms and consents may be required for specific trips and will be shared when appropriate. In order to be able to attend trips, students must be able to follow the directions of all adults at all times, as any one of the adults may be responsible for their safety. If we feel that your child poses a safety concern due to difficulties in following adult directions, he/she will not be permitted to attend trips. Families will be notified prior to the trip if their child is unable to attend. If your child is not able to attend a field trip the child will receive appropriate academic work. If a child demonstrates unsafe behavior the morning of a trip they will not be permitted to attend the trip and you will be notified that your child will be placed in another location while their



grade is on the trip. A student may receive a discipline referral while on a field trip for not following behavioral expectations. Additionally, a student may lose the privilege to attend a subsequent trip as a logical consequence for not following behavioral expectations while on a field trip. In general, parent, guardian, or family member chaperones are not asked to attend middle school field trips.

For Overnight Field Trips, there may be additional requirements in place to determine student participation. Students who have received multiple discipline referrals throughout the year may be determined to be ineligible for attending the trip. 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. The same student code of conduct applies on both day and overnight trips.

TEACHER GIFTS

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 the New York State General Municipal 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 fundraisers held by the PTO.

CELLULAR PHONES & ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

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.

Middle School Collection Protocol

Students must turn in their devices each day during morning advisory to their advisor (or other school staff member). Students will receive their devices back during the end of day advisory period (before leaving for the day). Each advisory room 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.

MANDATED REPORTERS

All of our employees are mandated reporters and we are obligated by the law to report any concerns regarding possible child abuse, maltreatment, or neglect when we have reasonable cause to suspect them. We do not make a judgment regarding whether or not such concerns are occurring but rather fulfill our legal responsibility of calling the Mandated Reporter Hotline and allowing them to make a determination on whether or not an Administration for Child Services ("ACS") case is warranted based on information provided.

DISCIPLINE

At Growing Up Green Middle School we have adopted the Developmental Designs program. Developmental Designs focuses on building relationships and working with students to set and achieve goals. GUGMS 1 & 2 will be following the Developmental Designs processes to help students who are having difficulties following our school expectations. 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:

Clear and consistent classroom expectations are essential in order to maintain a safe learning environment. Every classroom will establish clear classroom expectations and all classrooms will follow the Developmental Designs framework for behavior interventions. The following interventions are utilized in each classroom to help support students reflect on their choices and correct behaviors:

Reminders – Students will first be given a reminder of the classroom expectations and instructions on how to correct their behaviors.

In-Classroom Break – If a behavior continues after reminders are given, a student may be asked to take a brief break in the classroom and return once he or she has reflected on their behavior.

Out-of-Classroom Break (Tab-Out) – If a behavior persists after an in-classroom break, then a student may be asked to take a break out of the classroom (tab-out). During a tab-out, a student is directed to another classroom and asked to complete a short reflection aimed at helping the student make better choices upon returning. The student will also debrief with their own classroom teacher before rejoining the class when possible.

Problem Solving Conferences – Students that are struggling with meeting behavioral expectations in the classroom setting may be asked to engage in a problem solving conference with a 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.

Lateness to Class

It is the student's responsibility to arrive to their next class before the end of the transition period. Teachers will document any student who arrives late to a class without a pass. Teachers will write discipline referrals for students who are repeatedly late to their class and logical consequences will apply.

Hallway Passes/Hallway Behavior

It is mandatory that students have a pass when traveling in the hallways during class time. It is the student's responsibility to obtain either a classroom pass or a note from a staff member before entering the hallways. School staff will document any students who are in the hall without a pass. Parents will be notified if a student is repeatedly traveling without a pass and logical consequences may be warranted. Additionally, students are expected to travel in the hallways during transition times in a safe manner and refrain from engaging in behaviors that are not compliant with our code of conduct. If students are



making poor behavioral choices during transition times then logical consequences may be warranted and loss of hallway privileges may be implemented.

