

ELEMENTARY (PS3-5TH) HANDBOOK



GASTON
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL

PREPARE *People*

TEACH *Truth*

GLORIFY *God*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GASTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL.....	4
NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY	4
GASTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ELEMENTARY (PS3-5TH) HANDBOOK	6
1. STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, MISSION, AND OBJECTIVES	6
1.1 PHILOSOPHY	6
1.2 VISION STATEMENT: SOARING TO EXCELLENCE IN CHRIST	6
1.3 MISSION STATEMENT: PREPARE PEOPLE. TEACH TRUTH. GLORIFY GOD.....	6
1.4 OBJECTIVES	6
2. ADMISSIONS	8
2.1 GENERAL ADMISSIONS CRITERIA TO GCS	8
2.2 GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDENT APPLICATION PROCESS	8
2.3 DECISIONS FOR ADMISSIONS	8
3. GENERAL INFORMATION	9
3.1 ATTENDANCE POLICY.....	9
3.2 PLANNED ABSENCES	9
3.3 TARDY POLICIES.....	9
3.4 ARRIVAL PROCEDURES (08/2021)	10
3.5 DISMISSAL PROCEDURES (08/2021).....	11
3.6 SIGN IN/OUT PROCEDURE (08/2021)	11
3.7 INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY.....	11
3.8 GUESTS / VISITORS.....	11
3.9 LUNCHESES & SNACKS.....	12
3.10 OBSERVANCE OF SPECIAL DAYS (08/2021).....	12
3.11 STUDENT BIRTHDAY TREATS (08/2021).....	12
3.12 SCHOOL PROGRAMS & PERFORMANCES	12
3.13 GRADE PARENTS.....	13
3.14 PARENT TEACHER FELLOWSHIP.....	13
3.15 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE	13
3.16 FORMAL RECONCILIATION/BINDING ARBITRATION/MEDIATION AGREEMENT	14
4. HEALTH INFORMATION (08/2021).....	15
4.1 IMMUNIZATIONS	15
4.2 MEDICINE	15
4.3 STUDENT ILLNESS/INJURY	15
5. ACADEMICS PROGRAMS & STUDENT DEVELOPMENT	16
5.1 GRADING SYSTEM.....	16
5.2 ASSESSMENT & REPORTING (08/2021).....	16
5.3 STUDENT RECOGNITION	16
5.4 STUDENT PROMOTION (08/2021).....	16
5.5 PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES	16
5.6 HOMEWORK (08/2021).....	17
5.7 TEXTBOOKS.....	17
5.8 CHAPEL & SPIRITUAL FORMATION (08/2021).....	17
5.9 SPECIAL CLASSES.....	17
5.10 FIELD TRIPS.....	17
5.11 TOILET TRAINING & BATHROOM ACCIDENT POLICY.....	18
6. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE	18
6.1 CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE GENERAL GUIDELINES.....	18
6.2 STUDENT CELL PHONE/SMARTWATCH POLICY	19
6.3 BULLYING POLICY (08/2021)	19
6.4 GUM & TOYS.....	19

6.5 PROHIBITED ITEMS AND ACTIVITIES19

7. STUDENT APPEARANCE/DRESS GUIDELINES20

 7.1 DRESS CODE & PERSONAL APPEARANCE20

 7.2 MALE STUDENTS.....20

 7.3 FEMALE STUDENTS20

 7.4 HAIR21

 7.5 FOOTWEAR & SHOES21

 7.6 NOTE FOR PRESCHOOL-KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS:21

 7.7 DRESS CODE CONSEQUENCES21

ADDENDUM A: GUIDELINES FOR FIELD TRIP DRIVERS/CHAPERONES22

ADDENDUM D: GUIDELINES FOR COMMON ILLNESSES23

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GASTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Gaston Christian School, Inc. was established in 1979 by a group of seven area pastors and interested Christian parents who believed that a need existed for a school that would provide a program of academic excellence and spiritual development in an orderly, God-honoring setting. The first year was devoted to planning, with the school opening its doors the following fall (1980) with an enrollment of 105 students in grades K-9 in the educational facilities of Parkwood Baptist Church. A preschool program for three- and four-year-olds was added in 1985.

In August 1991 an additional elementary school campus was established in the Belmont/Mt. Holly area, using the educational facilities of Catawba Heights Baptist Church.

In 1994, the program expanded through grade ten on the campus of the former Sacred Heart College. Grades 11 and 12 were added the following two years with the school now providing a full college-preparatory program through the 12th grade. Acquiring 54 acres of land in March 1999 for future campus development, the school entered one of the most exciting phases of its history. In August of 2006, all elementary students moved to their new building on the Lowell campus. Students in grades 6-12 re-located to the consolidated campus in August of 2008. Campus development continued with the construction of the Fine Arts Center, which was completed during the 2018-2019 school year.

As set forth in the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws, Gaston Christian School is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees. The school is accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, the Northwest Accreditation Commission, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and Improvement; Gaston Christian is also approved by the North Carolina Department of Non-Public Instruction.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Gaston Christian School, Inc. admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate in the administration of its personnel or educational policies, admission policies, scholarships, athletic activities, or other school administered program.

