

GHCA Family Handbook

2012-13





Welcome!

We appreciate your interest in providing your child a quality, uniquely Christian education that reinforces the biblical values you have worked so hard to build into the lives of your child. Believing that the Christian worldview affects every area of life, we seek to be distinctively Christian in every area of school life. Our desire is for each student to come to personal faith in Christ and then to learn to think and live “Christianly” —to understand all of life from the biblical perspective and live in a way consistent with this perspective.

Greater Houlton Christian Academy was established for these purposes almost three decades ago. It continues to stand for the teaching of God's infallible Word, the Bible, for a high level of age-appropriate academic expectations, and for high standards of morality and Christian behavior.

This handbook is designed to help you understand how the school operates and to give you the information you need concerning our policies and procedures, *but it is not exhaustive in any sense, since it becomes necessary from time to time to add, delete, and revise policies and procedures as we continue to seek to improve.* You will be kept informed of any changes that affect your family. In this handbook “parent” is understood to include guardians; “school” or “the Academy” refers to GHCA.

Our hope is that this handbook will help us work together in the bond of Christ's love for the benefit of our children: “Can two walk together unless they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). Parents are encouraged to contact the administration any time they have concerns, questions, or suggestions that will help GHCA better accomplish its mission.

We are delighted to serve the families and churches of the Greater Houlton region as together we help youth discover and reach their God-given potential in mind, body, and spirit.

John R. Bishop
Head of School

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ABOUT THE ACADEMY

Governance

Greater Houlton Christian Academy, a non-profit corporation, is sponsored by the Greater Houlton Christian Academy Association. The Association elects a representative Board of Directors comprised of at least five, but not more than nine members, which is entrusted with the general care, operation and function of the Academy. The board's duties include overseeing the general financial operation of the school (including budgeting, strategic planning, and major fundraising), recruiting and selecting the head of school, developing policy, and serving as the link between Academy administration, staff and the Association while guarding the founders' vision and the school's current mission.

The head of school is appointed by the board as the Chief Executive Officer of the Academy and carries out the policies established by the board while overseeing the daily operation of the school. This includes evaluation of all educational practices, providing leadership in curriculum development, staff development and forwarding recommendations to the Board of Directors in these and other areas.

The Greater Houlton Christian Academy (GHCA) student body represents about twenty area churches. GHCA is a non-denominational, independent Christian school in Houlton, Maine and has been a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) since 1994.

Association Membership

All school parents who are in agreement with the Statement of Faith and Christian Philosophy of Education are Association members along with school employees. Former school parents, alumni, and friends may also be Association members if they are in agreement with the Statement of Faith and Christian Philosophy of Education, have been approved by the board, and if they make a contribution each year to the school. Greater Houlton Christian Academy, Inc. holds an association meeting each year.

Because parents play a pivotal role in the development of their children's responsible attitudes towards school, appropriate behavior, and respectful interactions with others, they are encouraged to take an active part in the school experience. The Academy depends on parental involvement in such activities as work nights, fundraisers, and parent-teacher conferences. Realizing that some have time constraints, we simply ask parents to do their very best to participate. This participation makes this parent-sponsored school work successfully.

Board of Directors

Board members are elected for up to three-year terms at the annual meeting of the Association in late spring. Presently, seven members comprise the board with the head of school acting as an ex-officio member of the board. The Association delegates leadership of the school to the board, which establishes policies for the operation of the school. The head of school, as chief executive officer, exercises oversight for all the operations and activities of the school's ministry. At the annual meeting, the board submits the school budget to the Association for information and approval. Greater Houlton Christian Academy is a board-directed, parent-sponsored school with a high measure of parental involvement at all levels of school activity.

Mission Statement

Greater Houlton Christian Academy exists to educate the mind for knowledge and to enlighten the spirit for wisdom in order to empower the next generation of godly leaders who will impact the world for Jesus Christ.

Vision Statement

Functioning as a center of Christian educational influence, GHCA will be an exemplary school community that will nurture, challenge and empower students to develop their unique gifts and abilities to their highest potential for the glory of God. Led by a committed and caring faculty, the students will be taught to think critically and biblically, and to achieve appropriate levels of academic and extracurricular excellence in order to become godly leaders for Jesus Christ and His kingdom in the greater Houlton area and around the world. Each student is given opportunity for a well-rounded education in a safe, loving, and disciplined environment. GHCA is committed to providing this affordable quality education for all families seeking a Christian school education.

Core Values

- Glorify God:** We seek to glorify God in all activities and relationships and in the use of the resources God has given us.
- Partnership:** We view education as a partnership between parents, churches, and the Academy.
- Love:** We seek to model the love of Jesus Christ through compassion, discipline, and grace.

- Respect:** Each person is created in God's image and therefore will be treated with respect and encouraged to treat others with respect.
- Honesty:** Our relationships and academic performance will be based on honesty and fairness.
- Excellence:** Continuous improvement and the pursuit of excellence will underlie all that we do.

Christian Philosophy of Education

The educational philosophy of the Greater Houlton Christian Academy is based on a God-centered view that all truth is God's truth, and that the Bible is the inspired and the only infallible authoritative Word of God that contains this truth. God created all things in six days and sustains all things. Therefore, the universe and man are dynamically related to God and have the purpose of glorifying Him. Because man is a sinner by nature and choice, he cannot, however, glorify or know God. He can do this only by choosing God's free gift of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ, thereby committing his life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The Academy will provide the student as well as the parent the necessary awareness of God and responses to His Word, so that when the Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin, he will readily and with understanding accept Christ as His Savior. Christian education can then carry out its purpose.

This philosophy also channels our energies to promote high academic standards while helping the students to achieve skills in creative and critical thinking using the best integrated curriculum available. The objective of our instructional program is to enable the student to pursue the post-secondary education of his choosing, whether in college, university or in vocational training areas.

Our aim socially is to provide a Christian perspective on the total world view from which will come a balanced personality and a proper understanding and acceptance of a person's role in life at home, at work, at play and at worship—all grounded in the Christian concept of love.

The Academy permits the parents to carry out their responsibility to God for the education of their children. This responsibility is the prerogative not of the state, but of the parents. Therefore, GHCA assists the family in this responsibility and requires support from the home.

Our responsibility for the student encompasses the spiritual, mental, intellectual, physical, social, and emotional areas. These areas are inseparable and through them runs the insistent thread of the spiritual. Therefore, it must be our aim to shun the tendency to teach the Bible compartmentally or on the intellectual level alone—the scarlet thread must be woven throughout the total curriculum.

It is apparent, then, that the types of activities we employ or permit in the classroom or school program will either facilitate or militate against our basic philosophy. The spiritual must permeate all areas—else we become textbook-oriented rather than student oriented.

Carried out, this philosophy dictates that we cooperate closely with parents in every phase of the student's development, always offering assistance in understanding the purposes of GHCA. This cooperation enables us to better accomplish our goals for our students. It is our philosophy that also makes us uniquely different and preserves our Christian distinctiveness.

Statement of Faith

- A. We believe the Bible to be the only inspired, the only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God (II Timothy 3:15; II Peter 1:21).
- B. We believe there is only one God, eternally existent in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19; John 10:30).
- C. We believe in the deity of Christ (John 10:33); His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:35); His sinless life (Hebrews 4:15; 7:26); His miracles (John 2:11); His vicarious and atoning death (I Corinthians 15:3; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 2:9); His bodily resurrection (John 2:11; I Corinthians 15:4); His physical ascension to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19); His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11; Revelation 19:11).
- D. We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ, and that only by God's grace and through faith alone are we saved (John 3:16-19; Romans 3:23; 5:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5).

E. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29).

F. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:26-28).

G. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (Romans 8:13-14; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19-20; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18).

H. We believe in the creation of man and the world by the direct act of God (Genesis 1:26-28; 5:1-2), and that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman. We also believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; I Corinthians 5:1; 6:9).

School History

In September 1984, County Road Baptist School opened its doors in the church facilities of County Road Baptist Church in New Limerick with kindergarten through twelfth grades. This was the result of the vision of a small group of church members who desired to see children educated from the perspective of God's Word. The first of many steps of faith in the history of the school had proven that God's hand was upon the work.

In the summer of 1993, the school came under new leadership with Mark B. Jago and changed its name to County Road Christian School to make the school more available to families of other Bible-believing churches. The school grew slowly to about forty students while still part of the County Road Baptist Church.

County Road Baptist Church voted in August 1995 to reorganize as an independent, non-denominational, Christian school, believing the change would open the school's doors for families of even more evangelical congregations. In that same month, the Parent/Teacher Fellowship of County Road Christian School voted unanimously to receive ownership, operation, oversight and responsibility of the newly organized school with the direction of a new Board of Directors. In October 1995, the Greater Houlton Christian Academy was incorporated as an independent, non-profit Christian School association of parents and members. After much work, the by-laws were written and the Academy Association began looking for its own facility in Houlton. Principal Jago was given the new leadership title of "Headmaster."

In February 1996, the Lambert School building on School Street in downtown Houlton became available at a cost of only \$1.00. The association took out a substantial loan to renovate the building. The resulting greatly improved facility was the product of thousands of hours of volunteer work, contracted labor and many love gifts from interested and caring friends. After a successful capital campaign a few years later, the school was able to completely pay off the mortgage in December 2005.

The doors to the new building were opened in September 1996 and the enrollment jumped to eighty students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. In September 2002 a pre-kindergarten for four-year-old children was started, completing a pre-school through grade 12 educational program with an enrollment of almost 190 students. In June 2003, Head of School Jago began leading the process for accreditation—a dream that became fulfilled in 2010 when the school achieved a ten-year accreditation with both the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). In that same year the school became fully approved by the State of Maine Department of Education.

In the spring of 2008, the administration and board completed development of a Five-Year Strategic Plan (2008-2013) which maps the vision of the school in the areas of academic excellence and financial stability. The board continues to be open to expansion of its facility as God leads.

It is the continued purpose of the Academy to honor Jesus Christ, believing that an education in which Christ is central will influence the entire course of a student's life.

Tax Status

GHCA is a tax-exempt organization under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3). Donations are tax-deductible; tuition payment does not qualify.

Accreditation

GHCA holds a ten-year term of accreditation with both Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The school is recognized as fully approved by the State of Maine.

Teacher Certification

Teachers are expected to hold a minimum of a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree in their area of expertise and to hold a valid certificate from ACSI, the State of Maine, or a reciprocal state. Some of our teachers and administrators also have Master's degrees or are pursuing them.

Affiliations

GHCA is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and the Maine Principals Association (MPA).

ADMISSION

Nondiscriminatory Policy

Greater Houlton Christian Academy is a distinctly Christian institution dedicated to biblical principles of fairness and equality (Pro. 24:23; Acts 17:26; Gal. 3:28; etc.). Therefore, GHCA welcomes students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, providing them all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students in the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, tuition assistance programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Admissions Policies

Some of our basic admissions policies include the following:

1. Our mission as a Christian school is to work as partners with parents in the Christian training of their children in accordance with biblical principles. Therefore, parents must state in writing that they have read the Statement of Faith and the school's Christian Philosophy of Education and must agree to have their children educated in accordance with these statements. No student will be enrolled whose parents are not strongly supportive of their children being taught from this traditional Christian perspective and/or who have serious differences with the school's Statement of Faith. Parents should understand we seek to lead every student to personal faith in Christ. GHCA students must be unmarried and living with their parent/guardian.
2. The student must be able to demonstrate by testing and/or professional evaluation that he/she is able to profit from traditional classroom instruction. GHCA does offer a Learning Resource Center which provides limited assistance to students. However, while we strongly desire to be able to educate every child who comes to us, we do not have the resources necessary to educate children with substantial learning or behavioral problems.
3. Students must have satisfied all state immunization requirements.
4. Prospective pre-kindergarten students must be four years old by October 15th of the school year; prospective kindergarten students must be five years old by October 15th of the school year.
5. The student must have good disciplinary and attendance records and show agreement with Greater Houlton Christian Academy's policies and standards. Students who have had a history of behavioral problems must demonstrate a commitment to a changed lifestyle in both personal testimony and character references. We do not require students to have come to faith in Christ, but they must be able to comply cheerfully with our policies and standards. Students in grades 7-12 must be able to sign their agreement with the Student Honor Code, Code of Conduct, and Disciplinary Code.
6. A secondary student (gr. 7-12) may be dismissed from school or asked not to return the following year, at the sole discretion of the administration, if the student is not living in compliance with the Statement of Faith, Student Honor Code, or Code of Conduct. Re-admission following dismissal or withdrawal will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
7. GHCA reserves the right to place students on academic and/or behavioral probation at the administration's discretion.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Tuition

The ministry of GHCA is made possible only by the shared sacrifice of families (in the form of tuition and gifts), of faculty and staff (in the form of substantially lower salaries), and by the gifts of those who appreciate the need for Christian education. While a number of area churches contribute to the needs of GHCA, unlike church-sponsored schools, we have no host congregation to make up budget shortages. For this reason it is essential to the continued ministry of GHCA that families honor their tuition commitment as well as assist in fund-raising and gift-giving as they are able.

Terms of Payment

Tuition and fees, included in the annual Tuition Contract, may be paid in twelve (12) equal payments that are due the first of each month, July through June. Other payment options may be worked out with the Business Office if necessary.

Specific terms of payment are stated in the annual Tuition Contract and should be read and considered carefully before signing. Please feel free to contact the Business Office for any clarifications about any component of the Contract.

Delinquent Payment

All tuition payments must be received in a timely manner in order for the school to meet its own obligations. Our ability to meet our own substantial obligations to our staff requires prompt payment. Greater Houlton Christian Academy operates on an extremely thin budget, and parent failure to honor their payment commitments to the school can make it very difficult for the school to meet its payroll requirements as well as to pay vendors on time, which reflects poorly on the witness of the school.

Sometimes unexpected changes occur in a family's circumstances. If this happens, please contact the Business Office promptly so we may make every effort to work with you to avoid disrupting your children's education at the Academy.