Discipline Referrals

If the classroom management interventions are unsuccessful in helping a student fix a behavior or a student is unsafe, a discipline referral may be warranted. The Dean of Students will meet with students after they have received a discipline referral to provide students with the space to reflect on their actions, and provide logical consequences for their behaviors. These meetings will occur during non-academic times of the day, when possible. If a student is being unsafe in the classroom the student will be immediately removed from the classroom and escorted to the discipline office, a counselor's office, or the office of another leadership team member. If a student receives a discipline referral the student's parents will be contacted by the referring teacher about the behavior infraction. If the behavior is serious or the student has received multiple referrals for a similar infraction, then the dean of students will set up a mandatory meeting to discuss the student's actions and logical consequences.

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 corresponding 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 himself/herself 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 his/her 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.

In-School Reflection Period

Students who receive a discipline referral may be required to serve an in-school reflection period. The length of this reflection will be determined by the Dean of Students and will take place during lunch and/or recess periods. Students may be required to serve multiple in-school reflection periods if the offense warrants a longer reflection, or if it is a repeated behavior. In-school reflection periods are geared towards helping students think through their actions and work on action plans for ensuring better choices.

After-School Reflection Period

Students who receive a discipline referral **may** be required to serve an after-school reflection depending on the behavior infraction. After-school reflection periods will be served at the earliest possible time once a parent or guardian has been notified. After-school reflections are mandatory, and alternate



transportation may be required for students utilizing the bus or being picked up. After-school reflection periods will be held two times a week, and students will be required to serve anywhere between 30 minutes to an hour depending on the seriousness of the offense. Students may be required to serve multiple after-school reflection periods if the offense warrants a longer reflection, or if it is a repeated behavior.

Reflection periods are a time for students to reflect on their actions and as a result, all students will be given an academic assignment connected to the behavioral infraction that occurred. These academic assignments will help students reflect on choices and develop a plan for how they can make more responsible decisions during learning time. After-school reflection periods are considered logical consequences for actions given that students have taken away from their own and others valuable learning time. At the conclusion of reflection periods, students meet with a dean to debrief and discuss actionable next steps for changing behaviors in the future.

Student Culture Skill Building and Conflict Mediation Sessions

Students who are engaging in repetitive disruptive behaviors and/or who are experiencing conflicts with their peers that are leading to contentious situations may be required to attend a student culture skill building circle or conflict mediation session with a Dean 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.

Additionally, at times, restorative mediation conversations may happen between teachers and students, with the intent of repairing teacher-student relationships and supporting students in their class engagement and success in the school community.

GUGCS Discipline Code

GUGCS clearly states the school's 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.

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 reflection periods 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
Exclusion from Extracurricular activities	Determined by the staff member running the extracurricular activity, Dean of Students and School Leader.
Afterschool Reflection Period	Determined by the Dean of Students and School Leader; a student may have to stay for up to an hour after school to reflect on school expectations.
Short Term Removal	Determined by the Dean of Students and School Leader; a student may be removed from the classroom environment for a period of up to two hours.
Short Term Suspension	Determined by the School Leader, 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 Leader, 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 Leader, 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.



