

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Gateway Charter School. In hopes of working together for a successful school year, we have created this handbook to make everyone aware of our school policies and procedures. Since all students are required to have a parent sign their Agenda Book on a nightly basis, it will be helpful to be able to refer to various sections as needed throughout the year.

**PLEASE SIGN THIS DOCUMENT OF THE HANDBOOK SECTION, TEAR IT OUT, AND RETURN IT TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER.**

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**PARENT HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS K-8  
2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR**

**STUDENT**

I certify that I have received a copy of the Gateway Charter School Parent Handbook and together with my parents we have read and discussed this document.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature- Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**YOUR COPY**

**PARENT**

I am the parent/legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_. I have had the opportunity to read the Gateway Charter School Parent Handbook and have discussed it with my child.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature- Parent/Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Acknowledged by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
School Official

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**ABSENCES:** Anytime a student returns to school after an absence, a note **MUST** be brought from home. If a student is going to be absent, please call the school office before 8:30a.m. Acceptable excuses for students' absences are illness, a death in the family, a school-sponsored event or activity that has been previously approved or religious holiday. If you need to take your child out of school before the end of the school day, come to the school office and sign him/her out and a school employee will call for your child as long as it is at least 30 minutes prior to regular dismissal. An unexcused early dismissal will be posted to the student's record unless a doctor's note is provided for an excuse. Excessive "early dismissal" days will result in the same consequences as "tardy" mornings (see TARDY).

**Students will only be dismissed from the office, not the classroom. Early dismissal after a field trip is not permitted.**

Although the school does not support students missing school for vacation purposes, any student missing school for vacation must notify the administration. Notification must be made in writing at least two weeks in advance so teachers can have the appropriate work ready for each student.

**Students who have 19 or more unexcused absences risk the possibility of retention.**

### **AGENDA BOOK:**

All students are required to purchase an official school agenda book and folder. A parent must sign the Agenda Book daily. This is an important form of communication. Intermediate school students are required to have the Agenda Book with them at all times. Students are required to show their parent's signature to the teacher as soon as they arrive in the morning.

### **ARRIVAL:**

Students need to learn the importance of regular school attendance. In addition, **it is important that students report to school on time.** There is **no supervision before 7:00 am** for students who are not enrolled in the Before School Care program. All students dropped off before 7:30am will be placed in Before School care and charged \$3.00 per day based on the monthly program (see After Care Handbook). Students eating breakfast may arrive at 8:00 am. Instruction begins promptly at 8:30am for elementary school students. Intermediate School (7-8) arrival time will be 7:00 with classes beginning at 7:40 a.m., also see SCHOOL HOURS.

### **ATHLETIC SPORTS PROGRAMS:**

Gateway Charter School offers several athletic sports programs which operate after school for boys and girls. These programs will occur throughout the school year (based upon student interest) are as follows: basketball, cross country, golf, tennis, volleyball, soccer, and track and field.

#### **Student Requirements**

- Students must have at least a c level (70-79) grade per academic/elective class on game day.
- Students can not have been suspended ( in or out ) on game day or day before
- Students can not participate on game day if there is an afterschool detention assigned
- Students can only have three missed practices (both excused and un-excused) to continue to be a member of the team. This excludes prior GICS comments.
- Students must be present in school on game day in order to participate.

To accomplish the above and be eligible to play on game day students must follow the student handbook and dress code.

## **BEFORE & AFTER CARE PROGRAM:**

All students can participate in our After School Program which begins at 2:30 p.m. for the Intermediate School 7-8 and at 3:00 p.m. for the Elementary K-6. Both programs run until 6:00 p.m. (\$9 per day for After Care & \$3 per day for Before Care). The fee is charged bi-weekly and must be paid in advance to the Business Administrator. Contact the Aftercare Director for an application and handbook for more details about the program and the monthly fees. Fees are paid by check or money order only. Parents are allowed to take advantage of After School Program in case of an emergency only and \$15 per child will be assessed for each occurrence.