An outstanding balance due from any family at the end of the school year can result in withholding report card(s). If such a family includes a high school senior, that student will not receive his/her diploma or final transcript. Students who have unpaid tuition or fees of any kind will not be allowed to participate at graduation. Furthermore, children of parents/sponsors who have an outstanding balance will not be allowed to start school at the beginning of the next school year without arrangements being made with the Business Office.

Fees

Various fees are charged to help defray school costs. Registration and re-registration fees are required to establish the student enrollment commitment for the upcoming year and to cover a portion of the initial operating expenses. They are payable at the time of application or re-registration and are nonrefundable unless the student is denied admission or the family moves out of the area normally served by the school. Payment of the fees does not guarantee admission or reenrollment. Admission is conditioned upon the availability of class openings, evaluation of the student's testing results, and other criteria listed in the New Student Application. Once the re-registration period is over, a student's class placement is no longer guaranteed if the fee is unpaid.

Tuition Assistance

Greater Houlton Christian Academy offers tuition assistance to families who would be unable to send their children to the school without such assistance. In fairness to all our families, however, the school seeks to require each family to bear its share of sacrifice as fully as possible; no family receives full tuition assistance.

A family applying for tuition assistance will be asked to obtain tuition assistance information from the Business Office in order to complete the application process through a third party vendor.

Fund-Raising

Since tuition covers only a portion of the full cost of educating our students, leaving a gap of several hundreds of dollars for each student, all families are expected to support the various fundraisers that help make up the difference for their children. Individual classes and the PTF ("Pass the Flame") sponsor various smaller fundraisers during the year to help reduce the cost of class trips and to purchase additional resources.

Accident Insurance

GHCA does not provide medical insurance to cover injuries to students. Families are provided an opportunity each year to purchase a student insurance plan through a local vendor.

ATTENDANCE

Absences

The instructional program designed by each teacher is a progressive and sequential experience. It is generally impossible for that experience to be "made up." Parents should keep in mind that excessive absences also require extra work on the part of the teacher and affect a class's ability to move forward at an adequate pace. For these reasons, the Academy strongly discourages non-essential absences. Failure to attend school will be considered either an *excused* or *unexcused* absence as consistent with Maine state law (20-A §5001-A).

Excused Absences:

1. Illness or injury prohibiting a child from coming to school (more than **three** days requires a physician's note to be excused)
2. Student's participation in school-sponsored activities during the school day
3. Serious illness or death in the family
4. Planned absences for personal or educational purposes
5. Health professional appointments that cannot be made outside the regular school day

A written note from a parent/guardian must be received by the Main Office within **three** days of the last absence stating the specific reason for the absence. Those students that experience prolonged absence (three or more consecutive days) for medical reasons must submit a letter to the administration along with a written explanation from a physician indicating the nature of the illness and that it was just cause for the extended absences. The administration makes the final decision as to whether an absence is excused or unexcused.

Excessive Absences

The Board has established that students must be in attendance at school 85% of the 175-day school year in order to keep pace and achieve success in their educational development. Therefore, any student (grades PreK – 8) who accumulates more than **27 days excused and/or unexcused absence**, will be considered for retention in that grade. Students in grades 9-12 who accumulate more than **27 excused and/or unexcused absences** (or **14** for one-semester courses) will be in jeopardy of forfeiting credit for their courses regardless of whether or not they have passing grades, with the final decision to be made by the administration. Parents will be notified of excessive absences in a timely manner and students may be placed on academic probation in an attempt to prevent this kind of serious consequence.

Student Early Dismissals

The portion of the day missed because a student left early will be considered unexcused except for reasons already stated. When a student must leave school early, he must bring a note from a parent that morning stating the reason and dismissal time. Students in grades 1-12 arriving late or leaving early must sign in or out at the Main Office.

Tardies

Students who arrive after the 8:00 a.m. bell are marked tardy. Tardiness disrupts classroom routines and instruction, and chronic tardiness may develop a habit in a student which will be detrimental to success beyond school. Therefore, parents are expected to make every effort to ensure students are at school on time.

The Main Office will determine whether a tardy is excused or unexcused, using the same criteria used for excusing absence, also considering whether or not the tardiness is truly avoidable. Tardies due to inclement weather, illness, roadwork, and similar reasons may be *excused*; oversleeping, "personal" reasons, and similar will be marked *unexcused*.

Parents of secondary students (grades 7-12) with **four** unexcused tardies within **any five-week period** will be notified by the office. Secondary students with **five** unexcused tardies in **any five-week period** will receive an after-school detention. Continued tardiness will result in meeting with the administration to determine further disciplinary action if appropriate.

Family Vacations

Since a number of extended recesses are scheduled during the school year itself, parents are strongly encouraged not to schedule vacations during school weeks if at all possible due to the disruption it can cause in a student's academic progress as well as the extra work it creates for faculty. If a trip must be scheduled, the parent is encouraged to notify the teacher at least one week in advance in order to make arrangements.

In the event that students miss school due to a family trip, the teacher will use his/her discretion regarding the issuing of homework prior to the trip. Any homework given prior to the vacation must be completed and turned in as specified by the teacher; otherwise, no credit will be given for the assigned work. Further, if the teacher decides that no homework will be given prior to the trip, then all work missed is to be completed within the same number of school days the student missed.

Make-up Work

On the day secondary students return from an absence, they are responsible for checking with their teachers and scheduling missed work. Students with excused absences will be allowed to make up all work missed in a time period equal to the number of days the student was absent. As a general rule, if an assignment or project is given in advance and the student is absent from school for 1-2 days during the assignment period, the assignment will still be due or the test

taken on the assigned date. Special consideration will be given to students with long-term illness or disability documented by a physician's note.

Quizzes, tests, and special projects that were announced prior to the student's absence are to be made up on the student's return to school unless otherwise arranged and approved by the teacher. Consideration will be given to students missing several days in a row or who were too ill to prepare for school. Students are not permitted to miss regularly scheduled classes in order to make up work.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Spiritual Formation

Spiritual growth is a primary concern of GHCA, growing out of our mission to provide a biblically-integrated education. This focus is reflected in a number of ways in the school's program throughout the year:

- Daily class Bible reading and prayer
- Weekly faculty and staff devotions
- Integration of biblical perspectives with all areas of school study and activity
- The teaching of Bible as a regular course of study
- Weekly chapels
- Junior High and High School discipleship groups
- Community service projects
- Scripture memorization
- Annual High School Retreat

Cooperation with Area Churches

Our students and staff represent about twenty area churches with whom we work to maintain a strong partnership for the spiritual benefit of our students. Churches support the school in a variety of ways, including providing chapel speakers, facilities for school use (e.g., chapels and concerts), and financial support. Pastors often provide counseling and prayer support for our students and staff.

Bible

For consistency, students are asked to keep a New King James Version at school for school use.

Prayer Meetings

School prayer meetings are scheduled periodically to provide opportunities for the board, staff, parents and students to come together to pray for the needs of the school and its families.

Chapels & Assemblies

All students are required to attend chapel each week, which gives them the opportunity to sing, share testimonies, and hear a nondenominational, biblical message. Chapel and discipleship groups alternate weeks for secondary level students. Chapel programs involve many different kinds of speakers, activities, and videos. Area pastors, youth pastors, and missionaries are frequent guests. Occasionally special chapels or assemblies are announced when the opportunity arises to hear special guests or presentations. Special all-school (PreK – 12) chapels are held at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. Parents are always welcome to attend chapel services.

Discipleship Groups

Students in grades 7-12 are divided into "discipleship groups" that alternate meeting times with chapel services. These groups are fairly informal and enjoy time focusing on various aspects of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Discipleship groups sometimes do off-campus service projects; they also can go off campus for lunch about once each quarter.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Elementary Program Overview

Academic emphasis at the elementary level is placed on building a firm foundation on the basics in Bible, mathematics, language arts, history, geography, and science. Biblical integration throughout all areas of the curriculum is an important goal of the program. The language arts program consists of spelling, phonics, sight words, high frequency words, structural analysis, comprehension skills, and writing. A variety of methods and materials provides experiences to build these skills. Hands-on activities, manipulatives, special projects, memorization, and journaling help to create a balanced approach to learning. Students enjoy “specials” such as choir, band, and physical education.

Secondary Program Overview

Our secondary program (grades 7-12) is designed to continue training students in soul, mind, and body, with a specific view to preparing students for continued success beyond high school, whether at an institution of higher learning (more than 90% of our graduates go on to higher education) or in a career.

Emphasis is on giving students a strong academic and spiritual foundation in the junior high years (grades 7-8), on which the high school program (grades 9-12) will build and expand. Students have several co-curricular options in the areas of athletics, fine arts, and service to help round out their education while at GHCA. We have an active Student Council and chapter of the National Honor Society.

Grading System

Pre-K and Kindergarten: Pre-K assessments include continual monitoring of motor skills, social/emotional skills, communication skills (listening and language), reading/math readiness, and handwriting. Kindergarten assessments monitor skills similar to Pre-K as well as math concepts, beginning reading, phonics skills, and Bible memorization. Progress is indicated by S (Satisfactory), I (Improving), and NI (Needs Improvement).

Grades 1-2: Students are assessed according to their progress in various academic concepts, work habits, and social development using a simple rating system.

Grade 3: In this transitional year for grading, academic core subjects are assessed using numerical grades. Other subjects, work habits, and social development use a letter rating system as do earlier grades.

Grades 4-12:

Numerical Equivalent	Letter Grade	4-pt Scale Equivalent
98-100	A+	4.00
94-97	A	4.00
92-93	A-	3.67
90-91	B+	3.33
86-89	B	3.00
84-85	B-	2.67
82-83	C+	2.33
78-81	C	2.00
76-77	C-	1.67
74-75	D+	1.33
70-73	D	1.00
Below 70	F	0.00

Report Cards

Pre-K and Kindergarten: Teachers provide quarterly report cards, and parent conferences are scheduled in November and as needed afterwards.

Grades 1-3: Report cards are sent home after each of the four marking periods.

Grades 4-12: Grades are posted regularly on SURRAnet, our online student information system that tracks a variety of data to allow administration, teachers, parents, and students to track student academic and behavioral performance at school. Parents can view their students' grades any time. Paper report cards are distributed to students the last day of school.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for parents of students in grades Pre-K through eighth grades in the fall. The goal of these conferences is to provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to communicate with each other in order to improve the instruction and training of our students.

Grade Point Average

High school Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is based on all the student's academic course work (except physical education and fine arts) from grades 9-12. GPAs sent to prospective colleges during the senior year prior to graduation are based on the student's academic coursework from grades 9-11. Full credit courses are weighted twice while one-half credit courses are weighted once. Class rank is determined by a senior's grade point average.

Honor Roll

The Highest Honor Roll has no grade lower than an A- in academic subjects. High Honor Roll has no grade lower than a B- in academic subjects. Honor Roll has all A's and/or B's and just one C in academic subjects. Our honor rolls are published in the local newspaper.

Course Failures

Junior High (Grades 7-8)

Any student failing two or more core academic subjects (English, Math, History, Science) will repeat that grade for the next school year unless they retake and pass those subjects at our Summer Academy. Students failing a single core academic subject will be required to retake the course in Summer Academy.

High School (Grades 9-12)

High school students who fail a required full-year course must make up that work in one of three ways as approved by an administrator; the administration may limit the amount of credit earned through these alternative methods in order to protect the integrity of our diploma:

1. Pass a comparable course of an approved correspondence or online school;
2. Be tutored for a minimum of twenty hours in the subject by a tutor approved by the school and pass a re-examination. Tutoring for a required semester course is ten hours minimum.
3. Repeat the course in the upcoming school year, schedule permitting.

If the Bible course is failed, the student must successfully complete a project assigned by the Bible teacher and approved by an administrator. Students must have a final grade of 60-69 in order to make up any course. Students who receive 59 or below must repeat the course.

Promotion & Retention

General Principles

1. Retention is occasionally required in order to give a student a better opportunity for success in school. Sometimes retention is necessary because of academic failure; this is more likely to occur in an upper grade. However, usually when retention is recommended in grades PreK-8, it is more likely because of social, emotional or behavioral factors that are having an adverse effect on a child. Children mature at different rates; it may be more advantageous in the long term to retain the child at an early age rather than experience "failure" at a higher grade level.
2. The goal of our school is to minimize the need for retention. Developmental screening is one tool for reducing the need for retention. Early communication between the home and school combined with vigorous intervention efforts help to reduce the potential for retention.
3. The general policy regarding retention is that a child may not be retained more than one time while enrolled at GHCA.

Procedure

1. If, after careful observation during the first semester, a teacher feels retention is a possibility, he/she will consult with the head of school. The teacher will then schedule a parent conference to discuss the child's academic and developmental progress. At this conference, the possibility of retention will be suggested as well as specific plans for remediation.
2. Depending on the child's progress, a recommendation for retention will be made to the parents by the classroom teacher with the head of school's approval. This conference will be scheduled at the earliest time possible during the second semester.

3. In some cases, in spite of appropriate intervention, retention will still be necessary. The administration will make this final recommendation. If parents do not agree with this recommendation, a conference will be scheduled with the parents, classroom teacher and administration. The desired result of this conference is to have a parental consent for retention. We recognize that parental consent is a vital component for the retention to be effective. Generally, the school will not retain a student without parental consent. However, in cases in which the administration believes that promotion would be educationally detrimental to a student or have a negative effect on the progress of his/her classmates, the administration reserves the right to retain a student.

Academic Probation

Secondary students who fail to make reasonable academic progress may be placed on academic probation at any time during the school year. Continued failure to make significant progress may, at the discretion of the administration, result in the school requesting the student's withdrawal prior to the conclusion of the school year.

Learning Resource Program

The Learning Resource Program provides help for students in the regular classroom who need accommodations or modifications such as word banks added to tests, retests, more time for tests, or highlighted notes. Generally, the classroom teacher will be responsible for these accommodations.

