



Student / Parent Handbook 2022-2023

Ashley Brooks, Executive Director
Jean Castelli, Principal
Dr. Lindajeanne Schwartz, Director of Student Services

Gates School is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. Gates School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, or immigrant status in its programs and activities. The Gates School Principal has been designated to handle questions pertaining to Section 504. As required by Title IX, Gates School does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in its education programs or activities. The Director of Operations, Janice Nichols, serves as the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator's email address is j.nichols@gatesschool.org, phone number is (843) 868-8178 and address is 5010 Wetland Crossing Road, North Charleston, SC 29418.

A Message to Our Parents

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the 2022-23 school year at Gates School!

The Gates School faculty and staff value your child, and it is our intent to provide a meaningful, productive and safe learning environment. Our goal is to support our students, who learn and think differently, through a multisensory instructional approach that promotes whole brain learning and strong literacy skills. We invite you, as parents and families, to share actively as our partners in education. Two-way communication between home and school is vital to this partnership. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to participate in our Parent-Teacher Conference Days, GFA meetings, and other school activities.

The Student/Parent Handbook includes. Please take important information regarding the routines, policies and procedures established for the safety and well-being of our students and the smooth operation of the school the time to read this information and review it with your child. Should you have questions, please feel free to contact school staff at (843)868-8178.

The Gates School team is excited to work with your child and partner with you to provide an exceptional educational experience that leads to success.

Best wishes for a wonderful school year!

Sincerely,

Ashley Brooks, Executive Director

Jean Castelli, Principal

Dr. Lindajeanne Schwartz, Director of Student Services

Table of Contents

Mission	4
Vision	4
Gates School Pledge	4
Important Contact Information	4
Governing Structure	5
Alternative Education Campus	5
Absences and Tardies	6
Unlawful Absences	7
Daily Schedule	7
Early Dismissal	8
Emergency Early Release	8
Arrival Procedures	9
Dismissal Procedures	9
Health Services	10
Dress Code	11
Visitors	12
Volunteers	12
Homework	13
Make Up Work	13
Fees	13
Textbooks	13
Report Cards and Grading Scale	14
Parent / Teacher Conferences	14
Class Parties	14
Discipline and Code of Conduct	14
<i>Children’s Internet Protection Act</i>	14
<i>Social Media</i>	15
<i>Expectations for Student and Parent Behavior</i>	15
<i>Toys</i>	16
<i>Weapons</i>	17
<i>Bullying</i>	17
<i>Student Code of Conduct Matrix</i>	18
<i>Video Surveillance</i>	23
Student Complaints/Concerns/Grievances	24

Mission

The Gates School Mission is “to provide an exceptional, evidence-based, multi-sensory education for students with dyslexia to open the gates to their academic potential in an environment that empowers students to develop a positive and socially conscious self-image.”

Vision

Gates School’s vision is to be recognized as one of the most successful multisensory educational leaders in the region for providing a highly structured, student-centered education that addresses the academic and social challenges students with dyslexia experience.

Gates School Pledge

We are the Gates Griffins, making a better tomorrow by working together.

We bravely lead others with kindness and empathy.

We are focused learners who show hard work, curiosity, and creativity each day.

We show appreciation to ourselves and others by being respectful, helpful, hopeful and joyful.

We show up each day as our best self, whether that be active, precise, mysterious, or playful.

We, the Gates Griffins, are guardians.

Important Contact Information

Gates School
5010 Wetland Crossing Road
North Charleston, SC 29418
(843) 868-8178
www.gatesschool.org

The Charter Institute at Erskine
1201 Main Street
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 849-2464
www.erskinecharters.org

School Administration:

Ashley Brooks	Executive Director	a.brooks@gatesschol.org
Jean Castelli	Principal	j.castelli@gatesschool.org
Dr. Lindajeane Schwartz	Director of Student Services	l.schwartz@gatesschool.org
Janice Nichols	Director of Operations	j.nichols@gatesschool.org
Rachel Jones	Office Manager	ra.jones@gatesschool.org

Governing Structure

Gates School is a tuition-free public charter school authorized under The Charter Institute at Erskine (CIE). Gates School is also a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation through the South Carolina Secretary of State's office, and as such, is governed by a Board of Directors. The Gates School Board of Directors is elected annually in February by the parent body and employees of the school, with new members taking their seats in February, in compliance with Section 59-40-50 of the South Carolina Charter Schools Act (1996).

Gates School's Board of Directors is responsible for governing, not managing, the school. Board members ensure that Gates School's academic programs are consistent with the school's mission and are successful in educating all students, and that school funds are responsibly managed and accounted for. Board members also approve and evaluate school policies to ensure that they are lawful, fair, and provide appropriate protection and opportunity for everyone involved with the school.

Gates School's Executive Director and Leadership Team are responsible for inspiring, leading, guiding, and directing every member of the instructional and support services team and for achieving the highest standards of excellence, so that each individual student enrolled in the school may have a complete, valuable, and meaningful education.

The Executive Director is responsible directly to the Board of Directors for operating the school. The Board will delegate its authority to the school's Executive Director to execute approved policies and manage the day-to-day activities of the school.