## **BICYCLES:**

It is a privilege for students to bicycle themselves to and from school. Permission forms are available in the front office. Bike racks are provided on the school grounds. Bikes are expected to be locked at all times while at the bike racks. Bikes are not to be ridden around the school at ANY time. Responsibility for bikes cannot be assumed by the school. Florida law requires all bicycle riders under the age of 16 years of age to WEAR a properly fitted helmet, fastened securely onto the rider's head by a strap. Not wearing a helmet can subject the bike rider to a citation issued by law enforcement.

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION:**

Riding a bus is a privilege. A student who violates these rules will be reported to the school administration, who has authority to suspend that student from bus transportation. A bus suspension **DOES NOT MEAN** that a student is suspended from attending school. When a student is serving a bus suspension, they are still required to attend school.

The following rules are in the interest of student safety and apply to all students when they are being transported on a school bus.

1. The driver is in full charge of the bus, and students **MUST** obey the driver.
2. Students shall keep assigned seats at all times with arms and head inside the bus.
3. Eating, drinking, or chewing gum will not be allowed on the bus.
4. Anything that interferes with safety will not be allowed: such as fighting, profanity, abusive language, etc...
5. Only *assigned* students can ride on the bus.

**If your child is riding a bus and a parent decides to pick up their child, a written note is required. We are unable to accept phone calls as documentation unless it is an emergency. NO TRANSFERS ON BUSES WILL BE ALLOWED.**

## **CAFETERIA PROGRAM:**

<b>Breakfast Regular Price</b>	<b>\$ 1.50</b>
<b>Lunch Regular Price</b>	<b>\$ 2.85 (includes milk)</b>
<b>Milk only</b>	<b>.50</b>

A standard menu will be used. Breakfast and lunch will be served in the cafeteria. Students who bring lunch from home are able to purchase milk. **NO LUNCH CHARGES** can be made since public funds do not allow schools to extend credit. Students are not allowed to bring sodas or caffeine powered drinks to school. **Since we are trying to promote healthy eating habits, we request that fast food not be brought to school when a child forgets his/her lunch.** Store bought items are allowed for special occasions to share with an entire class (i.e. birthday). No homemade items allowed.

**Payment:** All parents are encouraged to pre-pay for lunches on Friday so that money is always available for student purchases. Gateway Charter School does not allow negative balances in a breakfast/lunch account. It is the parents' responsibility to check their student's account balance. To check your balance call 239-768-5048. Checks should be made out to **Gateway Charter School**. It is imperative that you pay for lunch on time. **Free/Reduced Price Lunches:** An application for Free or Reduced Price meals will be sent home with students the first day of school. Parents must apply for this benefit yearly. It should be completed and returned to the office as soon as possible. Notification pertaining to qualification for free/reduced lunch will be sent promptly.

### **CELL PHONES:**

Students are permitted to bring cell phones with them to school in case of emergencies before and after school. Once students arrive at school they will be required to turn the cell phone in to the office to be kept for the day. The phone should be picked up by the student at dismissal. Discipline for cell phones will be in accordance with number 42 in the discipline matrix.

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS:**

It is the responsibility of each student and parent to inform the registrar of a change of address or phone number immediately and provide needed support documentation. Having accurate information facilitates communication between school and home.

### **CHECK RETURN POLICY:**

All checks should be made payable to Gateway Charter School for students in grades K-8. \*Lunch is the only exception for students in grades 7-8 in which checks are made out to Gateway Charter High School. All returned checks will be assessed a \$25 service charge. Restitution on returned checks must be made by either cash or money order.

### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

Communication is absolutely essential for success in any human endeavor. The administration and staff recognize this and will strive to facilitate open and frequent communications with parents at all times. From time to time, surveys will be sent home to ask your opinion on certain issues. Also, an End of the Year Survey will be conducted and your participation is crucial so that the school can determine areas that are working well and areas that need improvement. In addition to the report cards and conferences, work will be sent home in a folder on Fridays. The parent/guardian will be asked to sign and return the folder by the following Monday. Teachers will each maintain a web page for up to date information. Progress Reports will be sent home once during the middle of each grading period. These are also available online on SIS.