When a weakness is discovered, the classroom teacher refers students to the Learning Resource Program. Recommendations will be made throughout the school year. Classes that are modified or accommodated will be identified on the student's transcript.

Referral Procedure

1. The student is referred by a teacher or parent to the LRC Director.
2. The LRC Director schedules a PET (Pupil Evaluation Team) meeting and notifies the assistant head of school.
3. PET will determine if the student needs to be referred for testing through MSAD #29.
4. PET will determine if an IAP (Individual Action Plan) needs to be written for the student.
5. If students have an IAP, an annual meeting will be held to evaluate the student's performance.

Diploma/Credit Requirements*

**Subject to change as necessary*

Subject Areas	Credits
Bible	1 credit for each year of GHCA enrollment
Math	4
English	4
History	3 (1 must be U. S. History)
Science	3
Foreign Language	2
Physical Education	1
Health	½
Fine Arts	½
Computer	Demonstrate proficiency either through completion of a junior high class or competent high school work
TOTAL	18 (plus normally 4 credits of Bible)

Transfer Credit

All grades will be transferred to the GHCA grading scale by the most equitable method. Transfer students will have their prior coursework evaluated for GHCA credit at the time of enrollment. Academic work accomplished through homeschooling will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis upon receipt of an official transcript.

Graduation

Graduation is based on the satisfactory completion of the requirements set by the board. A minimum of eighteen (18) units of credit above eighth grade, plus one credit of Bible for every year at GHCA, is required for receiving a diploma from GHCA.

Participation in Commencement Exercises

Our commencement exercises are the high point of our school year and a time when the entire GHCA school family celebrates the academic and character achievements of its senior class. Attendance and participation in the school's annual commencement exercises (graduation) are privileges earned by meeting the basic criteria listed below.

In order for a student to participate in commencement exercises, five criteria must be met:

1. All required coursework must have been satisfactorily completed; if not, the student must be making sufficient progress as determined by the administration toward completion of approved alternative options by June 1st of the senior year. Should a senior fail any required courses for graduation, those courses must be retaken either in summer school or through an approved tutoring program at cost and obligation to the senior. A diploma will be issued in August if the course is satisfactorily completed.
2. Students must attend full time for both semesters of their senior year at GHCA in order to graduate. A transfer student's remaining graduation requirements will be determined at the time of admission.
3. All tuition and fees owed to the school for the senior must be paid in full or the family must be current with its payment plan in order for the student to participate in commencement exercises. Students will regretfully not be allowed to participate in the commencement exercises if parents are in arrears on their payment plan.
4. The student must have a satisfactory disciplinary record in his/her senior year. Serious or chronic misbehavior in the senior year may disqualify a student from attendance and participation at commencement activities. Students prohibited from attending and participating in these activities but who have met the other criteria may receive their diploma the week following graduation.
5. The student must be in conformity with the dress code requirements for commencement exercises in order to attend and participate.

Diploma

All credit requirements must be fully met in order for a senior to receive his/her diploma and have final transcripts released.

Class Honors

In order to be named class valedictorian, salutatorian, or honor essayist a student must

1. have completed his/her junior and senior years at GHCA;
2. have achieved the highest, second highest, or third highest grade point average in his/her class; and
3. have maintained a positive disciplinary record his/her senior year.

Course Selection

Parents are encouraged to be involved in the process and decisions of course selection with their children. Each student from 8th through 11th grade is assigned a course scheduling appointment with the Guidance Director in the early spring, which parents are encouraged to attend to give input and direction.

Schedule Changes

Changes in students' schedules that involve changing from one course or track to a different course or track must be completed by the end of the first marking period. If a student wishes to drop a course after that date, the student and his/her parent must confer with the Guidance Director for this change to be considered.

Student Testing

Various kinds of achievement testing is administered throughout the various grades. Students in grades 11-12 take the Stanford Achievement Test annually. High school students begin to prepare for post high school planning by taking the following tests:

- PSAT: Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test; provides firsthand practice for the SAT Reasoning Test; given to tenth graders in October;
- SAT: Scholastic Aptitude Test (college entrance exam, given in the spring of junior year and/or fall of senior year); and/or
- ACT: American College Testing (college entrance exam, given in the spring of junior year and/or fall of senior year).

Exams

Final Exams are given as a regular part of the academic program for students in grades 9-12. Students in grades 9-12 are required to take a final exam in each academic course. The exam itself will count 20% (1/5) of the final average for the course.

Homework

Meaningful home study is a necessary part of each pupil's educational program at GHCA and a purposeful extension of the school day, providing the student with additional opportunities for

- reviewing and practicing what they have learned that day,
- preparing for the next day's class,
- using resources, such as libraries and reference materials, and
- investigating topics more fully than time allows in the classroom.

Students who spend more time on homework, on average, do better academically than students who do not, and the academic benefits of homework increase in the upper grades, according to the U. S. Dept. of Education Office of Education Research and Improvement.

Homework Time Guidelines

(occasionally will be exceeded)

Grades 1-3:	up to 30 minutes
Grades 4-6:	up to 60 minutes
Grades 7-8:	up to 90 minutes
Grades 9-12:	up to 120 minutes

These are *approximate* guidelines *only* because the actual amount of time required to complete homework varies widely depending on several variables. However, if your child significantly exceeds these guidelines regularly, please make the teacher(s) aware. Limited or no homework will be assigned over weekends and holidays.

Requests for Extension of Time

There may be times when a child cannot be in school or is unable to complete a homework assignment due to appropriate extenuating circumstances and parents wish to request additional time. In these kinds of situations, parents may request a time extension by sending in a brief note explaining the situation.

Early Dismissal Assignments

Students excused early from school for sports, other activities, or appointments must submit any assignments due that day to their teachers before they leave school and are responsible for obtaining and completing assignments for the next class.

Homework Tips for Parents (from the Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans)

- *Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework.*

Avoid having your child do homework with the television on or in places with other distractions, such as people coming and going.

- *Help your child with time management*

Establish a set time each day for doing homework. Don't let your child leave homework until just before bedtime. Think about using a weekend morning or afternoon for working on big projects, especially if the project involves getting together with classmates.

- *Be positive about homework.*

Tell your child how important school is. The attitude you express about homework will be the attitude your child acquires.

- *When your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers.*

Giving answers means your child will not learn the material. Too much help teaches your child that when the going gets rough, someone will do the work for him.

- *If homework is meant to be done by your child alone, stay away.*

Too much parent involvement can prevent homework from having some positive effects. Homework is a great way for kids to develop independent, lifelong learning skills.

- *Help your child figure out what is hard homework and what is easy homework.*

Have your child do the hard work first. This will mean he will be most alert when facing the biggest challenges. Easy material will seem to go fast when fatigue begins to set in.

- *Watch your child for signs of failure and frustration.*

Let your child take a short break if she is having trouble keeping her mind on an assignment.

- *Reward progress in homework.*

If your child has been successful in homework completion and is working hard, celebrate that success with a special event (e.g., pizza, a walk, a trip to the park) to reinforce the positive effort.

Papers, Reports, & Projects

Students are required to do research papers, projects, and reports for various courses and subject areas as appropriate for their grade level. Teachers will explain the grading process and requirements for these assignments. While each teacher may vary somewhat in the requirements of the project, secondary work (grades 7-12) must be consistent with the GHCA Writing & Research Standards.

Assignment Books

Students in first grade use folders to transport papers and notes to home. Students in grades 2-8 are required to purchase special GHCA student assignment books that are available at the Main Office. Many students choose to use our assignment books all the way through high school. Sometimes parents and teachers initial the assignments as a way of helping the student develop accountability.

Late Work

Students submitting a paper/project late will lose 10% of their grade for each day the paper/project is late. This consequence will apply for only five school days, after which the student will receive a zero unless special arrangements are made with the teacher.

Extra Work

Extra work may be assigned at the discretion of the teacher when there is a valid educational reason. It will not be used as a desperate effort to improve a low grade in a subject for a student who has not been working to potential.

Extra Help

Teachers try to make themselves available for extra help as much as possible. Students are encouraged to see a teacher for any additional questions, problems, and assistance that they may need. There are times when teachers schedule times after school to help students experiencing difficulties, for preparation for exams, and for tutoring.

Students in grades 4-12 who are failing a course at the end of a report period will be required to attend two “help classes” each week until they are passing with a “C” at the end of the next quarter. Each teacher is responsible to schedule these help classes with students.

Bible Instruction

GHCA is an evangelical, interdenominational school that draws from about twenty area churches. Our Statement of Faith reflects our commitment to the traditional understanding of the Christian faith shared by evangelical churches regardless of denominational affiliation.

While we seek to lead all our students to a saving knowledge of Christ (if they have not already come to faith in Him) and to increase their understanding of God's Word, individual expressions of faith and particular doctrinal issues relating to those expressions are left to the individual family and local church. GHCA does not teach, promote, or denigrate the doctrinal or worship distinctives of any denomination or theological group. However, Bible instruction at the secondary level does present the fact that there is a wide range of interpretation on many issues even among Bible-believing Christians. If controversial questions relating to doctrine, Scripture interpretation, or worship arise in the classroom, we will encourage students to seek answers from their own parents and churches and to be respectful of those positions with which they do not agree.

Literature Instruction

Greater Houlton Christian Academy approaches all learning from the perspective that the biblical worldview is the only accurate and valid perspective for understanding the world God created. An individual with a framework for biblical thinking is equipped to make proper judgments in all areas of life. While this kind of decision-making usually comes later in life, students at GHCA will be building this biblical worldview beginning at a young age.

The teaching of literature fits into this scheme of development. Using good literature (American and British as well as other cultural and traditional literature) can help develop this process. Literature must be taught with analysis and evaluation. Selected and approved literature that is not in total agreement with Christian values may be taught in order to encourage the students to evaluate and analyze the written word on the basis of Scriptural truth.

Science Instruction

We believe that students need to have a solid understanding of the major scientific theories and issues prevalent in our culture. We will therefore explain the theory of evolution to our students, but do so from the perspective of the biblical worldview, presenting the scientific and biblical inconsistencies of evolutionary theory. Our goal is to enable our students to be able to respond intelligently and compassionately to those who challenge their Christian beliefs regarding origins.

GHCA WRITING AND RESEARCH STANDARDS: Gr. 7-12

The administration and secondary faculty have adopted the following basic standard for writing and research at the secondary level at Greater Houlton Christian Academy, believing that holding students to a consistent, reasonable standard honors the Lord (Colossians 3:17, 23). All students will be expected to submit work that meets these minimal levels of expectations. Teachers may, at their own discretion, increase these standards for any of their assignments. Work not meeting these standards will not be accepted by the teacher and will be considered late until turned in with corrections.

Writing Standards

1. SENTENCES
 - All sentences will start with a capital letter, be complete, and end with an appropriate end mark.
 - All answers will be written in complete sentences in every course. “Short answers” will be the exception rather than the rule. Teachers may require parts of answers to be highlighted to save correction time.
2. ORGANIZATION
 - Students will use IBC (introduction-body-conclusion) format with good paragraphs.
3. MECHANICS
 - Students will italicize, underline, or use quotation marks for titles and demonstrate correct use of apostrophes, capitalization, and spelling.
4. APPEARANCE
 - Written work will be legible and not use all capital letters.
 - Written work will be neat with few corrections.
 - There will be no scribbling or doodling on written work.
 - All papers will use the correct GHCA heading:
 - Student name
 - Date
 - Course
 - Assignment

Research Standards

1. All research papers and projects at GHCA must conform to MLA (Modern Language Association) format; all teachers will have a copy of the MLA style book and refer to it). Basic citations state the author and page number inside parentheses: e.g., (Smith 103).
2. Any specific information not derived from common knowledge must be cited, whether it is quoted or paraphrased.
3. Teachers may determine the quantity of Internet sources to be used for papers and projects as well as determine which Internet sources are acceptable for assignments.
4. All research work must include note cards, typed notes, or a handwritten rough draft at the discretion of the teacher.
5. Students may be required to have their papers typed.

DRESS CODE

Philosophy

Our desire at GHCA is to be distinctively Christian in attitude, action, and appearance (I Cor. 10:31; Rom. 15:5-6). Our dress code is based on the principles of modesty, neatness, affordability, safety, and appropriateness. It seeks to provide students with several dress options that meet these standards. Our dress code has not been designed to measure spirituality in any way but to help ensure a school environment in which learning can take place without distraction. We fully understand that no set of rules, especially a dress code, can in and of itself produce spiritual maturity. However, a reasonable standard enforced respectfully and consistently can provide opportunities for personal growth and development of Christian character when applied in an atmosphere which seeks to integrate all aspects of life from a biblical perspective.

General

1. All clothing must be neat, clean, in good repair, and the appropriate size for the student: not oversized, sloppy, or tight-fitting. All clothing must be modest—not revealing or see-through. Students are expected to be clean and well-groomed and to practice good physical hygiene.
2. Dress and grooming must never contradict GHCA's biblical values. Logos, styles, etc., that violate biblical principles of wholesomeness and modesty are never appropriate at school functions of any kind.
3. Any clothing, jewelry, or grooming style that calls attention to itself and/or is disruptive in any way at school or school functions is unacceptable. Clothing styles and colors should be conservative and modest.
4. Students are to remain in appropriate dress code attire while on school grounds from the time they arrive until they depart.

Special Occasions

1. School Spirit days: students may wear GHCA apparel (T-shirts, sweatshirts, etc.) with neat jeans or regular dress code pants. Casual Days and athletic events: modest casual clothing such as jeans, athletic apparel, and T-shirts are acceptable.
2. Chapel attire (grades 1-12 only): Boys—dress shirt, and tie; Girls—Jumper, dress, or skirt and blouse (girls may wear pants from November through March).
3. Dress code for special functions and occasions such as field trips, banquets, and graduation-related activities will be announced as necessary.