Tiers of Misconduct

Tier 1 Behaviors that are more minor in nature but detract from the learning of students and negatively impact the classroom community.	Tier 2 Behaviors that are more serious in nature that violate the school's code of conduct or create a disrespectful environment and may warrant a discipline referral.	Tier 3 Serious behaviors that endanger the safety of others or the student and demonstrate disrespect for staff, students, and/or school community.	Tier 4 Behaviors that are extreme in nature and create a serious threat to the safety of students or others in the school.
Examples: ● Verbally disruptive. ● Unwillingness to follow directions. ● Refusal to participate or complete work. ● Unsteady body in the classroom. ● Verbally hurt a classmate's feelings or intentionally said something unkind to others. ● Any other negative behaviors that a classroom teacher feels distracts from the learning environment.	Examples: ● Threatened or was verbally aggressive towards another person. ● Repeated unwillingness to follow directions that has not been corrected after in classroom consequences have been applied. ● Cheated on quizzes/tests/projects. ● In unassigned area without permission. ● Physically harmed another as a result of being unsafe. ● Repeated behaviors listed in Tier 1. ● Any other negative behaviors that a staff member believes violates the school's code of conduct or create a disrespectful environment.	Examples: ● Intentionally physically harming others. ● Stole or knowingly used stolen property. ● Left assigned room without permission. ● Using inappropriate or offensive language towards a teacher or a peer. ● Vandalizing school property causing minor damage. ● Engaging in behavior that is considered harassing towards other students. ● Reckless or unsafe behavior that endangers the safety of others or causes significant disruption to the school community ● Refusal to be in the classroom/ skipping class. ● Stealing, attempting to steal, or possess property known by the student to be stolen. ● Trespass on school property. ● Abuse school property or equipment. ● Engage in acts of sexual harassment, including but not limited to physical contact or offensive sexual comments ● Repeated behaviors listed on Tier 1 & Tier 2 ● Any other negative behaviors that a staff member feels	Examples: ● Attempting to run out of the building, running around the school, or running away from adults without stopping. ● Engaging in behavior that is confirmed as bullying towards other students. ● Physically assaulting staff members or threatening to assault staff members. ● Endangering the physical safety of another by the use of force or threats of force, which reasonably places the victim in fear of imminent bodily injury. ● Possess tobacco, electronic cigarettes, or alcohol. ● Make a false bomb threat or pull a false emergency alarm ● Possess, use, attempt to use, or transfer any firearm, knife, razor blade, explosive, mace, tear gas, or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student at school. ● Commit or attempt to commit arson on school property. ● Possess, sell, distribute, or use any alcoholic beverage, controlled substance, imitation, or marijuana on school property or at a school-sponsored event. ● Vandalize school property causing major damage.



		endangers the safety of others or the student and demonstrates disrespect for staff, students, and/or school community.	• Repeated behaviors listed in Tier 1, 2, or 3. • Any other negative behaviors that a staff member feels create a serious threat to the safety of students.
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Consequences

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

TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3	TIER 4
• Take a Break • Take a Break Out • Logical Consequences in the Classroom • Loss of privilege of class trip or activity • Parent phone call or meeting request. • Problem Solving Conference.	• Potential Discipline Referral • Logical Consequence as deemed appropriate. • Reflection Period(s) assigned during lunch, recess, and/or after-school. • Parent phone call or meeting request. • Student Culture Skill Building Sessions or Conflict Mediation Sessions. • Short term removal.	• Automatic Discipline Referral • Reflection Period(s) during lunch, recess, and/or after-school. • Parent meeting request. • Problem Solving Conference. • Immediate need to be picked up by parent. • In School or Out of School Suspension. • Loss of privilege, community service project, or repair as warranted. • Student Culture Skill Building Sessions or Conflict Mediation Sessions. • Short term removal.	• Automatic Discipline Referral. • Reflection Period(s) during lunch, recess, and/or after-school. • Mandatory parent meeting. • Out of School Suspension. • Immediate need to be picked up by parent. • Possible Expulsion. • Short term removal.

Due Process for Suspensions

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 academics process the informal conference shall take place as soon as possible after the suspension is reasonably practicable. You may not be represented by legal counsel at this conference. Parents/Guardians will have the opportunity to discuss the relevant facts pertaining to the suspension,



and present their child's defense to the allegations leading to the suspension. Ultimately, the school will make the final decision on the suspension. An appeal process is explained below.

Students who have been suspended for more than ten days have a right to a formal hearing. At the formal hearing, you and your child may be represented by legal counsel, may offer evidence and challenge evidence submitted by the school, present witnesses and cross-examine witnesses against your child. You must notify GUGCS 2 days in advance if you intend to bring a lawyer. 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. The hearing office may be the School Leader or another member of leadership. 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 the decision rendered at this hearing. If you wish to appeal, you must do so within five business days of the hearing in writing to Matthew Greenberg, Executive Director at 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.

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

or via email to: charterschools@nysed.gov

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.

Provisions to Implement Alternative Instruction Options:



Students removed for all suspensions will receive all classroom assignments and a schedule by which to complete missed assignments and/or tests during the time of the suspension. Students will also receive an educational assignment to complete related to the behavior that led to a suspension. GUGCS will provide additional alternative education instruction for a minimum of 2 hours for each school day (5th and 6th Grades) or 3 hours (for 7th and 8th grades) during out of school suspensions. Instruction for each student shall be sufficient to enable the student to make adequate academic progress.