GCS has created a Parent **Communication Guide** with specific details about who to contact with issues or concerns and how to reach these individuals. Please retrieve your copy from the front office or on our web page. You should continue to consult with your child's teacher regarding any problems or questions that concern your child. It is the desire of the administrators and the faculty to be of service to both parents and students, and every teacher welcomes a conference with any parent. We do urge, however, that such visits be made by making an appointment with the teacher at a convenient before or after-school hour. Parents are asked not to meet with a teacher before or after class unless a conference has been scheduled.

Formal school communications will be sent home as needed in student folders. Please make sure that you check your child's backpack daily for informal notes from the teacher or from our staff in their folder.

## **CONFERENCES:**

Parent conferences may be scheduled BEFORE 8:00 A.M., AFTER 3:45 P.M., and during a teacher's individual conference period. To schedule a conference, EMAIL the teacher or PHONE the school office.

## **DANCES:**

Throughout the year there will be three school socials: K-2, 3-4, & 5-6.

- ALL school rules apply to these events.
- Student dress MUST be in accordance with GCS school rules and good taste.
- Student conduct MUST be in good taste.
- Chaperones will REMOVE anyone they believe has been misbehaving. Students are subject to all school rules on drinking and smoking.
- Decorations are to be left for enjoyment for the duration of the dance—any student dismantling decorations may be asked to leave immediately.
- Students are NOT to leave the designated area and re-enter.
- If a student leaves before the end of the dance, they are to notify a chaperone and call their parents.
- **Students must be picked up promptly from the school social. Students picked up late may lose the privilege of attending future school events.**
- Students must be in attendance at school ON the day of the school social.
- Students asked to leave an event for displaying inappropriate behavior WILL be subject to school consequences: detention, suspension, or the loss of the privilege of another dance/activity.
- Only GCS students may attend.
- Administration determines eligibility for event attendance.

## **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE:**

Discipline is the process of changing a student's behavior from inappropriate to exemplary. We are never satisfied with merely stopping poor behavior; we desire to teach the student to do what is right. We do not discipline a student out of anger or for the sake of convenience, but with a loving desire to help the student to do what is right. Though few students desire discipline, they often need it in order to reach their full potential.

Gateway Charter School follows the Lee County Code of Conduct. Parents, guardians, and students are expected to become completely familiar with this code. A copy is issued to each student and will always be available on our web page and at the front office.

Prior to suspension or dismissal, the student has the right to a fair hearing.

## **DISMISSAL:**

The Principal may recommend to the Board of Directors (Lee Charter Foundation) to dismiss a student for any offense that requires a Level III Action and in addition for any of the following:

1. Possession, use of or transmission of a weapon including, but not limited to, a gun, knife, razor, explosive, ice pick or club.
2. Possession, use of or transmission of a substance capable of modifying mood or behavior.
3. Using any article as a weapon or in a manner calculated to threaten any person.
4. Committing a serious breach of conduct including, but not limited to, an assault on school personnel or on another pupil, lewd or lascivious act, arson, vandalism or any

- other such act, which disrupts or tends to disrupt the orderly conduct of the school activity.
5. Engaging in less serious but continuing misconduct including, but not limited to, the use of profane, obscene or abusive language, or other acts that are detrimental to the educational function of the school.

### **DRESS CODE:**

A higher standard of dress encourages greater respect for individuals, students and others, and results in a higher standard of behavior. Our dress code guidelines indicate appropriate school dress during normal school days. Gateway Charter School reserves the right to interpret these guidelines and/or make changes during the school year. Students are expected to follow these guidelines. Every student in attendance shall wear a school uniform, purchased through the designated uniform company.

**New students** who start school during the school year are required to purchase one shirt from the school office at the time of registration. This shirt must be worn until all other uniform shirts are ordered and delivered. Khaki or navy blue pants must be worn until the purchased uniforms are delivered. ALL NEW students must show proof of ordering the uniform in order to start school at GCS. NO JEANS/DENIM can be worn at any time.