Enforcement

1. Parents have the primary responsibility to make sure their children are dressed appropriately for school and conform to the dress and grooming code. Most dress/grooming issues can be avoided by parents ensuring that their students are complying with the standard. ***Parents are expected to support the school's position when questions arise.***
2. The school administration and staff will seek to enforce the dress code with consistency, fairness, respect, and with concern for not only an individual student but also for the larger school family.
3. Students in violation of the dress code may be asked to remain in the office until suitable clothing can be brought in and may be subject to disciplinary action. Students wearing acceptable clothing in an unacceptable manner may also be subject to disciplinary action.
4. The school reserves the right to evaluate and place restrictions as needed as new fashions and fads emerge. ***Final interpretation of the dress code rests solely with the administration.***

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

It is impossible and undesirable to provide an exhaustive list of acceptable and/or unacceptable items or practices. These guidelines are designed to provide a clear sense of the overall goal. Parents and/or students are encouraged to bring in questionable items for approval before wearing to school to prevent the possibility of disciplinary action.

	BOYS	GIRLS
PANTS & SHORTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress chinos/khakis, twill, corduroy, cargo, dress slacks • Pants must be hemmed or cuffed; not to be touching the floor or higher than ankle • No boxers/briefs are to be visible • Modest-length walking shorts or cargo shorts (Sep, May, Jun) • Unacceptable: denim, camouflage, sweatpants, leather pants, etc. (PreK-Gr. 6 may wear non-blue, non-faded, solid-color denim pants.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress chinos/khakis, twill, corduroy, cargo, dress slacks • Pants must be hemmed or cuffed; not to be touching the floor or higher than ankle • Modest-length walking shorts, cargo shorts, cropped pants, or capris (Sep, May, Jun) • Unacceptable: denim, stretch, camouflage, sweatpants, zip-off, leather pants, etc. (PreK-Gr. 6 may wear non-blue, non-faded, solid-color denim pants.)
SKIRTS & DRESSES	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skirts, jumpers, or dresses may be worn, but must not be tight-fitting or of clingy fabrics; • Modest knee-length culottes, split skirts, skorts, gauchos • Length must fall to top of knee while standing, including slits, even when wearing leggings • Denim skirts & jumpers must not be faded • Chapel days: dress, jumper, or skirt and blouse
SHIRTS &/OR BLOUSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collared, dress, oxford, or polo shirts • Turtleneck, mock-turtleneck shirts • Rugby shirts and crew neck shirts with 2 or 3 button closure • Only shirts with squared bottoms may be worn untucked • Chapel days: dress shirts & ties • Unacceptable: T-shirts, sweatshirts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modest shirts/blouses with or without collars • Polo shirts, sweaters, vests, turtlenecks • Rugby shirts and crew neck shirts with 2 or 3 button closure • Must be appropriately buttoned • Unacceptable: bare midriffs when arms raised, bare backs; sleeveless, sheer, low-cut or revealing tops; T-shirts, sweatshirts
SWEATERS & OUTERWEAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardigan & pullover sweaters and sweater vests • Fleece vests & jackets, GHCA hoodies only • Unacceptable: outdoor coats, hats, gloves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardigan & pullover sweaters and sweater vests • Fleece vests & jackets, GHCA hoodies only • Unacceptable: outdoor coats, off-the-shoulder sweaters, hats, gloves
SHOES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletic & dress shoes; socks required • Unacceptable: military boots, cleats, moccasins, athletic or beach-style sandals or flip-flops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean dress or casual shoes; sneakers • Unacceptable: cleats, slippers, moccasins, beach sandals or flip-flops
JEWELRY & TATTOOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No body-piercing jewelry or earrings • No large-size or thick neck chains or chokers • No tattoos (real or fake) may be visible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No body-piercing jewelry except earrings • No tattoos (real or fake) may be visible
HAIR &/OR MAKE-UP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is to be kept clean, neat, and well-groomed • Length: must be out of the eyes, and off the ears and collar • Must be clean shaven (seniors may wear neatly groomed facial hair that is not distracting) • No distracting hairstyles or colors allowed including unnatural hair colors, designs, or unnatural color highlights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is to be kept clean, neat, and well-groomed • No distracting hairstyles or colors allowed including unnatural hair colors, designs, or unnatural color highlights • Make-up: tasteful, not excessive; giving a natural appearance.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Philosophy

Greater Houlton Christian Academy is a school family based on the teachings of Jesus Christ as taught in His Word, the Bible. In such a community, we all—students, parents, and staff—are expected to engage in ways that build each other up and honor God. There is no place for language, appearance, or behavior that would show anything other than respect for God, ourselves, those around us, for our facilities, and for our learning environment (Rom. 12:10,16; 13:8-10; 14:19, etc.). We feel strongly that no one at GHCA should ever experience rudeness, disrespect, sexual comments, theft, intimidation, harassment, fighting, or any other type of behavior that would make that person feel unsafe, unwelcome, or less than equal.

We have, therefore, developed policies over the years to help ensure that GHCA provides students the safe environment necessary for optimal learning and training. While we fully expect students to abide by these policies, we will at the same time help our students understand that outward keeping of rules does not make us righteous before the Lord, and it does not in any way enhance our standing with Him (Gal. 2:16b; Phil. 3:9).

We will be just as clear, however, that according to the Scriptures there are legitimate purposes for law and that joyful submission to the authorities God places over us honors and glorifies the Lord (I Sam. 15:22-23; Rom. 13:1-6; Heb. 13:17; Eph. 6:1-3). Rules become necessary to provide the safe and orderly atmosphere necessary for education and training. Our Code of Conduct seeks to honor the Lord and to protect the needs and dignity of all our students and employees. We expect students to comply with these guidelines as long as they are enrolled in the school.

GHCA Honor Code (Gr. 7-12)

The Honor Code summarizes our expectation for student behavior at all times while enrolled at GHCA:

On my honor, I will be honest in all my work, treat others with utmost respect, and uphold a biblical standard of integrity and service at all times, whether at school or elsewhere.

Our Honor Code is based on biblical principles contained in the First and Second Great Commandments as taught by Jesus Christ Himself. “Jesus said... ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matt. 22:37-39).

Students and parents should understand that the Honor Code is in effect at all times while a student is enrolled at the Academy regardless of whether a student is at school or a school activity or not. Serious violations of the Honor Code, regardless of time and location, will be handled as described in the Disciplinary Code.

It is important to remember, however, that an honorable school community is more than external obedience to a set of rules—it is a commitment to an honorable lifestyle of integrity, respect, and service. It is our strongest desire that our students’ commitment to this kind of lifestyle be motivated by their desire to honor Christ himself and that this commitment far outlive their time at the Academy.

Students at GHCA are expected to conduct themselves according to the highest Christian standards of honesty, integrity, responsibility, and love for one another (I Cor. 13; Gal. 5:13-15, 22-23). They are not to engage in, nor advocate, any immoral, illegal, unethical, and/or dangerous activity that might have a detrimental effect on the offending student, other students, the Academy or the name of Jesus Christ.

General Conduct Expectations

1. Students will at all times respect the authority of all teachers, school staff, and volunteers.
2. Students will not engage in conduct that will disrupt, disturb, or interrupt any school activity (e.g., talking without permission, rowdiness in hallways, distracting hair or clothing, etc.).
3. Students will arrive at school and classes on time, dressed appropriately, prepared to work and to complete assignments as instructed.
4. Students are encouraged to communicate in ways that build up and benefit others. Students are not to use profanity and/or coarse, vulgar expressions or gestures. Students will not bully, threaten, taunt and/or harass students, faculty or staff.
5. Student postings on Internet sites must be consistent with the school’s Christian testimony. Students will not use the Internet to post derogatory, insulting, or threatening remarks about the school, its staff, or its students. Students will not post or transmit coarse or offensive language and/or inappropriate or embarrassing pictures or videos, whether using phones or Internet. While the administration does not scrutinize these sites, when objectionable or questionable

postings are brought to its attention, it will deal with any postings inconsistent with the school's testimony as a Christian school. All students are expected to comply with the "Computer Lab Terms of Use" and "GHCA Wireless Network Terms of Use" (distributed and signed annually, gr. 7-12; also available on our school website).

6. Students will live in harmony with the biblical view of sexuality (as described in our Statement of Faith) and abstain from all immoral sexual activity including, but not limited to, sexual activity outside of marriage and possession, distribution, and/or use of pornography (Heb. 13:4; Gal. 5:16-2; Rom. 1:26-27; I Cor. 6:9; Eph. 5:3-5; I Thess. 4:3-8).
7. Students will respect all property belonging to the school, its employees, and other students and will not handle another's personal belongings without permission.
8. No student is permitted to use or have in his/her possession while on school property or at any school function any object which is or can be used as a weapon or looks like a weapon, including firearms, knives, toy weapons, explosives, dangerous chemicals, or fireworks of any kind. Students will not behave in any way that can injure others such as horseplay and throwing objects.
9. Students will not obtain, use, or provide prohibited substances including tobacco or any mind-altering substances such as drugs or alcohol, regardless of whether at a school function or elsewhere.
10. Students are expected to avoid all forms of dishonesty including lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarizing, and forging.

Matthew 18 and Proverbs 18 Principles for Dealing with Concerns

We seek as a distinctively *Christian* school to operate in harmony with the principles of God's Word. The "Matthew 18 Principle" and the "Proverbs 18 Principle" offer effective biblical models for dealing with concerns that will sometimes arise when people are working together.

The **Matthew 18 Principle** is based on the words of Jesus himself: "*If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone*" (Matt. 18:15). He then says that if you are unsuccessful in resolving things at this level, then the next step is to involve others (v. 16). In a school setting anyone with a concern is expected to take that issue *first* to the person with whom one has the concern ("*go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone*"). The "offender" has the responsibility to truly hear with an open mind the concern being expressed, and can then explain, correct, or apologize as appropriate. Most issues can be resolved at this level.

If, however, private discussion between the two does not resolve the issue, then the next step is to involve the appropriate administrator ("*But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you....*" v. 16). An administrator should *not* be contacted before a private attempt at reconciliation is made unless there is a true safety or moral issue—in which case an administrator should be contacted immediately.

The **Proverbs 18 Principle** is based on Proverbs 18:13, 17: "*If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.... The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.*" In other words, it is best to suspend judgment upon hearing a negative report until all the facts have been gathered. Every parent with more than one child understands this principle!

In a school setting we ask our parents and staff to suspend judgment on "reports" until they have received the "rest of the story." It is natural to be incensed or appalled when first hearing a negative report—but many times getting more information leads to a different conclusion.

In addition to being effective at addressing the normal kinds of concerns that can arise in daily school life, using these biblical principles is a way to teach our students Christ-honoring ways to resolve our differences.

DISCIPLINARY CODE

Guiding Principles

Our Code of Conduct expresses basic principles by which we expect students to live as long as they are enrolled at the Academy. This Disciplinary Code outlines how we respond when the Code of Conduct has been violated.

We understand from the Scriptures that no one "keeps the law" perfectly (Rom. 3:9-10, 23; Ps. 14:3). If a student does violate a school rule, it is expected that he/she will recognize and acknowledge the misconduct, respond with honest regret and desire to change in the future, and then graciously accept the consequences. It is our desire to help students grow in self-discipline.

If, however, a continued pattern of misbehavior develops, and a student fails to respond with sincere repentance and self-control, and the student indicates that he/she either does not desire our help or is incapable of living within such a self-disciplined community, then we will reluctantly be forced to ask that student to continue his/her education elsewhere.

It is important that authority be held in honor before our children, even when the authority is in error (Acts 23:1-5). Students need to see that the school and parents respect each other's authority and that if there is any doubt regarding the appropriateness of a disciplinary action, the parent will be supportive of the staff's position until there is an opportunity to fully discuss the action with the staff member. Any parental response that erodes the school's authority contributes to the erosion of any adult authority, including that of the parents.

Certain principles guide the administration of discipline at GHCA, including the following:

1. When our guidelines are violated we will seek to be as fair, redemptive, and instructive as possible, respecting the image of God in each student.
2. The degree of discipline seeks to reflect the frequency and seriousness of the offense. The attitude, repentant spirit, and cooperation of the student and/or parents involved may be considered in the administering of consequences.
3. When misconduct occurs that may also be a violation of law, the school will notify the appropriate civil authorities when, at the sole discretion of the administration, it is determined to be required by law or otherwise deemed appropriate. When civil authorities are involved, the school is not obligated to wait on or concur with the findings of those authorities in determining the appropriate action under GHCA's policies.
4. The school reserves the right to consider any attempt to commit a violation of the Code of Conduct/Disciplinary Code as a completed violation. Accomplices may be considered as violators and face similar consequences. *We strongly recommend that students avoid situations where others are violating the school's conduct policies.* When students find themselves in such situations, they should remove themselves immediately to avoid being implicated (2 Tim. 2:22).
5. This Disciplinary Code is not intended to be an exhaustive list of misconduct that will subject students to discipline. Therefore, the school reserves the right to discipline a student for any conduct the school, in its sole discretion, considers worthy of discipline, even though the specific conduct is not mentioned in this code.
6. We understand the school's authority to be an extension and delegation of the parents' authority while children are under our care, and we will deal with children on this basis. At the same time, attending GHCA is a privilege that is extended on the condition that students and parents accept and support our policies, including those in the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Code. Persistent failure to adhere to the standards of the school will result in separation from the school. ***If a parent believes that it is no longer possible to work together with the school in a spirit of unity or is unable to support the decisions of the administration, and all reasonable avenues of communication are exhausted, he/she will be expected to withdraw their children from the school.***

Elementary Discipline (Grades Pre-K – Gr. 6)

Rules are communicated clearly in each grade by the teacher who keeps parents informed as any problems arise. Normal elementary disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to, verbal reprimand, time-out, loss of privilege, loss of recess time, lunch detention, or writing assignment. More serious misbehavior or repeated misbehavior may be dealt with by a school administrator, who may use any of the disciplinary measures listed in the Disciplinary Code including detention, suspension, requested withdrawal, probation, or expulsion.