Alternative Education Campus (AEC)

Consistent with the provisions of the South Carolina Charter School Act of 1996, and specifically Section 59-40-111, Gates School will serve students 1st - 6th grade who have an identified specific learning disability in reading (dyslexia) as a primary diagnosis. More specifically and reflective of the provisions noted under Section 59-40-50 (B.7.), the students attending Gates School will have a demonstrated need for specialized, evidence-based educational services as documented by their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or by way of "documentation that the student is not meeting grade-specific standards in literacy as documented by the student's school" (Section 59-40-50 [B.7.]). Consequently, it is certain that more than 50% of the students enrolled in the Gates school will have an IEP consistent with the provisions noted for an AEC.

Absences and Tardiness

School success begins with regular attendance. Guardians must ensure that all school-age children in their care are in school and on time every day. We appreciate your support in emphasizing the importance of promptness and regular attendance.

Please note the following:

- All absences require a written explanation from the parent/guardian within three (3) school days from the date of return of the absence. Written explanations must include the student's name, parent's full name and phone number, date(s) of absence(s), and documentation or reason for the absence. Absences are unexcused without this information. There is no need to call the school to let us know your child is absent. Any absences over 3 consecutive days will only be excused with medical or legal documentation.
- Absences in excess of ten days per year will not be excused without official medical or legal documentation.
- Family vacations are recorded as an unexcused absence.
- Truancy occurs when a student has five unexcused and/or unverified absences or three consecutive unexcused or unverified absences. Truancy notifications will be provided to parents after the first offense and truancy intervention conferences will be held for each truancy that occurs after the first.
- If a student is late for school because of a medical appointment, a doctor's note is required for the tardy to be considered excused.
- Any excused or unexcused tardy will prevent a student from earning 100% attendance awards throughout, and at the end of, the year.
- Any student who reports to school after 8:00 am will be considered tardy. At 8:00 am promptly, the doors to the building will be closed and students will need to be signed in by a parent.
- Arriving to the room even a few minutes late is disruptive to the tardy student and to the other children in the classroom, and it delays the beginning of the school day. We will notify parents when their child has been tardy five times. After the fifth tardy, the parents will receive a letter from the administration and may be required to come in for a conference to discuss a Student Attendance Intervention Plan.
- Excessive unexcused absences may result in grade retention and/or disenrollment from the charter school. In the event that unlawful absences continue, the case will be reviewed for additional interventions and/or further action. The case may be referred to the Department of Social Services, the Ninth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office for participation in Family Court, or other interventions.

- ***Please be advised if your child has 10 consecutive unexcused absences, they will automatically be unenrolled at the school as per the South Carolina Department of Education guidelines.***

- Parents are responsible for daily transportation, ensuring regular attendance (including no tardiness or late pick up), and compliance with behavior expectations as noted in the Gates School Code of Conduct.

Student Promotion and Retention

There are important factors to be considered before determining that a student will progress to the next grade. Student promotion is based upon an evaluation of each student's achievement in terms of appropriate instructional goals. The basis for making the determination should reflect the consideration of the following: quarterly report cards, classroom assignments, daily observations, standardized tests, student portfolios, IEP plans (where appropriate), and other data as appropriate or required. It is important to note that the promotion and/or retention of any student must be discussed as a team starting in January, which includes the principal, teacher and parent(s). The decision regarding promotion/retention must ultimately be made by the School Principal.

Daily Schedule

Students may not be left unattended or released from vehicles before 7:30 AM.

7:30 AM Students may enter the building and report to the multipurpose room

8:00 AM Tardy Bell Rings

2:40 PM Afternoon Announcements

2:55 PM Dismissal

Any children waiting to be picked up by car after 3:15 PM will need to be signed out with the front office. Excessive amounts of late pickups will not be tolerated. Warnings will be given for the 1st and 2nd late pick up. The 3rd late pick up will result in a conference with the Administrative Staff. On the 5th late pick up (and each one thereafter), the parent will be charged \$1.00 per minute. This money will go directly to providing extra materials to Gates School students.

Early Dismissal

- Please make every effort to schedule appointments for your child outside of school hours. We cannot impress upon parents enough that calling into a classroom to request your child for dismissal interrupts not only your child's learning, but also that of the entire class. Early check out, excused or unexcused, WILL prevent a student from receiving 100% attendance awards throughout the year.
- If a student must be picked up early for a doctor's appointment, etc., the parent must send a handwritten note stating the reason and time the child will need to leave school as well as indicate permission for anyone other than the parent or guardian to sign out the student. Listing someone as an emergency contact does not give them permission to sign the child out of school unless there is an emergency at the school where parents cannot be reached. Early dismissal, excused or unexcused WILL prevent a student from receiving 100% attendance for the year.
- Upon arrival at the office, your (or the person with permission to pick up your student) driver's license will be required and only parents/guardians or someone approved by the parent in writing ahead of time, will be allowed to pick up a child.
- If the early release is for a doctor's appointment, bring in a note from the doctor the next day.
- Parents will not be permitted to pick up students after 2:30PM.
- If students are dismissed at recess, they will be delayed by having to first report to the classroom to collect their backpacks.