**Hair & Make-up** Hair must be neat and clean with no "unnatural" colors i.e. fluorescent, bright green, mohawks, spikes. etc. This is left to the administration's discretion. Blonde highlights are allowed. Hair that is distracting to the educational setting will not be allowed. No hats or bandanas may be worn. NO make-up can be worn in school. Students wearing make-up will be asked to remove it in the nurse's office or a parent will be called to assist the student.

**Shoes:** Students must wear closed shoes at all times. No boots of any kind or shoes with metal tips may be worn. No stacked or pumped shoes may be worn. We recommend sneakers or flat dress shoes. NO roller-skate shoes allowed i.e. hee-lies.

**Socks:** All socks MUST be white.

**Shirts:** All shirts must be tucked in and purchased from the uniform company.

**Slacks/Shorts:** All uniform slacks/shorts must be worn at the waist with a belt and be in good repair. (No denim/jeans)

**Belts-** A belt must be worn at all times with any article of clothing that has belt loops. It should be fitted around the waist so that excess length can be tucked in loops and NOT hanging.

**Jewelry:** Boys and girls may not wear body piercing other than earrings in the ear lobe. One earring per ear may be worn. Either a stud or a tiny hoop earring can be worn for safety purposes. (Tiny hoop can be no larger than an adult pinky finger.) Limited jewelry can be worn such as a watch, small bracelet, and thin necklace. Necklace should be worn inside of school uniform NOT on top for safety purposes.

**General:** At no time are students to wear anything offensive, immodest or deemed inappropriate by the faculty. ALL CLOTHING SHOULD BE LABELED WITH NAME.

**Dress down days:** Students will have the opportunity to participate in a dress down day once per month. This fundraising event will support classroom activities. Specific clothing is allowed and will be identified on a flyer.

Dances: Students will have the opportunity to participate in school dances or social functions. Appropriate dress or themed outfits will be required. Detailed information will be sent home in a flyer to describe the requirements of each activity/function.

PE Clothing- Elementary (K-6) students may wear school T-shirts ONLY on PE days. Intermediate School (7-8) will change into REQUIRED school approved PE attire for PE class (uniform)

**Students may ONLY wear GCS school sweaters and sweatshirts if chilly during the school day.**

School sweatshirts and fleece jackets are outerwear only.

**Uniform Consequences:** Students out of uniform will result in a three-tier violation procedure.

- Level I- verbal warning
- Level II- Teacher sends home a uniform violation sheet
- Level III- Student will be sent to the office and parent(s) will be called and required to bring the correct uniform to school before the child can return to class.

**GRADES 7-8: BACKPACKS AND PURSES MUST STAY IN LOCKERS AT ALL TIMES**

### **EARLY DISMISSAL POLICY:**

Any student leaving school prior to dismissal will have an early dismissal logged to his/her record.

- Any time a child has 3 unexcused early dismissals in one month, the parents will be sent a note notifying them.

**Excused early dismissals are given for doctor's appointments with notes from the doctor and extreme emergencies.**

After 5 unexcused early dismissals in a grading period:

- A letter will be sent requiring a conference to explain the seriousness of the matter and discuss the consequences of another early dismissal.

If another early dismissal occurs in the same grading period:

- Parents will have the option of:
  1. Child can return to school if accompanied by the parent for the entire day.
  2. Parent can complete 6 hours of volunteer work at the school within one month.

If option 2 is chosen and not fulfilled option 1 will be required to be completed.

**After 20 early dismissals, a child may not be invited to return to Gateway Charter School the following school year.**

**No child may be dismissed from the classroom with less than 30 minutes before dismissal. Parents must wait until the dismissal time and pick them up through the Parent Pick-up Line.**

### **END OF DISMISSAL:**

Students must leave the school grounds immediately after dismissal unless enrolled in the after care program. Parents must wait for their children outside the school.

Only individuals listed on the EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD will be allowed to pick-up students from the school. Valid photo identification will be required of all individuals picking-up students. If someone arrives at the school to seek the release of a student and the person's name is not on the emergency contact card or the person does not have valid photo identification, the student will not be released.