Dear Parents,

I want to welcome you and your child to the Gaston Christian School Elementary program. This is an exciting time for your child, and we thank you for the opportunity to minister to your family through Christian education.

Please know that we are eager to partner with you throughout the year. To that end, we commit ourselves to keeping you apprised of your child's progress and any concerns that may arise from time to time. Please feel free to share with your child's teacher any ideas or comments that would be helpful and any concerns that you might have.

I trust that this will be a memorable year for your child, filled with fun, friends, and learning. My prayer is for a great year for us all as we work together to provide for your child's spiritual, social and academic growth.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bethany Meekins-Coloma". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'B'.

Bethany Meekins-Coloma
Elementary Principal

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.
Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God
will be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9.

GASTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ELEMENTARY (PS3-5TH) HANDBOOK

We are delighted that you have chosen Gaston Christian School for your child's Elementary experience. We trust that this manual of information will be helpful in answering questions regarding school policy and practices. Please feel free to contact the school when additional information is needed.

1. STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, MISSION, AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Philosophy

The board, administration, faculty and staff of Gaston Christian School believe that education, like life, should be centered upon a personal relationship with God, Who is both our Creator and Redeemer. In Christian education, the Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word which reveals Jesus Christ is our philosophy, or foundational belief system, rather than man-centered philosophies.

1.2 Vision Statement: Soaring to Excellence in Christ

1.3 Mission Statement: Prepare people. Teach Truth. Glorify God.

1.4 Objectives

The School

- Believes that education must be personalized if it is to be effective.
- Views the student as created by God, in God's image and likeness. The student is somebody.
- Pledges to assist the student at each level of education to fully realize his undeveloped capacities for knowledge and wisdom apace with his maturing years.
- Takes a Biblical view of the student. From the scriptures we obtain knowledge about students as God's image bearers, deserving everyone's respect; from the scriptures we obtain knowledge about students as possessing a morally corrupt nature, needing God's forgiveness and redemption through Jesus Christ our Lord; from the scriptures we obtain knowledge about Christian sons and daughters growing into the image of God's Son, needing loving nurture and encouragement – and needing compassionate discipline and correction; and from the scriptures we obtain knowledge about students' uniqueness as persons, needing both the authority of law and the freedom of self-hood.
- Takes a developmental view of the student. From formal and informal observations we learn about student's personality differences; about their varieties of motivation, readiness, and learning styles; and about their developmental needs at the various stages of growth. From formal and informal observations we learn about their fears and aggressions; their joys and spontaneity; their loneliness and aspirations; their struggles with right and wrong, true and false, real and unreal, and love and hate. From formal and informal observations of students, we learn about the effects on students who come from stable and motivated homes; about effects on students who come from unstable and undisciplined homes; about the effects on students of good and poor nutrition; and about the effects on students of their emerging sexuality. From all such observations, both formal and informal, we learn about the complexity of human persons and how that complexity affects their educational requirements.

The Teacher

- Will be committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and set before students a noble example of Christian life and conduct.
- Will seek to know each student's abilities, feelings, values, and hopes.
- Will build many roads to success into the instructional program and assist students every day to taste success in an area of earnest endeavor.
- Will communicate what is expected of students.

- Will communicate how students can get assistance to successfully carry out what is expected of them.
- Will respect each student as an image bearer of God, regardless of the student's performance.
- Will lead the life of a Christian scholar in the vast and exciting worlds of fine arts, science, mathematics, language, literature, history, etc. The teacher will be a spiritual and intellectual model for students to follow and will have something rich and challenging to offer students.
- Will carefully examine and prepare for the learning styles of students.
- Will bring great enthusiasm to the teaching-learning transaction.
- Will have a passion for learning and an ever increasing mastery of the subjects they teach.
- Will set before students the rigorous requirements of the pursuit of academic excellence.

The Parents

- Have primary responsibility for their students. Parents train by example as well as by precept.
- Have the responsibility to teach their students that education is an aided form of self development over which the individual himself can never be relieved of the fundamental responsibility.
- Have the responsibility to encourage their students by carefully attending to the student's world of school. Parents must listen to and talk with students about the schoolday.
- Have the responsibility to support the school's and teacher's authority in the eyes of their students.
- Have the responsibility to resolve differences with the school or with a teacher in accordance with the scriptural principles outlined in Matthew 18 and Galatians 6.

The Student

- Will take an interest; he will set himself to learn and obey.
- Will aim high and strive hard. Whatever the student does, he will do with all his might as before the Lord's searching gaze.
- Will know that man cannot live without taking sides, without making decisions and taking action, and will know that while he is free to make choices, he is not free to determine the consequences of his choices.
- Will know that the scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God and fit him fully for all branches of his life's work.
- Will understand that the diversity of insights in the greater Christian community does not represent the pettiness of a difference, but rather, is representative of the vastness of the subject.
- Will recognize that bare facts, barely expressed, is not wisdom. He will understand that wisdom involves a feeling for facts, the realization of their meaning, significance, and application.
- Will accept the rigor and discipline which is required to become a Christian scholar.