Emergency Early Release

When adverse weather conditions threaten, officials at Gates School monitor the situation closely.

If, for any reason, there is a change in the school schedule, a notice will be posted immediately on the school website, and parents will be notified. Please monitor our school website and/or social media for updates regarding school closures.

School officials also have the option of calling for a delayed opening. A delayed opening is when the school will operate on a two-hour delay. The following will be the school schedule in the event of a delayed opening:

- Gates School will open two (2) hours later than usual. That is 10:00AM.
- Students should not be dropped off before school opens.
- The school day will end at the regular time.

Arrival Procedures

- Students should arrive at school between 7:30AM and 8:00AM. Please make every effort to get your child to school on time.
- Students may not be dropped off before 7:30AM.
- Students may enter the building at 7:30AM and proceed to their classroom. Any student arriving after 8:00AM will be marked tardy. If staff are no longer unloading cars, parents **MUST** park their car in a parking spot, walk their child into the building and sign their child into the front office. Do not have your child walk into the building alone.
- Students enter the building through the main entrance of the school.
- Children must remain in the car until directed by staff to step out onto the sidewalk.

Dismissal Procedures:

- Dismissal begins each day at 2:55PM.
- Students will be dismissed by at the front entrance of the school.
- Cars will remain in a single line. Please pull all the way forward as students will be called to specific stations to load their car in the afternoon.
- Children must remain in their classrooms while names are being called to load cars.
- Children are expected to sit quietly during car rider pick up and listen for their name.
- Remain in your car during pick-up and pull all the way to the end of the sidewalk. A teacher will escort your child to the car.
- Please do not use cell phones while on the pick-up line and avoid speeding.
- No dogs are permitted out of cars while on campus. If you have a dog in the car, ensure that the dog is secured.
- Changes in Dismissal Plans: Changes in a student's dismissal plan can only be made in writing (sent in with the child) or in person by the child's parent or legal guardian before 2:30pm. Telephone calls, faxes, emails, or text messages to the child's teacher or principal will not be accepted. No exceptions will be made. This procedure is in place solely for the safety of all Gates School students.

Health

Gates School currently does not have a nurse on staff. Parents need to inform the school whenever a child has a chronic medical condition and/or will need prescribed medicines or treatments during the school day.

Medication Policy

A doctor's note/order must be on file before medications can be administered. Completion of the **Medication Permission Form** is required. All medicine should be sent in its original unopened container and brought to the office upon arrival at school by the parent. Under no circumstances is a child to transport any medication (over-the-counter, prescribed, etc.) at any time.

Gates School has a limited list of over-the-counter medicines that may be administered to students with parent permission. Please see the health card for a list of these medications.

Students may not keep medicines in their cubbies or carry them in school or on school trips unless pre-approved by the student's physician.

Only a school administrator or trained designee may administer medication or prescribed treatments during the school day. If a child is prescribed a medication or a prescribed medication is changed, parents **MUST** notify the school in order to ensure the best possible care of your child. If a child takes a daily medication prior to school but the parent fails to administer the medication from time to time, this may have an adverse effect on the child's learning. In these cases, the parent will be called to either come in to administer the medication at school, or to remove the child from school for the remainder of the day.

The school is limited to handling first aid cases that occur at school. A sick child should not come to school. If your child has a fever, he/she should be fever free *without medication* for 24 hours before returning to school. If a child becomes sick at school, he/she will be sent home as soon as his/her parents can be contacted. It is of utmost importance that phone numbers on emergency cards and information cards be kept current.

Head Lice

Head lice is common in childhood. If signs of head lice are spotted (see DHEC link <https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-010752.pdf>), the child will be sent home for treatment. Your child may return after completing an approved treatment. A parent must accompany the child into school upon return and provide proof of treatment (medication box or picture of lice shampoo used). No live lice or nits may present at time of readmittance.

Emergency 911 Medical Attention

Gates School reserves the right to call emergency medical services (911) to transport a student without parent permission in an emergency arising from an illness or injury to the student while on school property.

Exclusion from School Due to Illness

Gates School follows the SC DHEC guidelines which may be found at: www.scdhec.gov/health/childteenhealth/schoolexclusion.

COVID

Gates school will follow the most recent guidelines set forth by SCDHEC and CDC for determining quarantine and isolation.

Dress Code

The goal of our dress code is to provide parents and students with a wide variety of clothing options, while ensuring that student attire does not interfere with instruction. Thank you for ensuring that your child adheres to our dress code policy.

- Athletic shoes and socks should be worn on all days due to PE.
- Shorts and skirts must be “fingertip” length.
- When leggings are worn, the accompanying top must be an appropriate length (fingertip).
- Halter tops or spaghetti straps are not allowed.
- Shirts may not show the midriff or back.
- Hats, bandanas, or headgear are not allowed (hats may be worn at recess).
- Hoods may not be worn indoors.
- Clothing must fit properly: not oversized or too tight, and pants must fit at the waist.
- Clothing and accessories may not display profanity, suggestive phrases, weapons, and/or offensive/inflammatory graphics or statements. Please keep in mind that some images (skeletons, skulls, etc.) can be frightening to other children.
- Any attire, bracelets, necklaces, accessories, etc. that are determined to be unsafe or a distraction to the learning environment are not allowed.
- Watches, such as gizmos and Apple watches, capable of making phone calls must be turned off and kept in bookbags while students are in the building.