SECONDARY DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE (Grades 7-12)

General

The Board of Directors has given authority for all behavioral/disciplinary matters to the head of school. The head, in turn, has delegated authority to the assistant head who is authorized to administer discipline on a daily basis. The head holds the final decision on appeal.

The following procedure is intended to provide a general sense of how misbehavior is normally handled, since it is impossible to list every possible infraction and situation that can arise. However, depending on the nature and/or frequency of the offense, *teachers or administrators have the flexibility to alter this sequence as necessary* and to exercise loving discipline in a way that is appropriate for their own unique situations (for example, writing assignments, lunch detention, work detail, office referral, loss of privileges, and ineligibility for field trips or extracurricular activities). Students should understand that school rules are in effect at all school functions, whether on campus or not, and that *all* GHCA employees have authority over all students, regardless of the employee's position or the grade level he/she teaches.

Consequences issued for misbehavior are to be met in a timely manner; therefore, *any and all disciplinary action takes priority over extra-curricular activities. No extra-curricular participation will be allowed during after-school detentions or during in-school or at-home suspensions.*

While GHCA has no direct control over and accepts no responsibility for the behavioral choices GHCA students make when off-campus, we reserve the right to discipline a student for off-campus conduct which negatively impacts the school's Christian testimony.

► **LEVEL 1: Less Serious Offenses**

Demerits are issued to identify and record less serious offenses. An accumulation of demerits will result in detentions being issued (see "Demerit Totals & Consequences," p. 34)

Level 1 Disciplinary Options *(not an exhaustive list)*

1. Speak with the student for purposes of correction and instruction
2. Issue a demerit for the purpose of recording the infraction
3. Notify parent
4. Assign an after-school detention
5. Remove the student from the classroom
6. Assign a special written assignment or work detail

Examples of Less Serious Offenses

1. tardy to class
2. unprepared for class (no books, paper, pen, etc.)
3. disruptive behavior in the classroom, chapel, hallway, field trips, etc.
4. failure to attend a scheduled help class or meeting
5. dress code infraction
6. writing, passing, or reading notes during class
7. eating in non-designated areas of the building
8. gum-chewing
9. inappropriate lunch time behavior
10. improper disposal of paper or trash
11. light horseplay
12. horseplay resulting in damaged school, staff, or student furniture or property
13. unkind and hurtful verbal treatment of other students
14. "borderline" disrespect to teachers
15. minor arguing or bickering with a faculty member
16. public display of affection on campus or at school events

► **LEVEL 2: More Serious Offenses**

These infractions usually reflect a defiant and rebellious attitude and/or action.

Level 2 Disciplinary Responses *(not an exhaustive list)*

When an offense is observed, the student will be sent to the Main Office and an administrator may utilize one or more of the following actions:

1. Assignment to a work detail
2. After-school detention
3. Loss of privileges (driving, sports, library access, senior privileges, etc.)
4. Placed on Behavioral Contract of Probation
5. Suspension

Examples of More Serious Offenses *(not an exhaustive list)*

1. malicious throwing of objects
2. any unauthorized use of cellphone during school
3. cutting class or leaving campus without permission
4. destruction, vandalism, or abuse of school property
5. critical or derogatory remarks, disrespect, insolence shown toward those in authority
6. malicious mistreatment, bullying or harassment of other students in person or via cyber-stalking
7. violations of the "Terms of Use" for the library, computer, science, or aerospace labs
8. rebellion against school standards
9. deceiving by means of cheating, lying, stealing, forging signatures
10. plagiarism: literary theft, misrepresentation or falsification
11. swearing, using inappropriate language or obscenities
12. defiant, willful disobedience to those in authority
13. persistent or recurring misconduct
14. inappropriate or dangerous use of vehicle on or off school property
15. participation in inappropriate material or messaging on publicly accessible websites

►LEVEL 3: Most Serious Offenses

Level 3 misconduct represents a serious breach of the Code of Conduct. These infractions are destructive in nature to the offender, to the victim, to the school, and to the reputation of Christ and therefore receive the most serious consequences, up to and including expulsion and reporting to law enforcement officials.

Disciplinary Responses

When an offense is observed, the administration may utilize one or more of the following actions:

1. Meeting with the head of school
2. Suspension from school
3. Placing student on behavioral probation
4. Requested withdrawal from school
5. Expulsion from school
6. Reporting incident(s) to appropriate law enforcement agencies

Examples of Most Serious Offenses

This list is not meant to be all-inclusive:

1. any criminal offense
2. physical assault on another student, fighting
3. sexual, verbal, or physical harassment of a school employee, student, volunteer, or parent
4. cyberbullying anywhere or any time
5. theft of school, staff, or student property
6. violent threats or actions toward a school employee, student, or parent
7. mocking/scorning of school principles or individual faith
8. sexual misconduct and possession, distribution, or acquisition of pornography (including sexting)
9. possession, sale, or illegal use of tobacco, alcohol, or any mind-altering substances (see Substance Abuse Policy)
10. possession or use of matches, lighters, weapons, firearms, or fireworks at school or school-related activities
11. arson, false fire alarms, or making bomb threats
12. committing a serious breach of the Student Honor Code either inside or outside the school which mars the testimony of Christ and/or the Academy

MAJOR MISCONDUCT POLICIES

1. Student Antiharassment Policy

General Policy

The policy of Greater Houlton Christian Academy is to provide an academic environment that is free from harassment—whether based on sex (gender), race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, or disability—an environment that is free from all forms of intimidation, exploitation, and harassment (including sexual harassment), where all individuals treat each other with dignity and respect. *The school includes bullying in its definition of harassment.* The school is prepared to take action to prevent and correct any violations of this policy. This policy applies to the actions of administration, teachers, staff, parents, volunteers, and students. Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination or expulsion.

The school does not tolerate harassment of students, nor does it tolerate reprisals against any student who makes a harassment complaint. Administration, teachers, staff, volunteers, and students who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, including expulsion from school or discharge from employment. Any administrative personnel who receive a complaint of harassment and fail to appropriately report it or take corrective action pursuant to this policy are also subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

I. Definitions and Prohibited Acts

1. Sexual harassment. “Sexual harassment” means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, made by someone from or in the work or educational setting, under any of the following conditions:

- a. Submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of an individual’s academic status or progress. This may occur by clearly stated acts or words or by implied acts or words.
- b. Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis of academic decisions affecting the individual.
- c. The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact on the individual’s academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

- d. Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through this school.

2. Unwelcome and Offensive. The fact that a student may not openly object to others' actions or words does not prove that they were unwelcome. Under the law of harassment, or bullying and intimidation, a student does not have to openly object to others' actions or words to prove that the actions or words are unwelcome. Harassment, bullying, or intimidation may occur even if the student originally remains silent or fails to show disapproval. Acts and statements that may not offend some people may be highly offensive to others. Therefore, all employees, volunteers, and students should be sensitive to the feelings of others whether they object or not.

3. Verbal Harassment. Prohibited statements include, but are not necessarily limited to, the use of derogatory descriptions of a student or group of students based on race, color, disability, ethnic or national origin, or age. It is also a violation of this policy to state stereotypical classifications concerning race, national or ethnic origin, color, age, or disability of a student or group of students, especially if they are repeatedly made. Although some students or individuals may enjoy discriminatory identifications and jokes, the school does not tolerate such on its premises or during working hours.

Examples of prohibited statements include, but are not necessarily limited to, derogatory or vulgar comments regarding a person's gender, sexually vulgar language, remarks about a person's physical anatomy or characteristics, dirty jokes, sexual innuendo, or display of written or graphic materials. Also prohibited are suggestive pictures, magazines, posters, offensive cartoons, and other words or pictures of a suggestive nature. Also prohibited are statements that demean women.

4. Physical Sexual Harassment. Prohibited actions include, but are not necessarily limited to, touching a student in a sexually suggestive way, or touching another so as to invade his or her personal privacy. This includes intentional touching or intentional movements made in order to observe another in a sexual manner. Also prohibited are physical acts such as hitting and pushing, and making physical gestures of a sexual nature. As a general rule, any act or touching of a person that most individuals refrain from doing with a stranger should not be done with another student.

5. Sexual Harasser. A harasser may be a male harassing a female, a female harassing a male, a male harassing a male, or a female harassing a female, just as long as the harassment is sexually based or based on the gender of the student.

6. Race, Color, National or Ethnic Origin, Age, and Disability Harassment. Unwelcome statements, name calling, or other verbal or physical conduct based on a student's race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, or disability is prohibited if and when any of the following occurs:

- a. Submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of an individual's academic status or progress. This may occur by clearly stated acts or words or by implied acts or words.
- b. Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis of academic decisions affecting the individual.
- c. The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact on the individual's academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.
- d. Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through this school.

7. Electronic Harassment. Harassment may occur through a number of mediums or means, including electronic communications. The student antiharassment policy applies to all harassment, including any that occurs by or through any type of electronic communication. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, Internet, email, cell phones (including picture phone or text messaging as well as voice), PDAs or other communication devices, and facsimile (fax) communications of any type. This list of electronic devices is not inclusive, and the policy is intended to cover other types of electronic communication.

8. Physical Harassment. Prohibited actions include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- a. Display of signs, pictures, cartoons, written statements, or other material that denigrates, intimidates, bullies, or otherwise discriminates against any student based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, or disability.
- b. General harassment, pushing, shoving, or other intentional acts perpetrated in whole or in part because of the student's race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, or disability.

9. Definition of Bullying or Intimidation. "Bullying or intimidation" means any written, oral, or physical act or gesture that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of harming a student or damaging his or her property or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or

her property, or that has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying includes a gesture or an act, whether written, oral, or physical, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by a characteristic such as sex (gender), race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, or disability.

10. Examples of Harassment, Bullying, or Intimidation. Unwelcome conduct of this type can include a wide range of verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual or other nature. Among the types of conduct that would violate this policy are the following:

- a. Unwanted sexual advances or propositions.
- b. Offering academic benefits in exchange for sexual favors.
- c. Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances.
- d. Visual conduct such as leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, or posters.
- e. Verbal conduct such as making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, and jokes about a student's race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, or disability.
- f. Verbal abuse of a sexual or other nature; graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, or disability; sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations.
- g. Physical conduct such as touching, assaulting, impeding, or blocking movements.
- h. Any conduct that has the effect of insulting or demeaning a student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or that is severe, persistent, or pervasive so that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

II. Application of Antiharassment Policy

The student antiharassment policy applies to school hours; to any school-sponsored event or activity, including during school-arranged transportation of any type to or from an event or activity, and whether the activity or event occurs on or off the school campus; while on school property or at school-leased facilities; or at any other time when the event or activity has any school recognition. Additionally, as a Christian school, the school has the right to expect and does expect that students and any employee of the school will conduct themselves in a Christlike manner and/or as a Christian role model. Conduct violating these biblical standards—whether occurring at school or during school-sponsored events, activities, or functions or not, or on campus or not—is subject to appropriate action by the school.

III. Prohibited Actions

1. Employee-Student Harassment, Bullying, or Intimidation. Employee-student harassment, bullying, or intimidation of any type is prohibited.

2. Student-Student Harassment, Bullying, or Intimidation. Student-student harassment, bullying, or intimidation of any type is prohibited.

IV. What to Do If You Experience or Observe Harassment, Bullying, or Intimidation

Students who feel that they have been subjected to conduct of a harassing, bullying, or intimidating nature are encouraged to promptly report the matter to one of the school officials designated below.

Students who observe conduct of a harassing, bullying, or intimidating nature are also encouraged to report the matter promptly to a teacher or school administrator. All complaints will be promptly investigated.

V. Confidentiality

Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the privacy of the parties involved in any complaint. However, the school reserves the right to investigate fully every complaint and to notify a student's parent/guardian and appropriate government officials as the circumstances warrant.

VI. Protection Against Retaliation

It is against the school's policy to discriminate or retaliate against any person, including any student, who has filed a complaint involving harassment, bullying, or intimidation or who has testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in any investigation, formal proceeding, or hearing concerning harassment, bullying, or intimidation. However, if in the course of an investigation or subsequently the school learns that a student or others have made a complaint that was not in good faith or it was known to be false at the time of the complaint, the school reserves the right to take appropriate action. Making false complaints or complaints not made in good faith can jeopardize someone's reputation.

VII. Procedure for Investigation of a Complaint and Taking Corrective Action

When a school employee receives a complaint, he or she shall immediately inform the head of school. The head of school will direct an investigation. If the investigation confirms the allegations, prompt corrective actions shall be taken. The individual who suffered the harassing, bullying, or intimidating conduct shall be informed of the corrective action taken. In addition, any employee or student found to be responsible for harassment, bullying, or intimidation in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion or termination. The severity of the disciplinary action will be based on the circumstances of the infraction.

2. Cheating

The Academy operates on an honor system in which honesty and integrity are at the core. Cheating is a major violation of the Honor Code and is disciplined accordingly. The following examples are considered as cheating:

1. Giving or receiving help on tests (including the use of cell phones, calculators, or any unauthorized help), copying homework, allowing someone else to copy one's own work;
2. Using prepared materials during a test or quiz, e.g., notes, formula lists, notes written on skin or clothing, etc.;
3. Sharing information from tests or quizzes with others;
4. Plagiarizing or copying work and claiming it as the student's own original work.

Any student violating this policy will receive a zero on the assignment and/or be suspended at the discretion of the administration. Repeat offenses will result in further disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

3. Hazing

Hazing refers to any activity expected of someone joining a group that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. These activities may include, but are not limited to, the following: use of alcohol; paddling; creation of excessive fatigue; physical and psychological shocks; quests, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, wearing of public apparel which is conspicuous and not normally in good taste; engaging in public stunts and buffoonery; morally degrading or humiliating games and activities, etc. Hazing activities occurring on or off school property by any student, staff member, group or organization affiliated with the school is strictly prohibited. Any student involved in hazing will be subject to the Disciplinary Code and potentially reported to law enforcement officials.