Family/School Relationship

- To work with parents in enhancing the school's program.
- To partnership with parents in bringing up their students in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

2. ADMISSIONS

2.1 General Admissions Criteria to GCS

Because Gaston Christian School deems a well-ordered environment as necessary to the fulfillment of its mission statement, it is selective in its admission of students. Students who are not in good standing with their previous schools are generally not offered enrollment.

All student applicants are thoroughly evaluated as to their readiness for the GCS program. Prior conduct, attendance, and attitude are considered heavily in the application process. An invitation to enroll is not extended to every student that applies.

2.2 General Overview of the Student Application Process

Prospective parents initiate the application process by contacting the Director of Admissions to receive information about the school and the enrollment process.

The application process involves completion of electronic documents and references. Applicants generally need to have scored at the 50th percentile rank or higher on standardized tests in reading, language, and math in order to be able to have a smooth transition to the GCS academic program.

Student applicants are interviewed and evaluated by the Principal. In support of the school's mission statement, the Principal will also evaluate the student's desire to attend.

2.3 Decisions for Admissions

If the student is considered eligible to enroll, the parents will receive an acceptance letter which grants 10 days to accept the offer of enrollment. The school cannot guarantee available space after the 10-day period has elapsed.

In the event that the Principal declines enrollment, the parent(s) will be notified in writing and an appeal of the Principal's decision may be made to the Head of School.

3. GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1 Attendance Policy

Introduction: The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study to achieve the goal of maximum educational benefit for each child. Essential to this process is the consistent contact of students with one another in an appropriate learning environment and their participation in planned instructional activities under the leadership of a teacher.

Procedures and Issues:

Students are expected to be present each day unless sickness occurs, or a death in the family, or some other unusual occurrence that makes it impossible for the student to attend. These types of absences will be excused and students will be allowed to make up and receive full credit for any tests that are missed. Students are extended the same number of days to make up work equal to the number of days of their absence.

Any absence for whatever reason will be documented in the student's record, except when a student participates in an approved school activity requiring his/her presence.

In the case of absences, parents call the school office and leave a message for the teacher indicating why your child is not in school. If this is not done, a note stating the reason for the student's absence must be sent to the teacher when the student returns to school. Extended absences due to medical reasons may require a doctor's note.

If a student's attendance pattern becomes a deterrent to the child's educational process, the Elementary Administration may require a conference with the parent(s) to review the reasons for the excessive absences and to assess the potential of a loss of academic credit in a given class or classes.

A student must be present at least 3 ½ hours to be considered present for that day.

Please remember — When a student has been sick, he/she should not return to school until free of fever, without the use of fever-reducing medication, for 24 hours. Please see Addendum A in the back of this Handbook.

3.2 Planned Absences

Family vacations should be arranged when students are not scheduled to be in school. Trips during school time that have exceptional educational (not recreational) value may be approved and considered excused by the Elementary Administration, if discussed a week in advance, thus allowing full credit for make-up work.

The classroom teacher may be contacted by the parent or student for make-up work preceding, during, or following an absence.

3.3 Tardy Policies

As well as being in school regularly, it is equally important for students to arrive on time. Students need time to prepare pencils, books, etc. This time is necessary to be ready to start the school day promptly. If a child is frustrated by not being organized and ready to begin with the rest of the class, it is difficult for that child to have a successful day. The learning process for classmates is also disrupted when tardies occur. A conference will be arranged by the principal with any parent whose child acquires as many as three tardies per nine-week period.

When a student needs to be dismissed early for appointments, etc., the parent must send a note to the school office, which their child will deliver to the school secretary upon their arrival to school. When a parent (or other authorized person) comes to school for the early pick-up, they must come to the school office and sign their

child out. The classroom teacher will be notified over the intercom system to send the child to the office to meet the parent there. Parents will not go to the classroom to get the child. If anyone other than the parent is picking up a child, the name of such person must be on the note the child brings to school. Parents should alert this person that they must be prepared to show identification to school personnel.

3.4 Arrival Procedures (08/2021)

School representatives will be on duty each morning at the designated drop-off places beginning at 7:30a.m. Adults should please remain in the car for both drop-off and pick-up. Parents will please allow the person on duty to assist the child out of the car.

Students are expected to walk themselves into the building independently. Parents may not enter the building during arrival or dismissal. This has proven to be the best practice, especially for younger children who may have separation anxiety at the beginning of the year.

The following chart outlines the times at which the classroom doors will be opened to receive students and the times for commencement of instruction. Students must arrive prepared and ready to begin on time.

Grade Level	Classroom doors open	Classroom instruction begins
1-5	7:30	8:00
Kindergarten	7:45	8:15
Preschool (3-yr-old) PreK (4-yr-old)	8:00	8:30

Lates: Students who do not arrive at school prior to the time that the instructional day begins (see chart above) are considered late.

Before School Care: For students in grades PS3-5th Before School Care is available beginning at 7:15 a.m. at a rate of \$6.50 per hour. <https://gastonchristian.org/admissions/#asc>

3.5 Dismissal Procedures (08/2021)

Though dismissal times vary, a general outline is provided in the chart below. Please ask the school office personnel to verify the dismissal times for your student(s) as needed.