Visitors

- Parking for all faculty members as well as visitors will be in the main parking lot in front of the school. Under no circumstances should anyone park behind the school building.
- Parents and other visitors are always welcome in the school, but please remember that student learning and safety are our top priorities. Visits to the school must be arranged with teachers prior to the visit.
- It is mandatory that all visitors, including ALL parents, volunteers, substitutes, and any adult, stop at the front office, present a valid driver's license, and receive a "VISITOR" pass. Please make sure your visitor's pass is clearly visible and adhered to your shirt or lapel. It is unlawful to enter the school without signing in and receiving a pass.
- All school personnel and volunteers will wear identification badges to help students and parents identify them. Teachers will not permit parents or other visitors to enter their classroom without required identification. Staff members are expected to ask any adult without identification to please check in with the office. This is for the safety of all our children when in our charge. For large activities/performances, a form will be sent to allow visitors the opportunity to RSVP and have a preprinted badge upon arrival.
- All visitors to Gates School are asked to use the bathrooms located in the administration area of the school. No adult should ever be in student restrooms.

No Solicitation on School Property

Soliciting in school property is prohibited during school hours, including one hour before school opens and one hour after school closes. Students will not be solicited by teachers or others to subscribe or contribute to the funds of, to become members of, or to work for, any organization not directly under the control of Gates School.

Volunteers

Gates School parents are expected to commit to a minimum of 10 hour per family volunteer service.

The Gates School charter includes parent volunteers as part of the academic and financial success of the school's infrastructure. Volunteers must understand that volunteering is a privilege, not a right, and the school may, in its sole discretion, decide to discontinue any volunteer participation at any time and for any reason or no reason, with or without notice or warning. All volunteers must consent to a criminal background check and sign our Confidentiality Pledge before being left alone with children in the school setting. Volunteers must adhere to the same ethical and dress standards of teachers. We ask that volunteers use adult restrooms only and not use their cell phones while working with students. Confidential information accessed during volunteering must remain confidential. Volunteerism is vital to the success of the school and many families contribute more than the required number of hours. The school seeks to

engage those precious hours in the most effective manner for the school and the family.

Academic Guidelines

Homework

Students will not have traditional daily homework; however, 20 minutes of reading daily at home is encouraged. Occasionally, students will be assigned projects which will require them to complete some work at home. Teachers will notify parents in advance of such work. Teachers may offer ideas and strategies for practice work at home.

Make-Up Work

To ensure continual academic progress, students are expected to make up work missed due to absence. Due to the nature of instructional planning and pacing, work cannot be provided prior to a student's absence unless a minimum of 3 days' notice is provided to the teacher.

Make-up work will be provided for those students who have missed 3 or more consecutive days of school.

Teachers will work with students who are absent to complete assignments upon their return.

Instructional & Technology Fees

The \$50 instructional fee helps to cover the cost multisensory materials, supplemental assistance for field trips as needed, consumable workbooks, student incentives, copy machine support, and any miscellaneous costs that might arise throughout the school year. We encourage those to be paid before the start of school. Children will be given a list of school supplies that they need to purchase before the start of the school year. These supplies will only be used by your child. If your child is on free or reduced lunch, please contact the front office for further guidance.

A \$25 technology fee helps to cover the cost of maintaining student Chromebooks. If your child is on free or reduced lunch, please contact the front office for further guidance.

Textbooks

All non-consumable textbooks are issued to students free of charge. However, each student is responsible for the care of his/her textbooks and will be charged for lost or damaged books. Children may not share textbooks.

If a student leaves Gates School, please see that all state textbooks and library books are returned. Any lost book fees must be paid. While we want our students to enjoy reading both textbooks and library books, we hold them accountable for their care and return.

Report Cards and Grading Scale

Report Cards will be sent home at the end of each nine weeks and will be generated through PowerSchool. Interim reports will be sent home to parents at the middle of each nine weeks and will be generated through PowerSchool. Report cards and interim reports are to be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school the next day.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Communication between parents and teachers is essential at Gates School. Teachers will often informally communicate with parents regarding a child's progress.

Structured parent/teacher conferences are more effective and productive when teachers can prepare for the conferences and have all necessary information for parents. Please schedule conferences in advance with your child's teacher. We ask that parents do not meet with or conference with teachers while teachers are teaching and supervising children.

Class Parties

Your child's teacher may plan class parties and special events throughout the year and may ask for your assistance in covering the necessary materials/costs. Please be mindful of any classroom allergies when contributing to class parties. Outside food must be store-bought and individually wrapped.

Parents may bring in a special treat for a child's birthday provided there are enough prepackaged items (no homemade food items) for each child in the class. This must be coordinated with your child's teacher prior to sending in any items. Parents must be mindful of classroom allergies.