4. Break-In or Vandalism

It is the responsibility of each student to respect and care for the building and equipment the Lord has provided for us at GHCA. Vandalism to school property will not be tolerated. This includes littering, writing on desks, defacing the school building, damaging school equipment, and abusing textbooks or library books. Students vandalizing school property will be disciplined according to the Disciplinary Code, will be required to make restitution for the damaged items, and may be reported to law enforcement officials. Any student involved in a break-in will be subject to the Disciplinary Code and potentially reported to law enforcement officials.

5. Possession of Weapons

Any students bringing weapons (firearms, blades, etc.) or explosives, fireworks, or any other dangerous items or substances to school or school activities will be subject to the Disciplinary Code and will be reported to law enforcement as deemed appropriate by an administrator.

6. Sexual Activity and Pornography

As a distinctly Christian ministry, GHCA requires its employees and students to adhere to traditional biblical principles of morality including abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage (I Cor. 6:9-20; Eph. 5:3-5; I Thess. 4:3-8; I Tim. 4:12; II Tim. 2:19-22, etc.). Students shall not engage in, advocate, or promote sexually immoral behavior (for example, premarital sexual relations, homosexuality/bisexuality, use/distribution of pornography, etc.) whether on or off campus. GHCA students must be unmarried and living with their parent/guardian. GHCA asserts its own right and responsibility to deal with particular moral issues that affect the reputation, atmosphere, and standard of the school. ***It is the policy of GHCA that any known actual immoral sexual activity (as described above) or promotion of it by students, regardless of time or location or medium, will be investigated by the administration and be subject to severe disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.***

7. Pregnancy and Parenthood

Consistent with GHCA's commitment to traditional biblical morality and the need to nurture a deep reverence and gratitude for God's loving and gracious gift of human life, the Academy will respond as graciously and redemptively as possible when a student becomes pregnant or causes a pregnancy. Therefore, if a student becomes pregnant or becomes a parent while enrolled at GHCA, he/she is required to share that information with the administration in order that

counseling and the ministry of repentance, forgiveness, reassurance, love, and support may be given to the student and his or her family.

Because the situation may be disruptive to the educational process not only for the immediate student(s) involved but also the entire school community, including younger children, the continued enrollment of the pregnant student and/or the student parent shall be reviewed on an individual basis by the administration in consultation with the student's parents. If a student's response is one of genuine repentance and acknowledgement of wrongdoing, then our anticipation would be that the student will be provided the opportunity to complete coursework (via home-bound instruction) for at least the current term if not the entire school year. Possible consequences include:

1. suspension
2. exclusion from regular school attendance and regular school activity participation (homebound education)
3. request that the student be withdrawn from the school
4. expulsion from the school.

If the administration determines homebound coursework to be warranted under the circumstances, continued enrollment at GHCA will be subject to the following conditions:

1. Abortion is not an option to be considered in dealing with the pregnancy.
2. Parents and students must agree to ongoing counseling with their minister and with another counseling program that is approved by the administration.
3. The student must attend and complete parenting classes with Pregnancy Care Center of Aroostook or another Christian counseling program that is approved by the administration.
4. Academic standards of the school must be maintained.
5. The student must forfeit any student leadership positions and will not be allowed to participate in student activities, until permitted by the administration pursuant to the transition plan.
6. The student's family will continue to pay tuition and may be subject to additional fees that will be assessed to compensate for the additional time and resources that may be needed to provide and monitor meaningful homebound coursework. These fees will be discussed with the family in connection with the development of the transition plan.

Failure to follow the final decisions of the administration may jeopardize continued enrollment at GHCA. Children of student parents are not permitted to be on the campus during the regular school day but are welcome at other activities.

8. Substance Abuse: Tobacco, Alcohol, Drugs

1. Students of GHCA are examples of Christ to the world and representatives of this school to the community. Therefore, the use, procurement, or provision by GHCA students of any mind-altering substances such as drugs or alcohol is strictly forbidden. This policy extends as well to any and all use of tobacco by students as well. The only exceptions to this policy are for the use of prescribed medications which are being taken in accordance with that prescription and for parent-approved substance use in the home, and for the use of wine for sacramental purposes.
2. Prohibited substances include all of those which are defined in 17-A M.R.S.A. s1101 and 1102 and those specifically listed below:
 - a. Narcotic Drugs (as defined in 17-A M.R.S.A. s1101, paragraph 6)
 - b. Alcohol
 - c. Marijuana (as defined in 17-A M.R.S.A. s1101, paragraph 1)
 - d. Potent medicinal substances (as defined in 22 M.R.S.A. s1102)
 - e. Hallucinogenic drugs (as defined in 17-A M.R.S.A. s1102)
 - f. Volatile materials such glue, paints and aerosols when possessed for the purpose of inhalation
 - g. Steroids and look-alike drugs
 - h. Tobacco products
 - i. Over-the-counter stimulants, depressants or other mood-altering substances
 - j. Drug paraphernalia (materials associated with carrying, storage, or use of a prohibited substance, e.g., marijuana pipes, bongs, etc.) and substance residue.
3. GHCA also enforces an "in the presence" policy: if a student shows up at a function at which drugs and/or alcohol are being used, he/she must leave immediately. Failure to do so will subject the student to disciplinary action, including suspension.
4. The school will report to law enforcement authorities any adults (including parents or other family members) who violate state law by providing or knowingly facilitating student access to alcoholic beverages or other prohibited substances as listed above. Violation of this policy may result in the termination of the relationship between that family and the Academy in order to protect other students.
5. Any failure to adhere to this policy will subject the student to immediate review and possible severe disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion and having his/her name reported to law enforcement.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS & CONSEQUENCES

In addition to the options listed below, sanctions may include counseling, community and/or school service, and restitution, solely at the discretion of the administration.

1. Verbal Warning/Reprimand

A verbal warning may be given the first time for minor offenses such as talking without permission, inattention, etc.

2. Demerits

A demerit may be given for minor offenses such as talking without permission, chewing gum, etc.

Demerit Totals & Consequences

Any 3 demerits in one week	= after-school detention
3 demerits in one quarter for same offence	= after-school detention
5 in one quarter	= after-school detention
10 in one quarter	= after-school detention
15 in one quarter	= in-house suspension
3 <i>detentions</i> in one quarter	= in-house suspension

The recording of demerits and detentions begins new with each grading period; the number of demerits is indicated at each grading period.

3. After-School Detention

1. Detention is held after school from 2:50-3:50 PM. Students report to the classroom of the issuing teacher or the office of the issuing administrator. Students reporting late to detention will receive additional detention time.
2. Parents are notified in writing (*Misconduct Notice*) at least one day prior to the day to be served. ***Detention must be served on the day scheduled and will not be postponed due to inconvenience, transportation problems, extracurricular activities (such as games and practices), jobs, etc.*** It may be postponed for emergencies, genuine hardship, or medical appointments at the discretion of the administration.
3. Students may be given writing assignments or work detail at the teacher's discretion during the time of the detention and will be unable to do homework unless the detention is for not doing work.
4. Failure to return the signed *Misconduct Notice* or to serve the assigned time will result in additional detention.

4. Community Service

Community service may be assigned to be performed on campus, either after school, on a Saturday, or at a community service project approved by the administration.

5. In-School Suspension

Depending on the nature and/or frequency of an offense, a student may be assigned suspension to be served in the school office for one to five days at the administration's discretion. Teachers will provide written work to be accomplished during the suspension; or in the case of vandalism, the student may be assigned to a work detail. A suspended student may not appear at any school-sponsored activity at or away from campus (including games and practices) until the day after the suspension is served.

6. At-Home Suspension

This step is taken when there is a serious disciplinary infraction that jeopardizes the student's continued enrollment at GHCA. Suspension is for one to five days at the administration's discretion. The student is responsible to make up all work and tests missed during this period within the normal framework of time allowed for absences. A suspended student may not appear on school property or at any school-sponsored activity at or away from campus (including games and practices) while suspended until the day after the suspension is served. A parent/administrator conference is required before the student can be reinstated at school. Participation in extracurricular activities such as Student Council, National Honor Society, and interscholastic sports may be jeopardized as well.

7. Behavioral Probation

A student may be placed on disciplinary probation by the administration for a specified period. Probation gives a student an opportunity to correct unacceptable behavior. This will normally follow other disciplinary action outlined in the *Disciplinary Code* but may be established for a new student as a result of questionable references or disciplinary issues at the previous school. Parents and student will be asked to sign a contract; failure to meet contract conditions may result in requested withdrawal or expulsion. Reasons for being placed on disciplinary probation include, but are not limited to

- a. continued deliberate disobedience;
- b. unchanged rebellious spirit;
- c. continued negative attitude;
- d. negative influence on other students;

- e. serious breach of conduct inside or outside of the school which has an adverse effect on the reputation, atmosphere, and standards of the school;
- f. failure of the parents to comply with the disciplinary procedures of the school.

A student may be denied admission for the following year when in the opinion of the administration the home does not fully support the ideals, goals, and discipline of the school and/or the student demonstrates an uncooperative or negative attitude toward the school.

8. Withdrawal

Because we believe the home and school must be in harmony in matters of discipline and standards, parents will be asked to withdraw their child if in the opinion of the administration the parents or student do not fully support the ideals, goals, and discipline of the school or the student demonstrates an uncooperative or negative attitude toward the school and its policies. In such cases the permanent record will record only the date of withdrawal and will not indicate the reason, unless the parent places a statement in the record. Withdrawal should not be confused with expulsion. If a parent refuses to withdraw a student at the head of school's request, however, the head of school will petition the Board of Directors for the expulsion of the student. In the case of expulsion the permanent record will state the reason(s).

9. Expulsion

Expulsion is reserved for the most serious violations of school policies (including those listed under At-Home Suspension) and/or repeated offenses which lesser disciplinary measures have not succeeded in preventing. In such cases the student will be suspended at home until the Board of Directors can hear the head of school's recommendation of expulsion and make a decision. Parents will be notified of the board's decision. Any student convicted of a criminal offense may be expelled from Greater Houlton Christian Academy.

End of Year Disciplinary Review

At the end of each school year, the administration reviews the disciplinary record of all students. The administration may, at its sole discretion, place students with unacceptable disciplinary or academic records on academic or behavioral probation or deny them the option to re-enroll.

Restoration & Reinstatement

Whenever a student is withdrawn or expelled, there is the possibility of restoration and reinstatement in the future if, at the sole discretion of the administration, 1) the student has demonstrated sincere repentance, 2) there is sufficient reason to believe the student will remain in full compliance with the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Code, and 3) the return of the former student will not be disruptive to the school community or cause anxiety for other students.

Disciplinary Code Scope

The Disciplinary Code applies to students while they are on campus or at a school-related function or activity. While student behavior outside of school falls under parental responsibility, behavior that impairs the testimony of the school cannot be ignored. GHCA students are expected to avoid illegal and/or immoral activity at all times. *Any serious breach of conduct inside or outside of school which adversely affects the testimony of Christ and the school may result in disciplinary action by the administration. While GHCA has no direct control over and accepts no responsibility for the behavioral choices GHCA students make when off-campus, we reserve the right to discipline a student for off-campus conduct which negatively impacts the school's Christian testimony.*

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

We strive at GHCA to minimize the possibilities of conflict by setting reasonable, clear guidelines and expectations of administration, staff, students, and parents. If, regrettably, conflict does arise, we believe we have an invaluable opportunity to model for students the biblical model for dealing with differences.

This model is based on the teaching of Christ Himself in Matthew 18:15-17 in which He affirms that if someone has a grievance with another, he/she is to refrain from discussing the grievance with anyone not immediately involved in the process: "Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone." When questions or disagreements arise, it is the responsibility of the student, parent, or GHCA employee involved to discuss the concern first with the offending party—not with other students, parents, employees, or board members.

If the matter is not resolved at this level, then the offended party should discuss the problem with the appropriate administrator with the employee present. If the issue is with the head of school, then the discussion would be with the school board chairman with the head of school present. If the matter is not resolved at this level, the final step is to bring the grievance to the school board, whose decision in the matter is final.

The ultimate concern in any conflict must be the glory of God and the effect on our students and unbelievers. The world (including our children) must be able to see it is possible to walk in love toward one another (John 13:34-35) even

if our differences are so great we decide we must part company. It is perhaps for these reasons that the Apostle Paul teaches us that unbelievers should never be part of the mediation process (I Cor. 6:1-10).

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

General Guidelines

GHCA sponsors a number of activities outside the classroom for student, community, and school enrichment. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in activities which interest them. We are grateful to the many adults whose sacrifice of time makes extracurricular organizations and activities possible. Some general guidelines for student activities and participation include

1. All extracurricular activities must be approved in advance by the administration and placed on the school calendar in the Main Office; once approved they are posted on the school's online calendar.
2. Disruption of classes is to be kept to a minimum; academics take priority.
3. School rules and policies are always in effect during student activities, whether on campus or away.
4. Students involved in extracurricular activities should not arrive more than ten minutes prior to the activity nor remain more than ten minutes after the activity without the advisor's/coach's permission.
5. If an activity requires a student to miss class(es), it is the student's responsibility to talk with the teacher of any class that will be missed to get assignments. If a scheduled test will be missed, the student should see the teacher before class to schedule a time to take the test.
6. All students involved in extracurricular activities of any kind should understand that participation/membership is a privilege that may be revoked for any length of time by the advisor, coach, or administrator as part of disciplinary action.

Eligibility Criteria

Our eligibility policy has been developed to help ensure that academic achievement does not suffer as a result of involvement in extracurricular activities and to comply with the Maine Principals Association's (MPA) requirement. Eligibility for all extracurricular activities will be guided by certain criteria pertaining to academic achievement, class conduct, and effort/attitude. It is important that students and parents understand that the purpose of these guidelines is remedial, not disciplinary.

Grades are checked weekly by the administration to determine eligibility status for all extracurricular activities. For fall sports, the first eligibility check is made following the first two weeks of attendance at the beginning of the school year. The MPA requires that a student must be passing four (4) major subjects.