Provisions for Students with Disabilities:

GUGCS 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). As described above, 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 Disabilities:

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. School personnel may also impose additional removals of the child of not more than 10 school days in a row in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct.

Before a student with an IEP 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.

Determination that Behavior was a Manifestation of the Child's Disability

If the school district, the parent, and relevant members of the CSE determine that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the CSE or CPSE must either:

1. Conduct a functional behavioral assessment, unless the school district 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

A child with a disability who is removed from his or her 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.

After a child with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for 10 school days in that same school year and if the current removal is for 10 school days in a row or less and if the removal is not a change of placement (see definition below), then school personnel in consultation with at least one of the child's teachers, determine the extent to which services are needed 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.

If the removal is a change of placement, the child's CSE determines the appropriate services 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.

Special Circumstances

Whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of the child's disability, school personnel may remove a student to an IAES 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;
2. Knowingly has or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, on transportation to or from school, or at a school function; or
3. Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, on transportation to or from school, or at a school function

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities offered by the school. Activities take place after-school and revolve around the student's and staff's interests. If after-school activities need to be canceled for any reason, an announcement will be made through the school's robo system, on the school's website, and the school's social media pages. Students that participate in extracurricular activities must be following expectations in an exemplary fashion. They are required to wear their uniforms and obey the disciplinary code at all times. Participating in extracurricular activities is



considered a privilege and if students are unable to comply with the disciplinary code during extracurricular activities they may lose the privilege. Additionally, sports teams and some organizations have a contract that outlines academic and behavior expectations that determine student's eligibility. Parent meetings are held to go over the expectations with families. Determination of this loss of privilege or exclusion will be determined by the Deans of Students and/or School Leader.

Middle School Spectator Policy for Athletic Events: The purpose of this policy is to ensure a safe and enjoyable environment for all participants, staff, and spectators at middle school athletic events while maintaining appropriate crowd sizes and adhering to GUGCS's safety protocols.

- **Home Team Spectators:** Each home team athlete is permitted to have up to 2 spectators attend the event. The first home team spectator may be a parent, guardian, or other registered contact (in Alma) for the athlete. The second home team spectator may be another parent, guardian, or registered contact (in Alma) for the athlete, or a sibling of the athlete, accompanied by the parent/guardian.
- **Away Team Spectators:** Each away team athlete is permitted to have up to 2 spectators attend the event. The first away team spectator must be a parent or guardian for the athlete. The second away team spectator may be another parent or guardian for the athlete, or a sibling of the athlete, accompanied by the parent/guardian.
- **Student Spectators:** No students or children (outside of athletes for GUGCS and the visiting team) are permitted to attend GUGCS home sporting events. On certain occasions, GUGCS student spectators may be invited to attend a home game to support their peers. In this case, a signed permission form will be provided and must be completed by the parent/guardian of each student spectator, and a GUGCS staff member will be supervising all student spectators for the entire duration of the athletic event, including ensuring proper dismissal from the event.
- **Admission and Check-In:** All spectators must check in at the security desk and provide identification, if requested. All spectators must wear a visitor's badge while inside the GUGCS school building.
- **Behavior Expectations:** All spectators are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship and respectful behavior toward athletes, coaches, officials, and other attendees. Failure to adhere to these behavior standards may result in removal from the event and potential restrictions on attending future games, which remains at the discretion of the GUGCS administration.
- **Special Exceptions:** Any exceptions to the spectator policy must be approved in advance by the school administration, but are unlikely to be granted. All exceptions must be confirmed in writing, via email, by the school administration, at least 24 hours prior to any athletic event.



STUDENT LOCKERS

Lockers are the property of Growing Up Green Middle School. Each student is assigned to a locker each year. The lockers should be maintained in a clean and orderly manner throughout the school year. Students will be given opportunities throughout the school year to clean and straighten their lockers. All lockers will be cleaned out at the end of the school year. Students may only put items that can be taken down easily (with tape) on the inside of their locker walls. Valuables should not be kept in lockers. Students may access lockers only at the times designated by School staff. Students must lock their lockers with a school issued lock at all times. If a student loses their lock they must request a replacement lock from the main office. Locker privileges may be suspended in the case a student repeatedly leaves their locker unsecured.