Discipline and Code of Conduct

Children's Internet Protection Act

The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) is a federal law enacted by Congress to address concerns about access to offensive content over the Internet on school and library computers. Gates School has protocols and policies in place to meet CIPA requirements. These include content filtering and virus protection software; both will be updated daily. Additionally, each network user's activity is monitored through the filtering and protection system. Gates School students also receive instruction regarding internet safety.

Social Media

Social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, etc., is commonly used by people to share information about themselves and/or their family. Organizations use social media, such

as Facebook, Instagram, etc., to share information about the organization. Gates School uses school-approved and endorsed Facebook and other forms of social media to enable the school community to exchange information with stakeholders about events at the school and to enable stakeholders and community to communicate with the school personnel.

Gates School does not permit the school's Facebook page to be used as an opportunity to disparage the school, students, teachers, or staff. Gates School reserves the right to delete or block individuals who post negative or hurtful comments. Gates School always wants to model respectful behavior and civility, and this is true with behavior on social media as well as with personal interactions.

Expectations for Student Behavior

Gates School intends to build a foundation of knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary for children to become independent learners. In order for this to happen, a positive learning environment must exist in the school overall and each classroom individually.

Gates School students shall:

- Attend school regularly and be punctual.
- Always be respectful to adults and fellow students.
- Obey the expectations of the school, its teachers and staff, and all adults employed at Gates School.
- Be honest in all that they say and do.
- Complete all assignments to the best of their abilities.
- Not engage in behavior that is disruptive or physically, socially, or emotionally injures others at Gates School or elsewhere.
- Show pride in themselves and Gates School by dressing neatly and being well-groomed.
- Show pride in their school by taking care of the facility, books, furniture, and all instructional materials.
- Work well with others and if problems occur, seek advice or help from others.
- Protect the learning environment against all interruptions by reporting to their teacher or the administrators if problems arise.
- Always treat everyone at Gates School with respect and courtesy.

Expectations for conduct enable all Gates School students and families to understand what is expected of each student while at school and while at school-sponsored activities. Students who are involved in activities at school or outside of school that endanger the health, safety, and physical/social/emotional well-being of others or disrupt the learning environment will be subject to disciplinary actions.

Expectations for Parent Behavior

Gates School Parents will:

- Comply with SC laws related to compulsory attendance
- Ensure their child(ren) arrive at school on time and leave school in accordance with arrival and dismissal policies and procedures.
- Participate in parent events.
- Support student sponsored activities.
- Treat administration and school staff with respect.
- Refrain from using abusive or obscene language or behavior and conduct themselves in a safe manner during school events or on school property.
- Collaborate with school staff to support their child's success.
- Complete and submit all required paperwork, including enrollment documentation, updated health information, personal contact and emergency notification contacts each year.
- Respond in a timely manner of any notification from school.
- Parents who are repeatedly disrespectful (verbally, email, social media, name calling, etc.) to staff and/or students may be banned from school property.

Video Surveillance Cameras

Gates School believes that safeguarding the welfare of its student, employees and visitors and deterring acts of violence, harassment, vandalism or theft are of the utmost importance. In order to enhance the safety and security of our school community, there are interior and exterior surveillance camera at designated locations through the school. We will use the footage from these cameras to deter individuals from violating school rules and to assist in the identification of those who engage in these actions.

Gates School respects the privacy of all individuals who enter school property. The use of surveillance monitoring or recording in school is limited to that uses that do not violate federal or state protections or other applicable laws, including those that prohibit wiretapping and electronic surveillance or aural communications.

Images retained through surveillance monitoring will be retained for a minimum of 30 days by the school, unless such images have historical value, for use in an investigation of a particular incident, or as part of a potential claim against the district. Such videos will be maintained for as long as necessary, as determined by the school.

Toys/Contraband

Personal toys, radios, music players, handheld audio/game systems, Apple watches, etc., are not allowed at school unless the teacher requests that certain items be brought to school for a specific purpose. If a teacher does request this, a written request will be

sent home with the student, as well as through the school electronic communication system. **Any type of weapon or toy weapon is strictly prohibited. These items become the property of South Carolina Law Enforcement and will NOT be returned to students or parents.** Any of these items, or any items that may injure anyone or cause a disturbance, are not allowed at school and will be taken from the student. If a parent/guardian wishes to reclaim these items, they may come to the school for them. The school will not be responsible for any item that is damaged or disappears at school.

Weapons

While on school grounds, in school buildings, or at school-related functions, students will not possess any item capable of inflicting injury or harm (hereinafter referred to as a weapon) to persons or property when that item is not used in relation to a normal school activity at a scheduled time for the student. No vehicles parked on school property may contain firearms, knives, blackjacks, or other items which are generally considered to be weapons.

Bullying

Gates School prohibits the bullying or intimidation (including physical, social, emotional) of a student by another student at any time. It is important that information in all situations be weighed and evaluated, but bullying has become an issue in schools. Bullying severely compromises the well-being of the student(s) involved. In the event a student has been accused of or committed the offense of bullying or has been the victim of bullying, the school will notify the parent(s), guardian(s), or other person(s) having control or charge of such student and disciplinary actions will be taken as appropriate.