To avoid having the school become involved in personal family conflicts, parents or guardians should submit to school authorities a copy of any legal documents, which indicate who has legal access to the child and his/her records during school hours. In the absence of legal documentation, school officials will provide access only to those individuals whose names appear on the student's data card. Friends and strangers will be denied access to a student in the absence of verified parental consent.

**Students not picked up will be assigned to our emergency after care. Payment of \$15 is expected upon student pick up from the emergency after care program.**

See BEFORE & AFTER CARE PROGRAM for further clarification.

**Parent Pick-up: All parents must remain outside the school perimeter at dismissal time. Teachers will bring the students to the designated pick-up area via the drive through. Parents who plan to pick-up their child by driving through the Parent Pick-up line should place the hang tag on their rear view mirror with the child's name on it for safety reasons.**

**All students who are walking home must stay on the sidewalk and NOT cross the street. Parents are NEVER ALLOWED TO PARK IN THE LOTS ACROSS THE STREET.**

### **FAMILY RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT:**

The revised Family Rights and Privacy Act became a Federal law in November 1974. The intent of this law is to protect the accuracy and privacy of student educational records. Without your prior consent, only you and authorized individuals having legitimate educational interests will have access to your child's educational records. In special instances, you may waive this right of access to allow other agencies working with your child to have access to those records.

### **FIELD TRIPS:**

As a learning experience, teachers may plan field trips. Parents may be asked to assist the teacher as chaperones. Parents serving in this capacity may not have other children accompany them. Parents who are **officially selected** to be chaperones may count their hours on the field trip as volunteer hours on SIS. The Guidelines for Chaperones form must be signed prior to any parent chaperoning a field trip. Parent chaperones are required to adhere to these guidelines.

Participation in field trips is a **privilege**. Students serve as representatives of the school; therefore, they may be excluded from participation in any trip for reasons relating to behavior, conduct, or academic issues, at the discretion of administration.

Parent permission must be given for students to participate in field trips. The teacher will send permission slips and information about each field trip 2-4 weeks prior to each field trip. Money and permission slips must be turned in according to the teacher's instructions, prior to the field trip or the student will not be permitted to take part in the field trip.

**Early dismissal after a field trip is not permitted.**

## **GRADING SCALE:**

Grades K-1	Grades 2-8
E - Excellent	90-100% A- Outstanding Performance
S - Satisfactory	80-89% B- Above Average Progress
N – Needs Improvement	70-79% C- Average Progress
U – Unsatisfactory	60-69% D- Lowest Acceptable Progress
	0-59% F- Failure

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:**

If a student or his/her parents feel they have a grievance or complaint they should do the following:

1. Carefully analyze the problem - be sure you have ALL the FACTS.
2. Ascertain that you have a rational attitude about the problem.
3. Seek to resolve the problem with the teacher if applicable.
4. If there is no solution, follow the steps outlined in the **Communication Guide**.

## **GUM:**

Our goal at GCS is to maintain a clean and attractive environment; therefore gum is NOT permitted on campus. All violators will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **HALLWAY BEHAVIOR:**

Students should travel through the hallways quietly to avoid interrupting ongoing classes. Students should always arrive to class on time. Students are NOT allowed to show Public Display of Affection. For safety reasons, students should walk on the right side of the hallway and keep their hands and feet off the walls.

## **HOMEWORK POLICY:**

The purpose of homework is to develop study habits in children early on in their academic lives. It is also used to reinforce concepts that have been taught or to work on projects that have been assigned. If a child does not understand their assignment after trying to do it at home, please send a note to the teacher indicating the problem.

Teachers use the following time schedule as a guide when assigning homework:

- Grade K/1 – 15 minutes
- Grade 1 – 20 minutes
- Grade 2/3 – 30-45 minutes
- Grade 4 /5 – 60 minutes
- Grade 6/7/8- 90 minutes

These times are a guide and are based on the average child's ability and on concentrated, undistracted time for doing homework. Some days' homework assignment may take less time and may take slightly more time on another day. A child who does not complete class work in class may have to complete class work in addition to homework.