Grade Level	Dismissal
Grade 5	3:00 PM
Grade 3-4	2:40 PM
Grade 1-2	2:20 PM
Kindergarten (full day)	2:10 PM
PS3 & PK4 (full day)	2:00 PM
Kindergarten (half day)	12:00 PM
PK4 (half day)	11:45 AM
PS3 (half day)	11:35 AM

Students will be placed in cars by school personnel as the cars pull up to the covered walkway. FOR SAFETY REASONS, STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO WALK ACROSS THE PARKING LOT TO A PARKED CAR. This needs to be carried out as quickly as possible. In order to ensure the safety of each student, parents are not to park to pick up their child unless they are signing out their child from the office.

Any special arrangements (such as changes in who is picking up the child) will need to be approved through the office ahead of time.

Late Pickups: It is important that your child be picked up at the appointed time each day. Any student not picked up within 10 minutes after dismissal time will be cared for but will be charged an after-school care fee.

3.6 Sign In/Out Procedure (08/2021)

Parents are encouraged to schedule medical and dental appointments after school whenever possible. Understanding that this can be difficult, the school permits early dismissals for infrequent appointments or emergency situations. To minimize disruption in the classroom, parents should communicate ahead of time with the Elementary Office and classroom teacher so that the child can be ready for pickup at the designated time. The parent will need to come by the office first to sign out the child and obtain a dismissal slip to be given to the teacher. Students arriving back on campus after the beginning of the school day must sign in with the Elementary Office.

3.7 Inclement Weather Policy

Parents will receive notification by GCS App notification, email, posted on the GCS website, and social media (Facebook page, Twitter, and Instagram). This information will be available as soon as a decision is made regarding the closures/delays. Local TV stations will be informed after all direct communication has been sent. To keep you informed of a school closing/delay, please download the GCS App for important notifications.

<https://gastonchristian.org/hub/#text>

3.8 Guests / Visitors

In the interest of school safety, all visitors must sign in at the Elementary Office. Appropriate attire (consistent with the school's stance on modesty) will be expected.

3.9 Lunches & Snacks

All students may bring a snack from home for mid-morning break. The snack should be one that is healthy and nutritious. Candy or any excessive sweets should not be a part of a child's snack or lunch.

Non-carbonated drinks may be sent with a student's lunch or milk may be purchased at school on a weekly, monthly, semester, or yearly basis.

In the event that a student does not bring his lunch, the school will try to contact the parent to bring a lunch. If neither parent can bring a lunch for the student, a lunch will be provided for him and a notice sent home indicating the \$4.00 charge for the meal to be submitted to the office the next day.

3.10 Observance of Special Days (08/2021)

To help prevent a health emergency, food for parties must be approved by the classroom teacher to ensure that students with food allergies will not be affected.

Classes parties will be provided two times a year: Christmas and end-of-the-year. Parties are to be planned by the teacher with the assistance of parent volunteers. Parties are defined as occasions with food and drink, perhaps including a craft, and will be held on the school site.

Treats will be planned by Grade Parents in collaboration with the teacher on Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, and Easter. Treats are defined as occasions with no more than 2 food items - no drinks. Celebrations must be limited to these five occasions. Treat bags are not part of school celebrations.

For the two parties, the Parent Club account is forwarded an allotment of \$10/child from the Business Office to be used, with an allowance of \$2.50/child for each party. The remaining \$5.00/child is to be used at the discretion of the Parent Club officers for the activities they typically sponsor, such as teachers appreciation gestures.

Parents may be asked to donate cupcakes, doughnuts, etc., on the three treat days, or volunteer a favorite dish for staff luncheons, etc., sponsored by the Parent Club. The teacher will plan details of each party with the assistance of the Grade Parent. Solicitations of any kind must be pre-approved by the principal. Gift exchange among students at school is not allowed at Christmas.

Parents are asked not to plan parties for individual staff members. GCS makes no observance of Halloween and Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny will not be part of the school's holiday observance.

3.11 Student Birthday Treats (08/2021)

A student birthday treat may be shared with a class if the teacher is contacted and if the treat is limited to one item that can be quickly and easily served (individually wrapped ice cream cup, cookie, brownie, rice krispie treat, or doughnut etc.). These may be shared at snack time. The treat should come to school with the student that morning, along with napkins, please. Birthday parties will not be held at school.

No balloons, flowers, or gift items may be delivered to a student in a classroom because of the disruption these items create.

3.12 School Programs & Performances

The school presents two programs each year for parents in which all students are involved. The first one is during the Christmas season, and the other is for Grandparents Day. Other programs on a smaller scale will be announced as they are planned.

Students in grades K-5th attend a chapel program on a regularly scheduled basis. Programs are given by a staff member, an invited guest, or individual classes. Students are encouraged to bring an offering each chapel time.

At year's end the offerings are sent to a worthy missionary or missionary organization.

Each student is expected to participate in school programs, since these are very much a part of the overall planned program of learning. Any exceptions need to be discussed IN ADVANCE with the principal.