In the section below, there is information on bullying, taken from the South Carolina Department of Education. It is important for all persons to know and understand just what bullying is, as well as the consequences for this act. In every setting – school, work, and life in general – people do things to one another that might be construed as bullying. Thus, by educating everyone regarding South Carolina Law concerning bullying, everyone will be better informed.

What Is Bullying?

“Bullying” can occur in various forms, for example:

If a student tries or threatens to injure another student, and he/she has the apparent present ability to do so, that is bullying.

If a student purposely shows force in a way that gives another student reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm, that is bullying.

If a student intentionally uses words (written or spoken) or a physical act that is reasonably perceived as an intention to threaten, harass, or intimidate, and those words cause another student to experience substantial or visible physical, social, emotional, or similar harm and/or they substantially interfere with a student's education;

They are so severe, persistent, or pervasive that they create an intimidating or threatening school environment; or

They substantially disrupt the orderly operation of the school.

When Can My Child Be Disciplined for Bullying?

Bullying is not limited to acts that occur on school grounds. A Gates School student may be disciplined for bullying that occurs on school transportation (if available), on transportation made available for school purposes, and at school-related functions or activities. With the advent of technology, a Gates School student may also be disciplined for "cyber-bullying" such that takes place through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a school system.

Investigation and Parental Notification

Bullying is a serious offense. The South Carolina Department of Education's model policy on bullying requires that a school must have a procedure in place to timely investigate to determine whether bullying has occurred. Thus, if Gates School receives a report that a Gates School student has been involved in bullying, the school will take steps in response. The model policy also requires that the parent or guardian of the accused student be notified at an appropriate time during or after the investigation, but must be immediately notified if an injury has occurred.

Levels of Disciplinary Action

Gates School works diligently to provide an appropriate learning environment for all students. Nonetheless, at times students may become disruptive, talkative, disrespectful, etc. To better deal with these types of behaviors, teachers and administrators will work collaboratively to implement a Progressive Discipline Plan. The seriousness of the offense, academic placement, attitude, age, pattern of misconduct, and degree of cooperation of the student, and any other circumstances will be considered in determining which actions should be taken. Please note that for any suspension, parents are required to attend a parent conference with administration prior to the return to school.

Level I Behavior (Behavioral Misconduct)

Level I behavior is defined as those activities engaged in by student(s) which tend to impede orderly classroom procedures or instructional activities, orderly operation of the school, or the frequency or seriousness of which interrupt the classroom or school. The provisions of this regulation apply not only to within school activities, but also to student conduct on school bus transportation vehicles and during school-sponsored activities.

OFFENSES	INTERVENTIONS	CONSEQUENCES
1. Classroom Tardiness (unexcused)	A. Teach/Re-teach Behavior Expectations	A. See Attendance Policy
2. Cheating (assignments and/or assessments)	B. Reinforcement of Appropriate Behavior	B. Verbal Warning & Parent/Guardian Contact
3. Lying		
4. Abusive language between or among students	C. Explicit Instruction in Replacement Behavior	C. Verbal Warning & Parent/Guardian Contact
5. Failure to comply with directives from school/district personnel, or agents (to include volunteer aides, chaperones, substitute teachers, or guest speakers)	D. Clarification of Expectations	D. Verbal Warning, Intervention Plan/Behavior Contract
6. Inappropriate use of communication device (including, but not limited to cell phones, tablets, computers, and music player) not issued by or allowed by the school	E. Student Problem-Solving Worksheet	E. Parent/Guardian Contact
	F. Peer Buddy/Peer Tutor	E. Parent/Guardian Shadowing
7. Bringing toys to school	G. Modify or Supplement Assignment/Activity	F. Intervention Plan/Behavior Contract
8. Out of Uniform	H. Adjust Classroom Environment	G. Administrative Detention
9. Out of Bounds (classroom)		
10. Unprepared (lack of materials)		
11. Excluding others or encouraging others to be excluded	I. Proximity Control	H. Community Service
		I. Laps at Recess

12. Blurting out (not raising hand/getting teacher attention appropriately)	J. Referral to School Administrator	J. Other Consequences Approved and Communicated by School Administration
13. Minor disrespect (rolling eyes, sucking teeth, stomping feet, etc.)	K. Seat Change	
14. Laying hands or objects on others and/or others' personal property	L. Teacher/Student Conference	
15. Chewing gum/eating gum, candy, and other snacks without permission	M. Parent/Guardian Contact N. Teacher/Parent/Student Conference O. Referral to Administration P. Other Interventions Approved and Communicated by Administration	

Level II Behavior (Disruptive Conduct)

Disruptive conduct is defined as those activities engaged in by student(s) which are directed against persons or property, and the consequences of which tend to endanger the mental/social-emotional/physical health or safety of oneself or others in the school. Some instances of disruptive conduct may overlap certain criminal offenses, justifying both administrative sanctions and court proceedings. Behavior misconduct (Level I Behavior) may be reclassified as disruptive conduct (Level II Behavior) if it is repetitive in nature across the school setting, even after interventions and/or consequences have been employed. The provisions of this regulation apply not only to within school activities but also to student conduct on school transportation vehicles, and during other school-sponsored activities.