GHCA also requires that any student whose grade point average (GPA) falls below 76% be placed on a "watch list" (provided to the administration and athletic director) and be encouraged to seek assistance from the appropriate teacher or tutor. If a student's GPA for four major subjects falls below 70%, he or she will be considered ineligible for participation in all extracurricular activities (athletic or non-athletic) until the GPA is raised to at least 70%. At that point the student becomes eligible again. Our goal is to help and encourage students to work up to their highest potential, and every effort will be made to achieve that goal through faculty mentoring and parental involvement.

Extracurricular Activity & Discipline

Participation in any extracurricular activity is a privilege that can be suspended or revoked by the administration at its sole discretion at any time as part of a disciplinary action. Students should understand that any misbehavior, whether related to an extracurricular function or not, may affect their athletic involvement. A student serving suspension will not be allowed to attend or participate in practices or games on the day(s) of the suspension. Coaches have the right to curtail or suspend playing time in response to student attitude and/or behavior. Continued attitude and/or behavior problems may lead to permanent removal from the team by the coach or by the administration at its sole discretion.

Field Trips

Class field trips are a valuable part of the educational experience, giving students opportunities to actually visit and explore some of the things they have been studying. Some field trips are primarily cultural enrichment activities intended to increase student appreciation for the fine arts.

All field trips are first approved by the administration as part of the curriculum. Information about the trip will be sent home in advance by the teacher or advisor. This will include itinerary, dates, times, cost, expectations, things to bring, and medical release statement. All trips require a signed permission slip from the parents. Students without a signed permission slip will not be able to go on a field trip.

We encourage parents to participate if possible as drivers or chaperones. In order for us to provide the fullest level of supervision of our students possible, we ask that drivers and chaperones not bring any other children. Please make your interest known to the teacher.

High School Fall Retreat

Each fall high school students enjoy a three-day, two-night retreat at Living Waters Bible Conference in Weston where fun social activities are combined with worship and Bible study in order to help students build right relationships with God and each other.

Student Council

Each year secondary students elect class officers; high school students also elect officers for the Student Council, which seeks to build a sense of community among students and provide opportunities for student leadership in the school. Besides sponsoring a number of activities throughout the year, the Student Council provides student input to the school administration.

National Honor Society

GHCA sponsors a chapter of the National Honor Society, which is duly chartered and affiliated with the national organization. It is open to any student in grades 10-12 who meets the eligibility requirements in four areas of evaluation: scholarship (must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher), leadership, service, and character. Standards for selection are established by the national office of NHS and have been revised to meet our local chapter needs. Students are selected to be members by the Faculty Council which bestows this honor upon qualified students on behalf of our school faculty each spring. *Consideration for membership in the NHS is a privilege, not a right; merely achieving the minimum GPA does not automatically result in an invitation to be a member.*

Students who meet eligibility criteria as listed in the chapter bylaws (available from the Main Office and the GHCA website) are invited to complete the Student Activity Information Form that provides the Faculty Council with information regarding the candidate's leadership and service. A history of leadership experiences and participation in school or community service is also required.

To evaluate a candidate's character, the student's school disciplinary records are reviewed, and faculty are solicited for input regarding their professional reflections on a candidate's service activities, character, and leadership. This information is reviewed by the Faculty Council along with the Student Activity Information Form to determine membership. A majority vote of the Council is necessary for selection. Candidates are notified regarding selection or nonselection according to a predetermined schedule.

Following notification, a formal induction ceremony is held to recognize all the newly selected members. Once inducted, new members are required to maintain the same level of performance (or better) in all four criteria that led to their selection. This obligation includes regular attendance at chapter meetings held quarterly during the school year, and participation in the chapter service projects conducted twice each year. Students or parents who have questions regarding the selection process or membership obligations can contact the chapter advisor through the Main Office.

Senior Privileges

Seniors are allowed certain privileges with the goal of improving student morale and also of giving these young adults some additional privileges commensurate with their higher level of maturity and self-discipline. It is important that seniors remember that these are *privileges* (not *rights*) which may be forfeited any time at the discretion of the administration if, in its opinion, a student shows a lack of maturity or self-control.

Student Parties

To prevent embarrassment of students at school, parents are asked not to distribute party invitations in school unless the entire class or all the students of the same gender are being invited. Otherwise, parents should mail the invitations or call by phone.

SPORTS PROGRAM

General

As a member of the Maine Principals Association (MPA) and the Aroostook League, we offer secondary students an active interscholastic sports program, the goal of which is to teach Christian character—such as self-discipline, commitment, and fairness—as well as to provide a vehicle for interaction and testimony to other students and provide a wholesome release for energy. Current sports offerings include cross-country, intramural soccer, basketball, baseball, softball, and tournament volleyball. In addition, GHCA has a cooperative agreement with Hodgdon High School to allow

individual students to compete in varsity soccer and golf. All GHCA interscholastic athletic activities are governed by the rules and regulations established by the MPA. Following are some athletics policies (in addition to the eligibility policy and other guidelines listed in “Student Activities”) that all students are expected to follow.

Middle School Program

The middle school level is foundational and emphasizes basic rules and skills, sportsmanship, and teamwork. Playing time will be as equal as possible but will also reflect skill, attitude, and work ethic. Cuts are rarely made but may be necessary due to resource constraints. Students in grades 5-8 may compete at this level. Due to our school size, eighth grade athletes are eligible to play in high school level sports. It is the school’s policy that priority is first given to the middle school programs—eighth graders are not allowed to practice with varsity teams until their season is complete but may travel and play with the varsity teams for games. Eighth grade athletes are expected to play all middle school games. At the conclusion of the middle school program, eighth graders may begin practicing with varsity teams. The school recognizes that it is a great opportunity for eighth graders to be involved with varsity teams and encourages such involvement. However, it is our belief that such involvement is mainly for developmental purposes, not athletic performance.

Varsity Program

At the varsity level, teams strive to be as competitive as possible within our philosophy. Coach expectations are higher at this level. There is a greater time commitment (daily) and the possibility of an extended season due to play-offs and tournaments. Playing time will vary depending entirely on skill, attitude, and work ethic. Any cuts made at the varsity levels are based on skill, attitude, and work ethic and may also be necessary due to resource constraints.

Attendance Requirement

Attendance is mandatory at all practices and games. Exceptions may be granted for excused absences at the coach's discretion. The athlete should notify the coach ahead of time when possible. Students absent or not arriving at school by noon may not practice or play games that day unless approval is granted by the head of school and athletic director. It is each student's responsibility to make arrangements with the teacher for any work missed due to early departures.

Physicals

A current physical examination is required by Maine state law before students can participate in interscholastic sports. A physical is current for a period of one year.

Injuries

Any injuries during practices or games must be reported to the coach immediately. An accident report will need to be filed in the nurse's office as soon as possible after the accident injury.

Christian Testimony

An athlete's actions are a reflection of the standards and values of GHCA. Therefore, all athletes are expected to exhibit Christ-honoring behavior and attitudes both on and off the field/court. This includes being respectful and obedient and demonstrating good sportsmanship.

Uniforms & Game Day Attire

Athletes are responsible to treat their uniforms with care and to keep them clean. Uniforms may be worn only for games and athletic functions as required by the coach or athletic director. Students are expected to return uniforms when requested and are responsible for the cost of lost or damaged uniforms. Failure to return or pay for uniforms may result in ineligibility to play on other teams.

Coaches have the prerogative to require athletes to wear chapel attire to school on game days. Students should travel to and from away games in this attire unless instructed otherwise by the coach or athletic director.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents should understand that our coaches receive minimal compensation for their services and deserve the full support of parents by such actions as supporting the coach's game decisions, volunteering to drive, picking up students after practices on time, serving at the gate or concessions stand, and supporting fund-raising efforts.

If a parent is dissatisfied with some aspect of a program (e.g., coaching philosophy, their student’s playing time, etc.), the parent should first encourage their student athlete to contact the coach directly to discuss the situation. Parents may also contact the athletic director who will determine if a meeting with the coach is warranted. If the athletic director determines that a meeting is justified, the athletic director will contact the coach to set up a time to discuss the concern(s) privately with the parent. The athletic director will also attend this meeting.

Issues related to the overall administration of the sports programs should be forwarded to the athletic director or the head of school. Discussion of any matter of dissatisfaction immediately following the completion of an athletic contest is strongly discouraged. Parents and coaches are expected to handle conflict in a way that models a genuinely Christian approach that honors the Lord.

Pick-Up of Students

Students are expected to arrive at an athletic event or practice at the time determined by the coach/athletic director and should not be dropped off earlier. Students are expected to be picked up promptly after all practices and athletic events. Exceptions to this policy may be made on a case by case basis by the coach or athletic director. Students arriving while another practice is occurring must respect the rules of a closed practice and will not be present or interfere with the other practice.

Sportsmanship

All our school family—parents, staff, and students—are strongly encouraged to come and cheer for our teams in competition. Spectators are asked to remember, however, that good sportsmanship on the part of fans enhances our testimony as a Christian school, while poor sportsmanship sets a negative example for our children and harms our witness to the community. Failure to conduct oneself in a Christ-honoring way may result in the offender being asked to leave the event.

Awards

Awards nights are held at the end of the winter and spring seasons to celebrate athletic accomplishments. Certificates, letters, pins, and trophies are awarded based on criteria established by the athletic staff and administration. Student athletes are required to attend all such functions.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Immunizations

GHCA must have an immunization record for each new entrant showing that immunization requirements have been met before a student may attend school. A detailed list of all immunizations and when they are due can be obtained from the school office.

Medications at School

Students are allowed to carry and self-administer emergency medications, specifically asthma inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors under the following conditions:

1. The student must have prior written approval from his/her health care provider indicating that the student has the knowledge and skills to possess and use the medication safely.
2. His/her parent must also give written approval.
3. Student must demonstrate to the school nurse the appropriate technique for safe and effective use of the medications.

Due to our concern for students' safety and because of state law, students can neither carry nor self-administer any medication (including over-the-counter medication) while in school. All medications are to be brought to the Main Office for administration. If your child is required to receive any medication during school hours, the following is required:

1. A written parental request for administration of the medication.
2. A written order from the doctor giving the name of the medication, dosage, and duration of the order.
3. The medication must be in the original container or pharmacy bottle.

Emergency Information Form

It is imperative that each family provide an up-to-date Emergency Information Form to the school and keep the school current on any changes. This form is used to contact the proper people in case of a medical emergency.

Medical Emergency Procedure

In cases of minor illness or injury, the school nurse or office personnel will assist students. Parents will be notified of the situation and its seriousness as soon as possible. With more serious conditions or injuries, the family will be contacted as soon as possible and parents requested to pick up their child. In cases where no contact can be made, school personnel may have to make the decision to call an ambulance. The family health care provider will also be notified of the situation.

Medical Appointments During School Hours

If it is absolutely necessary for a child to leave early for a medical appointment, a written note signed by the child's parent or guardian must be sent in advance. When a student leaves, he/she is to be signed out in the Main Office and signed back in upon returning to school. No student will be released to anyone other than those authorized in writing by the parent.

Communicable and Infectious Disease Policy

1. Illness at Home

In order to protect students from the possible spread of illness, ***please keep your child home if the following symptoms are present:*** fever, vomiting, diarrhea, red or inflamed eyes, skin rash, headache or pain. Please do not send your child to school when he/she is ill. ***Any student with a temperature of 100°F or higher or who has had any of the above symptoms in the previous 24 hours should not attend school.***

2. Illness at School

Students who develop the following symptoms will be isolated from the rest of the students and parents will be notified to take their child home: Diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat with fever, persistent earache with fever, rash of unknown etiology, pink eye, temperature of 100°F or higher, impetigo, scabies, ringworm, or head lice. All such conditions will be treated sensitively with as much confidentiality as possible. Please remember to update your emergency contact information as necessary during the school year to ensure that we can reach you.

3. Return to School

Children may return to school when they are fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication or 24 hours free of symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat, rashes, and red draining eyes.

Lice Policy and Procedure

1. Lice at Home

Head lice is not uncommon in school, especially in the lower grades. Because head lice is highly communicable, anyone can become infested with this condition. You can become alert to this condition in your own children by watching for signs such as severe scratching of the scalp. Children with head lice will have tiny bugs and/or grayish white dandruff-like particles that seem glued to the hair shaft. If you detect this:

- Keep your child at home until treatment is completed and all nits are removed.
- Notify the school so we can alert the homeroom teacher to look for other cases.
- We strongly urge families to follow the Center For Disease Control (CDC) recommendation of over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription lice medications also called pediculicides. Apply the pediculicide according to the instructions on the box. Avoid any shampooing within 2 days of treatment. Retreatment of head lice in the timeframe recommended by the medication (typically 7-10 days) is strongly advised since no treatment can kill all eggs. Manual removal of all nits is also necessary. *Avoid any shampooing or conditioning within 2 days of treatment.*
- Alternative home remedies may be used in conjunction with a pediculicide, but not within 2 days of using treatment. Not following these instructions risks reinfestation and exposing other children and staff.
- If you choose not to use OTC or prescription medication, then the office must be notified. More frequent and joint rechecks for live lice and nits will be arranged involving both staff and family together.

2. Lice at School

Random class inspections are conducted during the year for head lice. If lice are discovered on a student at school, we will follow this procedure:

- The infected student will be sent home with a treatment instruction packet.
- The student's personal belongings (backpack, coat, books, etc.) will be brought to the office.
- The student's classmates and siblings will be checked for lice and nits by a school staff member.
- The administration will notify other parents as it deems necessary that lice have been discovered, along with appropriate instructions. This information will be treated sensitively with as much confidentiality as possible.

3. Return to School

GHCA has a No-Nit Policy, meaning that all nits must be removed prior to the student returning to school. Students must be checked by school staff prior to returning to the classroom. If nits are discovered, the student will be sent home for further treatment; school staff does not remove nits. Students will not be admitted to the classroom if nits are present. Removing all nits from the child's head has proven very effective in preventing the spread or re-infestation of the condition. Parents should remember that while head lice is certainly an inconvenience, it has nothing to do with health or housekeeping practices.