Assignments must be completed on time and properly written. The only acceptable excuse for not completing homework is the student's illness or a written note stating an emergency, which prevented homework from being done. The classroom teacher will determine grading of late assignments. Teachers keep daily records of homework assignments, which are used in determining grades. **Homework will be assigned Monday – Friday, 5 days per week.**

Parents may help with Homework in the following ways:

- ❖ Show an interest in your child's work.
- ❖ Provide a place and time for quiet study.
- ❖ Assist in practicing with spelling words and number combinations.
- ❖ Encourage home reading and listen to your child read.
- ❖ Review the homework for neatness and completeness.
- ❖ Refrain from doing the work for your child.
- ❖ Discuss problems related to home study with your child's teacher.

It is important to note that "homelearning" is the responsibility of the student.

## **HONOR ROLL REQUIREMENT:**

### **2 - 8 Grade Only**

**High Academic Honors** - All A's in all subjects (includes electives)

**Honors** - All A's and B's in all subjects (includes electives)

## **INSTRUCTIONAL BOOKS, EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES:**

All textbooks and library books needed by students for school and homework assignments are furnished by the school from tax dollars. The school is also able to provide the materials and equipment requested by teachers for classroom instruction.

Students need to realize that books and materials are expensive and that they should be cared for properly. Students are required to cover all books that are issued to them. A brown grocery bag makes an excellent book cover. At the beginning of the school year, some businesses offer free book covers to the students. Students should print their names and room number on the front of each book cover. Books must not be written in or on. **Charges will be made for damaged or lost books and/or materials.** Students must learn to be responsible for the care of personal and school materials.

Supply lists will be provided for all students on the web and at the school office during the summer. Students will be expected to provide all of these basic supplies. It is best to bring them to the Open House and deliver them to the teacher. Please help your child come prepared for school by packing his/her homework and supplies in the evening to avoid the last minute morning rush. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to check and be sure that everything needed for the next day has been packed.

### **LABELS:**

Please have your child's name on all personal property such as: lunch boxes, sweaters, raincoats, backpacks, etc.

**LOCKERS:** Intermediate School (7-8) students will be assigned a locker. They are required to *rent* a lock from GCS. Only school locks are allowed, no private locks. All backpacks, coats, sweatshirts, books, and purses are to be stored in the locker.

### **LOST AND FOUND:**

Throughout the school year, items that have been lost are turned into the school office. Many of our problems would be solved if clothing and personal belongings were labeled with the student's name. Anytime a student loses an item, he/she may go to the designated area to claim

it. There are many items lost and never claimed each year. These items are donated bi-annually to various charitable institutions. Therefore, please label your child's personal belongings.

### **MEDICAL INFORMATION:**

*Emergency Cards:* You will receive an emergency card for your child the first week of school. Please complete both side and return to his/her teacher. IT is very important that you keep this information current so we can contact you during the school day if needed.

*Screenings:* The following screening will be completed during the current school year:

Height/Weight/Body Mass Index (BMI) – 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>

Vision – K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, ESE

Hearing – K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>

Scoliosis – 6<sup>th</sup>

If a student does not pass one of the above screening we will re-screen them in two weeks. If at that time he/she still does not pass the screening, a letter will be sent home to the parent/guardian so that you can follow up with your pediatrician. *Please note that these are only screenings, not a diagnosis.* If you do not want your child to participate in the above screenings, please notify the nurse in writing.

*Pediculosis (Head Lice):* Students will be checked periodically for head lice. If a student is found to have head lice, he/she will be sent home. The rest of his/her classmates will then be screened and notification will be sent home with each of them. Any infected student will not be allowed to return to school until treatment has been administered and all nits have been removed from the hair. Upon returning to school, the student and parent must report to the clinic and the student will be checked to determine if any lice/nits are still present before he/she is allowed to return to class. **Three days** is the maximum amount of time allowed for removal of eggs from the hair. Any absence over three days will be considered an unexcused absence. Please examine your child's head weekly to prevent an outbreak of head lice. This is a common problem that is very contagious but very preventable.