OFFENSES	INTERVENTIONS	CONSEQUENCES
----------	---------------	--------------

1. Violation of a Level 1 intervention plan and/or behavior contract	A. Level I Interventions may also be used	A. Temporary Removal from Class or Activity
2. Hit, kick, push, punch, grab, slap, etc.	B. Administrator/Student Problem Solving Meeting	B. In School Suspension C. Out of School Suspension
3. Vandalism (minor)		D. Expulsion
4. Stealing (minor)	C. Peer Mediation	
5. Out of Bounds (school)	D. Schedule Change	E. Restitution of Property and Damages, where appropriate
6. Abusive language towards others (staff, visitors, students)	E. Staff Mentor	F. Parent/Guardian Contact
7. Repeated refusal to comply with school personnel or agents (volunteer aides, chaperones, substitute teachers, guest speakers)	F. Behavior Contract	
8. Possession or use of unauthorized substances as defined law and local school board policy	G. Social Skill/Behavior Group	G. Parent/Guardian Shadowing
9. Illegally occupying or blocking in any way school property with the intent to deprive others of its use		H. Administrative Detention
10. Unlawful assembly	H. Referral to Outside Agency	I. Community Service Assignment
11. Disrupting lawful assembly	I. Abbreviated Day	J. Confiscation of items given to law enforcement or parents/guardians or not returned
12. Inappropriate use of technology (e.g. bullying, harassing, or intimidating other students or school employees, plagiarizing copyrighted materials, or accessing inappropriate websites)	J. Temporary Loss of Leadership Role	
13. Cutting class		K. School Probation Contract
14. Use of forged notes		

<p>15. Gross disrespect</p>		<p>L. Referral to Law Enforcement</p> <p>M. Other Consequences Approved and Communicated by School Administration</p>
<p>16. Threats to Others (minor)</p>		
<p>17. Fighting</p>		
<p>18. Possession of any type of “dangerous weapon” (including knife, blackjack, metal pipe or pole, razor, bullet, metal knuckles, firearm) or any other device or object that can be used to inflict bodily harm or death</p>		
<p>19. Gambling (trading or selling of items by students is prohibited)</p>		

Level III Behavior (Criminal Conduct)

Criminal Conduct is defined as those activities engaged in by student(s) which result in violence to oneself or another’s person or property or which pose a direct and serious threat to the safety of oneself or others in the school. When school officials have a reasonable belief that students have engaged in such activities, then these activities usually require administrative actions which result in immediate removal of the student from the school, the intervention of the School Resource Officer or other local law enforcement authorities, and/or action by the local school board. The provisions of this regulation apply to within school activities, but also to student conduct on school transportation vehicles, and during other school sponsored activities.

OFFENSES	CONSEQUENCES
1. Assault and battery that poses a serious threat of injury or results in physical harm	A. Out of School Suspension
2. Extortion	
3. Threat of the use of a destructive device	
4. Possession, use, or transfer of dangerous weapons	
5. Sexual Offenses/Sexual Harassment (staff and/or students)	B. Expulsion
6. Vandalism	
7. Theft, possession, or sale of stolen property	C. Restitution of Property and Damages, where Appropriate
8. Arson	
9. Furnishing of selling unauthorized substances as defined by law and/or local school board policy	
10. Furnishing, selling, or possession of controlled substances	D. Abbreviated Day
11. Illegal use of technology (e.g. communicating threats of destructive device, weapon, or event with the intention of intimidating, threatening, or interfering with school activities and maliciously transmitting sexual images of minors other than images of the student or images transmitted with the uncoerced consent of the individual in the images)	
12. Organizing a situation with 2 or more people that intentionally affects the mental/social-emotional/physical health or well-being of others (staff or students)	
13. Bribery	E. Referral to Outside Agency
14. Gang Activity	
	F. Other Sanctions as Approved by School Administration

Video Surveillance and Monitoring

Video cameras will be used in common areas for surveillance to ensure the security and safety of students, staff and patrons of Gates School throughout the entire campus. Disciplinary actions can be taken based on the information in the video surveillance. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Due to privacy concerns, no video surveillance footage will be shared with parents or legal guardians unless instructed to do so with a court ordered subpoena. While on Gates School property or at school sponsored events, students or parents may not record, whether audio or video, employees, other students, or parents/legal guardians, without first notifying the individual of the recording. This expectation does not apply to public events such as music performances, plays, athletic competitions, etc., where there is not an expectation of privacy.

STUDENT CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Gates School provides a grievance procedure as a formal method for the resolution of any grievances concerning the treatment of students by Gates School personnel. These grievances may arise from allegations of violations of student legal rights or school policy. In addition, the Board recognizes that there may be conditions that Gates School could improve, and that students should have some means by which they can effectively express their concerns. Gates School will resolve student complaints and grievances through orderly processes and at the lowest possible level.

A teacher will provide any student or parent the opportunity to discuss a decision or situation that the student considers unjust or unfair. If the incident remains unresolved, the student, parent or teacher may bring the matter to the Principal or designee for consideration and action.