3.13 Grade Parents

After the school year begins, a Grade Parent for each class is chosen who can be available during the school day and who is willing to assist the teacher when classroom needs arise. Duties include: planning parties, helping with or arranging transportation for field trips, assisting with any special projects within the class, according to guidelines from the teacher.

Each Grade Parent must have an updated background check (within the last twelve months) before serving as a Grade Parent. Please contact the school office if you have questions regarding this policy.

3.14 Parent Teacher Fellowship

The PTF organizes staff appreciation gestures deemed appropriate by the group and the school principal. Your support in this area and in all areas of your child's school experiences at GCS is much needed and appreciated.

3.15 Grievance Procedure

From time to time, disagreements may arise between students and/or parents and school personnel. The principles for resolving such matters are described in Matthew 18:15-17. Specifically, if a legitimate disagreement with a teacher arises, you must seek first, with all respect and Christian love, to resolve the problem with that teacher. With good communication from everyone, it is likely that most problems can be resolved at this level.

If resolution cannot be reached, then the student/parent should meet with the teacher and the next higher person in authority. You should not expect the next higher in authority to listen to criticisms of the teacher without the teacher having the opportunity to be present. The Head of School will make a final resolution decision. The Head of School makes the final decision for all school policies, including discipline. The Board will only hear appeals in cases where school policy is violated. For extraordinary circumstances, see "Conciliation Agreement."

The faculty and administration are very interested in helping you resolve any issue that may arise; however, we need your assistance to reach that goal. When a parent or student voices a complaint to ones other than appropriate school personnel, the problem generally goes unresolved, and frustrations increase for everyone involved. Such actions are also detrimental to personal relationships, potentially injurious to others, and dishonoring to one's Christian testimony. Perhaps the greatest harm, though, is that such actions violate God's principles for Christian speech and conduct. Repeated offenses of this nature by a family may become grounds for dismissal from the school. Our goal is to let our light shine to the community of always honoring each other in word and indeed.

It is expected that parents and students will cooperate with all guidelines established by the school. The policies and guidelines are established to ensure a comfortable, orderly, God- honoring school environment and educational program for students.

Attendance at Gaston Christian School is a privilege and not a right. Students forfeit this privilege if they do not conform to the school's standards of achievement and conduct. It is expected that students, parents, and school staff shall always show respect in every way to each other in obedience to the admonition of our Lord. (Ephesians 4:29-32, Galatians 6:10).

3.16 Formal Reconciliation and Binding Arbitration/Mediation Agreement

One of the principles clearly set forth in Scripture is the instruction that believers are not to sue one another in public courts. Grievances between believers are to be settled within the body of Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 and Matthew 18:15-20.) The purpose for this instruction is that the Body of Christ is to be united and that the Name of Christ not be blasphemed due to the conduct of believers. We are to seek to be reconciled to each other rather than to triumph over one another.

In the event that conciliation is necessary, the Rules for Procedure of Christian Conciliation established by the Association of Christian Conciliation Services shall be the sole remedy utilized in pursuing arbitration/mediation. (Handbooks giving a full description of this process are available in the school office.) All families and students of GCS expressly waive their rights to initiate civil litigation against Gaston Christian School, its employees, administrators, and officers as a condition of enrollment.3.9 Registration & Payment Fees.

4. HEALTH INFORMATION (08/2021)

4.1 Immunizations

State law requires that all immunizations and medical records be current and on file in the office. Please check with the School Nurse in fulfilling this requirement.

4.2 Medicine

Prescription medication will be administered to students at school on the specific written request of the student's physician and parent or guardian. The required [Medication Authorization](#) and [Release Form](#) must be completed by the parent or guardian AND also must contain your physician's signature for each medication or change of medication the parent wishes to have administered to the student.

Medication must be left at school in the original container that has the doctor's name and instructions. Possession of any medication without a Medication Information Form containing the physician's signature will be considered a serious violation.

Over-the-counter medications – Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, Diphenhydramine (Benadryl), Pepto- Bismol, Tums, and antibiotic ointment - will be available at Gaston Christian School. Dosing of all such medication will be consistent with the recommended doses for age and/or weight as defined on package guidelines unless otherwise indicated by a physician. The above over-the-counter medications available to students at Gaston Christian School will only be administered with written parental and physician permission. Faxed physician permission will be accepted. Absolutely no medications (non-prescription or prescription) will be administered by either school personnel or self (student) without written authorization of a physician and parent.

Copies of this form will be required to be completed BEFORE any field trips. Forms are located for your convenience on the GCS website or in the school offices.

4.3 Student Illness/Injury

Students are allowed to leave class for illness in cases of emergency as determined by the teacher. The school secretary will refer the student to the School Nurse who will assess the student's illness and call a parent or guardian to arrange for the student to be picked up if needed. Students will remain in the sick room until a parent arrives.

Students must be fever free without the use of fever reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school. All rashes should be evaluated by a physician. Please reference the Guidelines for Common Illness (Addendum D).

5. ACADEMICS PROGRAMS & STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Grading System

100-90	A
89-80	B
79-70	C
69-60	D
Below 60	F

5.2 Assessment & Reporting (08/2021)

For students in grades K-5, report cards will be issued every nine weeks. Report cards will reflect student progress towards the grade-level learning outcomes.