Students possess the right to privacy as well as freedom from unreasonable search and seizure of property guaranteed by the fourth amendment of the U.S. Constitution. That individual right is balanced by the school's responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all students. 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. There is no necessity for school officials to obtain a search warrant to make a search. 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 lockers, desks, areas of the school building, and parking lots remain the property of the School and therefore students should have no expectation of privacy when utilizing them, nor is, though the School is not responsible for books, clothing, or valuables left in lockers or desks. A student shall not place or keep in a locker 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.

Growing Up Green is not responsible for any lost and/or stolen items in lockers. We strongly encourage all students to lock up all their items and not to share their personal locker combinations with anyone.



INTERNET POLICY

Growing Up Green Charter Schools 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. 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, 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 or during school activities or functions and without the school's permission, will be subject to disciplinary action at the school level and will be asked to remove those images.

Social Media/Internet Guidelines

We expect 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 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 community.

Students should be mindful of their behavior on social media and should conduct themselves with respect for themselves and others in the 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. Cyberbullying 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 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 Middle School 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

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

G1 MS (LIC) Dignity Act Coordinators

Diana Lopez

dlopez@gugcs.org

Amira Sharif

sharif@gugcs.org

G2 MS (Jamaica) Dignity Act Coordinators

Nakia Richardson

richardson@gugcs.org

Kiana Cunningham

cunningham@gugcs.org

Board of Trustees Interim Chair

Marc Greenberg

magreenberg@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

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 Chair 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. 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 Chair of the Board of Trustees 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 Middle 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 District 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 Middle School will not retaliate against anyone 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 other 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.

DASA Coordinators at GUGCS

GUG1 Elementary, LIC	GUG1 Middle, LIC	GUG2 Elementary, Jamaica	GUG2 Elementary, Jamaica
Natalia Gomez gomez@gugcs.org	Amira Sharif sharif@gugcs.org	Casey Smith csmith@gugcs.org	Kiana Cunningham cunningham@gugcs.org
Bari Mimoun mimoun@gugcs.org	Diana Lopez dlopez@gugcs.org		Nakia Richardson richardson@gugcs.org

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
• 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 explicit or disparaging of another's culture, race, ethnicity, gender, disabilities, or sexual identity.

FIRE & EMERGENCY 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.

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 36-49 11th Street (LIC) location:

- St. Rita's Church (36-25 11th St, Queens, NY 11106)

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 84-35 152nd Street (Jamaica) location:

- Parson's Pre School (8460 Parsons Blvd, Jamaica, NY 11432)

EMERGENCY DRILLS EXPECTATIONS

As part of our preparation we practice different types of drills throughout the year. It is important that students and families know the different drills and discuss with their students expectations to follow.

Shelter In Place - Remain in the building.

When a Shelter In Place 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.

AED/CPR (Code Blue) -

When a CODE BLUE announcement is made:

- Only CPR-trained staff respond; students remain where they are.
- No action is required of students.
- In case of an actual Code Blue, students must listen and follow staff instructions.

Fire/Evacuation Drill - Go Outside

When an announcement is made or an 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 & 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 Middle School Coordinator 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 Middle School Coordinator 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



Access to Medical Records

Parents are entitled to access their students' medical records.

Notice for Directory Information

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

The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School to include information from your child's education records in the School's Family Directory.

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 Managing 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:

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

SURVEYS & ACTIVITIES

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

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent(s).
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family.
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes.
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior.



5. Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
6. Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians and ministers.
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
8. Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

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

"Opting Out" of Surveys and Activities

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

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- 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 Middle 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

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



VIOLATION OF LAW OR CHARTER COMPLAINT

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 complaint is against or involves the Executive Director, the complaint shall be made directly to the Board of Trustees of the School.

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.

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.

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, 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



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.

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.
- i) 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.
- j) 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, 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, or by telephone at 5178-474-0937. 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.



2026-2027 Middle School Family Handbook Acknowledgement Form:

I have read the Growing Up Green Middle 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: _____

Advisor: _____

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: _____