Gates School Student Grievance Policy:

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and efficient process for reviewing and resolving student grievances, which may be filed by a student or a student's parent(s) / legal guardian. Gates School will keep all grievance proceedings confidential to the extent permitted by law.

The Gates School student grievance process may be used by Gates students or their parents/ legal guardians as follows:

1. To address an alleged violation of applicable law, regulation or school policy that directly affects the student.
2. To address alleged discrimination or harassment against the student.

A student/parent/legal guardian who files a grievance has the right to be represented by legal counsel at their own expense, but timely notice must be given to the school to ensure the school can also have legal counsel present at any meeting. Meetings will not be held with only one party having legal counsel present.

If the timelines set forth herein are not met, the grievance may be deemed waived by the Gates official(s) charged with investigating and deciding the grievance.

The Gates official(s) charged with investigating and deciding grievances are entitled to extend the timelines herein for investigating and issuing decisions if necessary to conduct a thorough and complete investigation into a grievance or appeal.

Students and Families should follow a 3-step process to file a grievance with the school:

Step One: Informal Discussion

Subject to the following paragraph, the aggrieved student must first initiate an informal discussion with the other person(s) involved in the incident giving rise to the grievance within ten (10) calendar days of the incident or when the aggrieved student learned of the incident for the purpose of attempting to resolve the grievance. If the grievance includes allegations of discrimination or harassment against the student, the student is not required to initiate an informal discussion with the person(s) allegedly discriminating against or harassing the student, and the student may proceed immediately to Step Two.

Step Two: Submit a Written Grievance to the Principal

If the informal discussion does not resolve the student's concerns, the student may within ten (10) days after the informal discussion submit a written Grievance Form to the Principal.

The student must include in the Grievance Form a description of the grievance, the actions already taken by the student to attempt to resolve the grievance, and the relief requested. A Grievance Form that does not contain such information will be deemed incomplete and returned to the student to complete within the required timeline. Submission of an incomplete Grievance Form does not extend the required timeline. Only the issues set forth in the written Grievance Form shall be considered thereafter.

Upon the Principal's receipt of the Grievance Form, within ten (10) days the Principal shall hold a conference with the student/parent/guardian and any other individual(s) deemed necessary by the Principal to discuss the allegations. The Principal shall issue a written decision to the student within five (5) school days of the conclusion of the conference(s).

If the grievance includes allegations of discrimination or harassment concerning the Principal, the student shall skip Step Two and submit a written Grievance Form within ten (10) days of the incident or when the student learned of the incident to the Gates School Executive Director.

Step Three: Final Appeal to the Gates School Governing Board

If a student/parent/guardian is not satisfied with the Executive Director's written decision, the student may submit a written appeal to the Gates School Governing Board within ten (10) days of receiving the Executive Director's written decision. The written appeal should be submitted to the Gates School Board Chair. The written appeal must include a copy of the original written Grievance Form, a copy of the Principal's and the Executive Director's written decision, and a written description of why the student was not satisfied with the Executive Director's written decision. An appeal that does not contain such information will be deemed incomplete and returned to the student to complete within the required timeline.

Submission of an incomplete appeal does not extend the required timeline. Within ten (10) school days of receipt of a written appeal (or the original Grievance Form if the grievance involves allegations of discrimination or harassment against the Principal and is filed directly with the Board), the Gates School Governing Board will hold a hearing. The Board will provide the student with notice of the hearing date and the procedures for the hearing in a timely manner. All hearings conducted pursuant to this Grievance Policy are considered non-adversarial. After the hearing, the Gates School Governing Board will issue a written decision within ten (10) days, which will be final and binding. The Gates School Governing Board is entitled to extend these timelines if necessary for the purpose of conducting a thorough and complete investigation.

Legal Reference(s): S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended: Section 59-4-60(F)(13) – Charter School Grievance Procedure

Title IX complaints:

Parents of students who believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of their gender have the right to appeal to the school Title IX Director, Janice Nichols at 843-868-8178,

or designee. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the school Title IX Director, he/she may take his/her concern to the school Executive Director. If the parent is not satisfied with the response of the Executive Director, the parent may then take their concerns to the Board of Directors.

Section 504 complaints:

Parents of students who believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of their disabling condition have the right to appeal to the school Executive Director. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the school Executive Director, he/she may appeal to the Board of Directors. The school Executive Director will schedule appeals to the Board.



STUDENT AND PARENT AGREEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

I understand that I have entered a school relationship with Gates School voluntarily. I understand that it is a privilege to attend Gates School and that I am expected to follow all procedures, rules, and code of conduct provided to me in the Student/Parent Handbook. I understand that I should consult with my teachers or school administration regarding any questions or concerns not answered in the handbook.

Since the information and policies described in the handbook can be subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur. All such changes will be communicated through official notifications from school, and I understand that revised information may supersede or eliminate existing policies.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

I acknowledge, by my signature below, that this Student/Parent Handbook describes important information about Gates School. I have reviewed the information with my child(ren) and will fully support the school's policies and procedures through the school year. I understand that I should consult with my child's teachers or school administration regarding any questions not answered in the handbook.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____