5.3 Student Recognition

Honor Roll: End-of-Year Awards: Students in grades 3-5 will be recognized for attaining either the All A-Honor Roll or the A-B Honor Roll for each of the quarterly grading periods.

End-of-year Awards: The end-of-year awards will be presented to students in individual classes with the highest yearly average in: Math, Language Arts, History, Science and Bible. Students whose final grades qualify them for yearly Honor Roll will also be recognized.

Certificates are presented to students who maintained average and above average marks on Social and Work Habits for the year.

5.4 Student Promotion (08/2021)

GCS weighs carefully many factors in making a decision to promote or retain. GCS reserves the right to either retain or dismiss a student with excessive absences or tardies. Students must pass the current grade before promotion to the next grade level.

Parent teacher conferences to confirm kindergarten readiness (for Pre-K students) will be held each January. At that time, your teacher will share an assessment of developmental readiness along with any concerns. The final decision for kindergarten placement will be determined by the Elementary Principal, in consultation with your child's teacher and the Elementary Student Study Team.

5.5 Parent-Teacher Conferences

Open communication is essential to effective partnership between the classroom teacher and the home. One way to reinforce the shared goal of student wellbeing and success is through Parent-Teacher Conferences.

Parent-Teacher conferences are held for all students in grades K-5 after the first grading period and throughout the year as needed. For students in preschool, your child's teacher will contact you by phone during the first nine weeks of the school year for a concise update of your child's adjustment.

If additional conference time is needed, please contact the teacher and arrange a time for after school. Conferences should not occur before school starts or during the school day. School-age children can be left in after-school care at the hourly rate while conferences are held.

Classrooms must not be interrupted at any time during the school day. Messages, lunches, books, etc., may be left in the school office when such a need arises and the school secretary will take care of the delivery of these forms. Parents will not be permitted to go to the classrooms during instructional time.

5.6 Homework (08/2021)

The school recognizes that students need to experience balance in their lives between school work, social activities, family participation, and church. In recognition of this needed balance, teachers assign reasonable quantities of homework and provide time at school to do some homework. In general, the school will give lighter homework and test assignments on Wednesdays. Homework may be assigned over weekends but not over Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Spring Break.

Homework is a major part of learning in that it takes practice to master any skill. Homework can be given for reinforcement of classroom instruction, practice in skill development, memorizing important information, and preparing for tests. Homework is assigned on a regular basis and is expected to be submitted by the due dates. It is the student's responsibility to seek clarification of assignments and to seek assistance from the teacher as soon as the need is realized.

Parents should recognize the important role of homework to the total instructional program of their child. Students develop independent study skills through the completion of homework, and studies show a correlation between student achievement and homework.

5.7 Textbooks

Any textbook that is not used as a workbook (written responses by students) will be returned to the school at the end of the year, except designated books in Kindergarten. Damage fees will be assessed if excessive damage occurs. Lost library books will be charged at full value.

5.8 Chapel & Spiritual Formation (08/2021)

Chapel is a very significant part of Gaston Christian School. Students are required to participate and are challenged from the Word of God to develop genuine Christian character. Parents are welcome to attend any chapel session.

5.9 Special Classes

Regularly scheduled music, physical education, library, art and computer training is provided for students in Kindergarten to 5th Grade by teachers who specialize in these areas. GCS offers many after school Enrichment activities, and information will be made available regarding these opportunities.

5.10 Field Trips

Field trips are also an important part of the overall school program and are arranged each year by individual classroom teachers to enhance the classroom studies. Please refer to the "Field Trip Guidelines" on the last page of this handbook.

5.11 Toilet Training & Bathroom Accident Policy

Gaston Christian School's program for three and four-year-old students is an enrichment program. As such, we do not staff our classrooms using a daycare type format, nor do we have the convenience of daycare facilities, such as restrooms attached to classrooms, etc. In general, our program works successfully without additional staff & facilities because the school requires all entering students to be fully toilet trained as a prerequisite to enrollment. We recognize, however, that occasional accidents can occur, especially if a child is not feeling well on a particular day. To handle this situation the school's policy is as follows:

If a child wets his pants, he will be permitted to go to the restroom to change (using the change of clothes he brought to school). The teacher will assist as needed, beginning by helping him remove his shoes in the classroom.

If a child soils his/her pants, we will attempt to reach a parent (or nearby relative if any are listed in the child's records) so that he/she can come to school and clean and change the child.

In the event that a parent or designated caregiver cannot be reached within a reasonable period of time, school personnel will clean and change the child.

While school personnel are attempting to contact the parent or the parent is en route to the school, the child will wait in the school office to prevent the possible spread of illness to other children. School personnel will communicate to the child that waiting in the office is not a punitive measure.

These issues will be handled on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Elementary Administration.

PLEASE NOTE: Anytime a child experiences an accident involving soiled clothes, the parents will be required to remove the child from school for the day. If the child has three accidents within a six-week period, the parents would, at that point, need to remove the child from the preschool program for a long enough period of time to allow for complete toilet training. The place on the class roster can be retained by the parents' continuing to submit the monthly tuition payment.

6. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE

6.1 Conduct/Discipline General Guidelines

A very positive approach is used in the discipline of students. With a structured setting and a staff that is well trained in classroom management, the need for strong discipline measures is minimized. When correction or punishment is needed, it will be carried out with appropriate regard for the student and in a way that corresponds to the type of inappropriate behavior, the student's past behavior record, etc. Students who commit a flagrant violation of expected school behavior will receive suspension (may be either in- school or out-of-school suspension), or will be dismissed permanently from the school, as determined by the principal. Any student who receives suspension will be required to complete assigned work.

As stated in the Enrollment Agreement: Gaston Christian School reserves the right to dismiss any student who consistently and willfully neglects his academic work, exercises poor citizenship, reflects adversely on the Christian principles of the school, or engages in behaviors inconsistent with the biblical guidelines promoted by the school.

6.2 Student Cell Phone/Smartwatch Policy

Administrators and teachers have the responsibility to maintain order and to create a positive and respectful learning environment for GCS students. Cell phones/smartwatches can be a disruption to the educational environment on a day-to-day basis (interfering with learning).

The school prefers that students NOT CARRY cell phones/smart phones/other communication-enabled devices to school at all. According to GCS policy, if they are brought, they must remain turned off, in the child's backpack, as school personnel will communicate any necessary information with parents as needed. If a violation occurs, the device may be picked up in the Elementary Office at the end of the day by a parent.

6.3 Bullying Policy (08/2021)

Harassment or bullying of a student(s) by other students is contrary to God's Word and to the school's commitment to provide a physically and psychologically safe environment in which to learn. In John 13:34-35 Jesus commanded us to ". . . love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Bullying occurs when a person or group is intentionally intimidated, frightened, excluded, or hurt by a pattern of behaviors directed at them by others (Greg Griffiths, "Bullying in Schools-the Hidden Curriculum, 2003).

The following actions in an ongoing manner where an imbalance of power is represented may be forms of bullying:

- Physical aggression (hitting, kicking)
- Teasing or verbal abuse (insults, name calling, or racial/sexual remarks)
- Damaging a person's property/possessions or taking them without permission
- Threatening gestures, actions, or words
- Written/verbal/electronic messages that contain threats, putdowns, gossip, or slandering
- Cyberbullying through any social media site, texting, or other electronic means

Bullying is not acceptable behavior; incidents will be assessed by the administration and addressed according to administrative discretion. Gaston Christian School recognizes that not all inappropriate behaviors should be considered bullying or willful violation of this policy.

6.4 Gum & Toys

Neither chewing gum nor toys are permitted at school.

6.5 Prohibited Items and Activities

Weapons (guns, knives, etc.) or any other item which looks like or is used as a weapon, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, unauthorized use of prescription medication, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, vaping devices or solutions, drug paraphernalia and fireworks are strictly prohibited.

The following items are not allowed inside the school buildings because they do not promote instruction: electronic entertainment devices such as iPods, electronic games, or any other device that might distract from learning. These items will be taken and returned to the parent after 24 hours. Any item that dishonors God, is contrary to the mission statement of Gaston Christian School, or in any way distracts from an orderly environment or classroom instruction is also prohibited.

7. STUDENT APPEARANCE/DRESS GUIDELINES

7.1 Dress Code & Personal Appearance

Modesty, cleanliness, neatness, and showing honor to our Lord are determining factors of the GCS student.

All clothing must be clean, properly fitted, and neat in appearance. Dress should not distract from the learning process, nor should it attract undue attention to one's appearance. In addition to honoring the Lord, students' attire should convey respect for oneself and for the GCS community. Parents are requested to review the dress code and assist the school in its implementation.

Please be sure that your child's clothing is:

- Appropriate for dynamic learning and active play
- Appropriately sized fit and worn modestly
- Comfortable, washable, and allows for self-dressing
- Labeled with child's name (sweaters, jackets, coats, etc.)

School administration have the authority and responsibility to determine whether a student's appearance satisfies the intent of this policy. Final determination of appropriateness of attire or appearance will rest with school administration. Anything that disrupts the learning environment will be deemed unacceptable.

7.2 Male Students

- Bottoms: Dress slacks, casual slacks, jeans, or knee-length shorts including athletic shorts, may be worn to school. Jeans must have no holes above the knee. Frays or patches above the knee are acceptable only if no skin above the knee is exposed as a result of these frays or patches. Pants and shorts must be worn at normal waist height, and not at the hips.
- Tops: Appropriate tops include dress shirts/blouses, knit shirts, T-shirts, or sweatshirts may be worn. Undershirts or sleeveless shirts are not appropriate tops. No midriff should show at any time.

7.3 Female Students

- Bottoms: Dress slacks, casual slacks, jeans, or knee-length shorts including athletic shorts, may be worn to school. Jeans must have no holes above the knee. Frays or patches above the knee are acceptable only if no skin above the knee is exposed as a result of these frays or patches.
Leggings, jeggings, ballet pants, yoga pants, and other similar styles may not be worn on their own, but they may be worn underneath a dress, skirt, shorts, or tunic that come down to the mid-thigh.
Skirts and dresses that fall to the top of the knee and below when standing are acceptable. It is strongly recommended that girls wear bike shorts or something similar under dresses/skirts.
- Tops: Appropriate tops include dress shirts/blouses, knit shirts, T-shirts, or sweatshirts may be worn. Undershirts or sleeveless shirts are not appropriate tops. No midriff should show at any time.