Reporting Child Abuse

In accordance with state law and school policy, school staff is obligated under penalty of fine and jail term to report the reasonable suspicion of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or child neglect. The school will not contact parents in advance of making a report to authorities, which would be the procedure followed in most other legal matters.

Suicide Crisis Response Policy

All staff members have the responsibility to help keep students safe and to intervene when students exhibit any warning signs of suicide. When there is reason to believe that a student is in immediate danger, the administration will notify the police so that the student can receive appropriate outside assessment and treatment. If the student's parents and legal guardians cannot be reached, this step can be taken without their permission.

Fire Drills

GHCA is required to hold two fire drills during the first two weeks of school and to hold an additional eight fire drills during the year. Students are instructed how to exit the building properly. We take student safety seriously and expect students to leave the building quickly and quietly.

Lockdown Procedure

Our lockdown procedure, developed in consultation with the State Police and the Houlton Police Department, would be used if a serious threat to student and staff safety existed within our building. During a lockdown, students and adults are cleared immediately by staff from the halls and restrooms and locked in the nearest available room. All doors are locked, door windows are covered, and all students and adults remain quiet in their classrooms and offices. No one is permitted to leave, and no one, including parents, is allowed on campus. The use of cell phones is not permitted during lockdown due to the need for total silence.

Lockout Procedure

The lockout procedure is most commonly used when heightened vigilance is required due to an incident occurring outside the school building, on or off school property. A lockout allows the school to continue with the normal school day, but curtails outside activity and allows no unauthorized personnel in the building. Parents are able to pick up their children during a lockout.

Crisis Procedure

The following guidelines and procedures will be followed at GHCA in the event of a crisis or 911-type event:

1. Administrators will notify teachers/staff of an event as soon as possible on a room-to-room basis.
2. Teachers will share only the information they believe appropriate for their age group and lead their individual classes in prayer.
3. Teachers will permit students to call parents (in the Main Office or on cell phones) if the student requests. If a younger student requests to see another sibling/family member, the teacher will ask the Main Office to locate and send the other student. Teachers will keep a log of all students leaving the room that day indicating time out of the room and reason.
4. We will usually not dismiss school early unless other school districts dismiss early. If we do decide to dismiss early, we will attempt to contact parents. Announcements will be placed with the normal television and radio media and on the school web site: www.ghca.com.
5. Unless there is an early dismissal, parents will be strongly encouraged to keep their children at school in order to maintain as much a sense of calm as possible, but (as always) parents are allowed to pick up their children if they desire, providing we are not in a "lockdown" or "shelter-in-place" situation. "Shelter-in-place" would be used when conditions outside would be more dangerous than staying in place; for example, a hazardous material incident or severe weather situation.
6. An assembly for secondary students will be announced when and if appropriate (normally, after enough information has been received to warrant it).
7. Secondary students may be allowed to watch events on television only with administrative approval. Elementary students will not watch events on television.

Asbestos Policy

The school building at GHCA has been inspected for the presence of Asbestos Containing Building Materials (ACBMs). A written plan for the management has been developed. This plan, noting the type and location of ACBMs, is available for inspection in the Main Office during regular school hours.

Pesticide Policy

In accordance with the State standards for Pesticide Applications and Public Notification (CMR 01-026 Chapter 27), a written plan for the management of pesticide application has been approved. The plan is available for inspection in the Main Office during regular school hours. It is the policy of Greater Houlton Christian Academy to limit the use of any pesticide applications to the least hazardous combination of cultural, physical, biological and/or chemical controls to prevent unacceptable levels of pest activity and damage. When it is determined that a pesticide must be used, the least

hazardous material and method of application will be chosen. Pesticide applications will be timed to minimize their impact. All pesticides will be handled according to state and federal law.

When pesticide applications are scheduled in school buildings and on school grounds, GHCA shall provide notification in accordance with state regulation, including:

- Posting a pest control sign in an appropriate area.
- Providing the pest control information sheet to all individuals working in the school building.
- Providing required notice to all parents and guardians of students who have requested notification of individual applications of pesticides; such request may be made by contacting GHCA at 532-0736.

Where pests pose an immediate threat to the health and safety of students or employees, GHCA may authorize an emergency pesticide application and shall notify by telephone any parent and guardian who has requested such notification.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Arrival

7:30 a.m.	Doors Open - students are to wait in the main hall
7:45 a.m.	Students go directly to homerooms
8:00 a.m.	Classes begin promptly

Dismissal

11:30 a.m.	Half-day Pre-K dismissal
2:25 p.m.	Kindergarten/Pre-K dismissal
2:35 p.m.	Grades 1-6 dismissal
2:40 p.m.	Grades 7-8 dismissal
2:45 p.m.	Grades 9-12 dismissal

Arrival

Students are dropped off at the main entrance and proceed to the locations specified above. When driving into the parking lot, ***please drive slowly and use extreme caution***—children can fly out from between cars without warning—***expect*** them to do this!

Elementary parents often come in with their children and take them to their classrooms. While we love to have regular contact with our parents, we ask parents to remember that teachers are busy preparing for the day and also responsible for supervising all the children in their rooms—we do not want them distracted by having conferences with parents that really should be scheduled at other times.

Dismissal

1. Pre-K and Kindergarten students are picked up at their classrooms by their parents. Grades 1-6 students are brought outside at the main entrance by their teachers where parents or parent-designated drivers may pick them up.
2. When driving into the parking lot, ***please drive slowly and use extreme caution***—children can fly out from between cars without warning—***expect*** them to do this!
3. If the teacher or administrator does not recognize the adult seeking to sign out a child, he/she will ask for identification—please do not be offended! We will not release children from the school to any unknown adult. The Main Office **must** be notified if a parent gives another individual permission to pick up a child.
4. Students are not to be in the building following dismissal unless they are participating in an after-school activity or sport, receiving extra help from a teacher, serving a detention, or helping a staff member.

Sign-In / Sign-Out

Students who arrive in school after 8:00 a.m. must sign in at the Main Office. Students leaving school early before dismissal must sign out at the Main Office. In both instances, a written note signed by the parent is to be presented. Parents bringing their children in or picking them up may sign in or sign out in lieu of a written note.

School Closings & Delays

School closing or delay due to weather conditions may be necessary during the school year. Closings and delays are announced on WAGM –TV8 and on WHOU (100.1 FM) as well as on the home page of our website: www.ghca.com.

Student Drivers

High school drivers need administrator authorization to drive to school and must park only in the areas specified by administrators in the First Baptist Church parking lot. Students must obey all traffic and parking laws and to drive especially safely and courteously when at First Baptist Church and around the school. Students are not permitted to use their vehicles at any time during the school day without permission; this rule applies particularly to lunch time. No other students are to have access to student vehicles during the school day. Student drivers are expected to arrive at school on time. Failure to abide by these guidelines and responsibilities may result in loss of driving privileges for a time.

Closed Campus Policy

In the interest of student safety, GHCA is a closed campus, which means that once a student reports to the school grounds, he/she may not leave school early without written parental permission, and that school-age visitors are not permitted during school hours except with permission from the administration. Students are not allowed to leave the school once they have arrived, even if prior to the start of the school day (e.g., to go to buy coffee, etc., before school starts). We generally do not permit school-age visitors (except prospective students by appointment) due to problems of supervising students unfamiliar with our policies and guidelines, liability issues, and the extra work required for teachers.

Visitors

All visitors, including parents, must check in at the Main Office; no one may enter a classroom without first checking in at the office. We always welcome parents, alumni, pastors, and church youth leaders.

Student Visitors

We generally do not permit school-age visitors (except prospective students by appointment) due to problems of supervising students unfamiliar with our policies and guidelines, liability issues, and the extra work required for teachers. Students wishing to bring a visitor to school must complete a visitor form before permission will be given. A school-age visitor must not miss any classes at his/her school and must visit when his/her school is not in session unless approved by his own principal in a written note. Every visitor must first check in at the office for a visitor ID tag before going to class.

Parent Visits

Parents are always welcome to visit the school at any time but prior arrangements with the teacher and office are requested. Classes cannot be disrupted for personal conferences, so please schedule these ahead of time. Teachers have been asked to respond to parent calls or notes normally within one business day (however, they are not expected to respond during weekends, holidays, vacations, illness, etc).

Communication Between Parents, Teachers, and School

The Main Office sends to parents weekly emails with important dates and announcements. Our website, www.ghca.com, posts important announcements, various kinds of calendars, and staff blogs. Teachers can be reached during the school day by calling the Main Office and leaving a message with the secretary or through email. Teachers will return calls and email as soon as possible, usually within one business day. Students and staff will not be called out of class except for genuine emergencies. All teachers have email addresses as well, which is the most direct way to contact them. All of our teachers and administrators have blogs that are updated on our school website (www.ghca.com) on a regular basis. These blogs are good sources of information for upcoming events and current activities.

Contacting Staff at Home or in Public Places

Parents are asked to call school staff *during school hours only* (8:00am – 3:15pm) when they wish to discuss their children's school experience. Thank you for not contacting staff at home or in public places such as church, stores, etc. to discuss school issues. This allows us to protect your privacy as well as to protect the worship time and family time of our staff.

Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students

The Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students and Student Recruiting Information Act requires that schools make student names, addresses, and telephone numbers available to military recruiters and institutions of higher education. However, students and parents may opt out so that such information is not released without their prior consent. Consent forms restricting recruiter access to this information are made available to students and their guardians through the guidance office. In the event that consent has not been expressly restricted, the recruiter requested information shall be released.

Lockers

Students are assigned lockers at the beginning of school each year. ***Lockers are the property of Greater Houlton Christian Academy and may be searched by an administrator at any time at the administrator's discretion.*** Students are responsible for keeping the lockers clean and using them according to the following guidelines:

1. Students are not to swap lockers with anyone else without the approval of the student's homeroom/classroom teacher.

2. Only poster putty or magnets are to be used to put up pictures inside lockers. Stickers that do not peel off are not allowed. Nothing is allowed on the outside of the locker.
3. Discretion is expected in regard to material displayed in lockers. Items not compatible with our Christian school philosophy and mission are not acceptable. Pictures or stickers considered inappropriate by a faculty member or administrator must be removed by the student upon request.
4. Lockers are to be kept clean and neat at all times. Periodic locker checks and cleanouts may be held during the school year.
5. Failure to maintain a neat and clean locker or failure to maintain the locker by these guidelines may result in a student's losing the privilege of using a locker for a period of time.

Office Phone Use

Students may not use the phones in the school offices unless authorized by the office staff for genuine emergencies or unexpected schedule changes. Students may not use cell phones during the school day without explicit staff permission. We are happy to forward messages to students from parents for transportation changes that have to be made occasionally, but please avoid calling after 2:00 if possible. Written messages may be left for staff, but students and staff will not be called out of class except for genuine emergencies.

Cell Phones

Electronic devices such as cell phones, mp3 players, etc., must not be seen or heard during school hours without permission. Cell phones must be turned off and stored away unless given specific permission by a staff member. Disruptions caused by cell phones will result in the phone being confiscated for the remainder of the day and a demerit given. Repeat offenders will be required to "check in" their cell phone each day at the school office. Cell phones may be used before and after school.

Internet and Local Network

GHCA has Internet access and a local area network (LAN) that students are allowed to use. The use of our network and computer technology on campus is a privilege for a student at GHCA. We do not allow inappropriate content to be received or sent out from our network. Our network has a filter which rejects inappropriate language and content while monitoring student usage. Students who abuse or misuse our network or other area networks as outlined in our Computer Network Terms of Use (distributed and signed annually by grades 7-12; also available on our school website) will receive disciplinary action. In order to protect against someone misappropriating personal information, it is vital that students never give out their passwords and that they log off the system properly when finished using their account.

Lunch

Students bring their own lunches to be eaten in the gym. Seniors usually sell pizza on Fridays. Milk cards may be purchased during the year from the Main Office or the homeroom teacher. Food is limited to designated times and areas. Except for special occasions, no food will be eaten outside of the gym and must be kept in bags or lunch boxes in the student's locker until lunchtime. Microwave use is restricted to grades 7-12 only due to limited time and availability.

Snacks

Elementary classes have a snack time designated by each teacher. Secondary students are encouraged to have a snack at the beginning of third period each day. Water is the only drink permitted in the classroom.

Recess

Children are not permitted to stay in from recess without a written note from the parents. In case of inclement weather, recess is in the gym or classrooms.

Library

GHCA does not have its own library and makes use of the Cary Library located in the next block. Elementary students are taken by their teachers on scheduled visits to the library throughout the year. Secondary students may be given permission to visit the library but must go in groups of no fewer than three students.

Lost & Found

Unclaimed articles will be placed in the lost and found box and will be discarded periodically after students are given opportunity to reclaim their articles.

School Supplies

Student school supply lists are sent home with the last report card, included in the August mailing, and posted on our website under Elementary Downloads and Secondary Downloads.

Assignment Notebooks

Grades 2-8 are required to purchase and use the school assignment notebooks. These are purchased through the homeroom teachers. Use of the assignment notebooks trains students to plan their work and is an effective communication tool with parents. Assignment notebooks are strongly recommended at the high school level but not required.

Volunteers

Volunteering offers a major opportunity for parents to be involved in the lives and education of their children. An additional benefit of volunteering is that when our children see how important something is to us, it will become important to them as well. Pass the Flame (PTF) provides the leadership and organization for GHCA volunteers. Parents are encouraged to complete the Volunteer Form received in the summer mailing packet and return it to the school.

Background checks are required for all volunteers who have regular contact with students (defined as involvement in activities three or more times a year); examples include recess or lunch volunteers, sports volunteers, office volunteers, tutors, and volunteer activity/club advisors etc. Background checks are also required for all volunteers who have potentially unsupervised contact with students regardless of frequency of contact (e.g., chaperones for overnight activities).

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