7.4 Hair

- Hair is to be neatly trimmed and styled. All students must keep their hair out of their eyes and face, and no designs should be cut into their hair. Dyed hair of an unnatural color is not acceptable. Colored or multicolored braids must not be added to hair for school wear.
- Hair styles may be determined by the administration to be a distraction or inappropriate.

7.5 Footwear & Shoes

Footwear: Sneakers worn with socks are the best footwear for school. Shoes must be closed-toed with a heel. Cowboy boots and flip flops are not appropriate for school. Good judgment should be exercised in selecting safe footwear.

7.6 Note for Preschool-Kindergarten Students:

Please provide a seasonally-appropriate change of clothing for your child in a plastic zip-lock bag. Include underwear and socks in the bag, also. Clearly label the bag and the articles of clothing with your child's name. These items will be kept in their book bag.

7.7 Dress Code Consequences

First violations of the dress code (if slight) will be pointed out to parents by a note home or phone call. GCS Administration will be involved if there is a second violation. In an extreme violation the parent would be asked to bring, as quickly as possible, a change of clothing to the school.

The many aspects of a dress and appearance code are difficult to define in print. The constant changing of fads in clothing & hairstyles makes it impossible to list all the possible infractions. Parents must work cooperatively with the school in this area, supporting school administration as the final authority in these matters, and to daily oversee clothing a student chooses for school wear, thereby eliminating extra time taken from busy schedules to deal with infractions.

These guidelines apply to the regular school day as well as to any school-related activity.

ADDENDUM A: GUIDELINES FOR FIELD TRIP DRIVERS/CHAPERONES

We greatly appreciate the assistance of parents in transporting students on field trips that broaden the educational experience of the students. It is beneficial for everyone to have the following common guidelines for parent chaperons/drivers.

1. The teacher will determine the number of chaperones needed for a particular field trip (needs fluctuate); teachers will choose available willing parents on a rotating basis.
2. Parents attending Field Trips as drivers and chaperones must undergo a background check.
3. A driver must submit his/her valid driver's license and vehicle registration to the office prior to the field trip. (in case of an accident, the driver's automobile insurance would be considered the primary source of compensation, with the school's insurance being secondary to that.)
4. Younger siblings should not be brought along on the trip so that the chaperone will be better able to focus completely on the care of the students.
5. No unscheduled stops of any kind are to be made, except in the rare case of an emergency.
6. Chaperones should follow the specific time guidelines/schedule given by the teacher for every aspect of the trip.
7. Chaperones are expected to follow the same behavioral guidelines as school staff when accompanying students on a field trip (no listening to inappropriate music in the vehicle [no radio strongly suggested], no smoking, no inappropriate language, etc.)
8. The role of the chaperone includes giving appropriate supervision/direction to students in his/her care at times when they are not under the supervision of the teacher.

*Remember: Parents set the example for our children (students) to follow. Please follow the teachers lead and school guidelines. I have read the Gaston Christian School Guidelines for Field Trip Drivers/ Chaperones.

ADDENDUM D: GUIDELINES FOR COMMON ILLNESSES

ILLNESS	INCUBATION PERIOD	MODE OF TRANSMISSION	RESTRICT FROM SCHOOL?	RETURN TO SCHOOL	PREVENTION OF TRANSMISSION
Temperature over 100°			YES	Once fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications	Handwashing and dependent on underlying cause
Vomiting and/or diarrhea			YES	Once it has been 24 hours since last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea	Handwashing
Common Cold	12 hours to 5 days	Respiratory tract, droplets, indirectly by contaminated hands or surfaces	NO	N/A	Hand washing, covering nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	24-48 hours	Contact with discharge from eyes	YES	24 hours after the start of antibiotic therapy	Treatment of the affected eye, hand washing, disinfecting contaminated surfaces, avoid contact with eye drainage
Influenza	24-72 hours	Droplets, Respiratory tract	YES	When fever and symptom free for 24 hours without Fever reducing meds	Good hand washing, covering nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, Immunization unless contraindicated
Head Lice (Pediculosis)	7 days for eggs to hatch.	Direct contact with infested person is most common	NO	After application of effective pediculicide	Avoid head to head contact; do not share clothing, hats, combs/brushes, or towels.
Chickenpox (Varicella)	From 2-3 weeks; commonly 14-16 days	Person to person by direct contact, droplet, or airborne spread of secretions	YES	After all vesicles become dry/crusty	Avoiding contact with infected person; covering coughs and sneezes. Immunization unless contraindicated.
Rash			YES	Once evaluated and cleared to return to school by physician	Avoiding contact with the affected person
Strep Throat		Person to person contact	YES	24 hours after beginning antibiotic therapy	Avoiding contact with the affected person

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GASTON
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL

PREPARE *People*
TEACH *Truth*
GLORIFY *God*

GASTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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