*Medications:* ALL medications, including over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol, must have written authorization from the parent and the physician. **THIS IS A STATE LAW.** Please do not ask us to violate this law by sending in medications without these forms completed. You can obtain the parent and physician medication forms from the clinic. Medication will not be given without the proper documentation. If you have any questions please contact the school nurse at 768-5048.

*Illness:* Please do not send your child to school sick. If they have a fever or vomiting/diarrhea they need to stay home. They are contagious, more susceptible to pick up something else and probably don't feel well, which is not an optimal state in which to learn. *If a child is sent home from school with a fever, please note that they should be fever-free for 24 hours before they are sent back to school.* This is for the well being of your child and the other students at the school.

*Immunizations:* All students must be properly immunized for the grade they are attending. This information is on a blue card. These records are reviewed throughout the school year and must be current. If a student is found to be non-compliant the parent will be notified that new information is needed. If that information is not presented within one week the student may be excluded from school until the information is provided. This is in accordance with Lee County. A physical is also to be on file. This information is on a yellow card. The parent will be notified if a physical is not on file and will be asked to provide a yellow card, which is obtainable from your physician. This is also in accordance with Lee County.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS ANY SPECIAL NEEDS OR MEDICAL ISSUE, PLEASE CONTACT THE NURSE.

## **NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL:**

Students attend GCS to obtain a safe, solid, well-balanced education. The following items are prohibited from being brought to school as they may become a disruption to the learning environment. We will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items. In addition, these things will be confiscated by administration. Items such as, but not limited to: Gum, electronic devices, iPods, handheld games, sprays or perfumes, non-educational magazines, collectible trading cards, toys, candy, caffeine drinks or soda, or playing cards.

\* No latex is allowed in school including latex balloons.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES:**

All parents should meet with their child's teacher at least once during the school year. We encourage you to have conferences more often as effective communication is one of the cornerstones of education. Conferences are scheduled after 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. Please see the Communication Guide (on web page) for more details.

## **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO):**

A great portion of each child's day is spent at school; therefore, his/her growth and development become a joint responsibility between the home and school. Everyone is urged to become active in helping further the goals and growth of the PTO.

The faculty, staff and administration hope that all of the parents will become active members supporting the school and the association. Officers will be elected yearly according to the school's bylaws and district/state guidelines.

The PTO will sponsor fundraisers throughout the school year. Monies generated by fundraising events will be used to purchase materials and equipment for the students.

PTO board meetings will be held on a scheduled basis every other month (see posting on web page). They are open to anyone who wishes to attend. All members are eligible to vote on issues brought before them for consideration during the general PTO meetings.

## **PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL SPONSORED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND FIELD TRIPS:**

Participation in a school sponsored extracurricular activity or field trip is a privilege. The standard of behavior should be one that exhibits pride, politeness, and responsibility. Students who are unable to follow school rules and behavior guidelines may not be able to participate in outside activities such as dances, sporting events, and field trips.

Students must be in attendance in school on the day they are participating in an after school function, sport, or event.

See ATHLETIC SPORTS PROGRAMS for further clarification.

## **PUPIL PROGRESSION:**

GATEWAY CHARTER SCHOOL will follow the Lee County School's Pupil Progression requirements and procedures for K – 8 students.

## **SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL: (SAC)**

A School Advisory Council will be organized and will work with the Principal on issues related to the overall operation of the school.

## **SCHOOL HOURS:**

(Elementary K-6)	
Before School Care	7:00 – 7:30 a.m.
Breakfast Hours	8:00 – 8:25 a.m.
Students Begin Arriving	7:30 a.m.
School Begins	8:30 a.m.
Student Dismissal	3:00 p.m.
After School Care	3:00 – 6:00p.m.

(7-8 Intermediate School)	
Breakfast Hours	7:00-7:30 a.m.
Students Begin Arriving	7:00 a.m.
School Begins	7:40 a.m.
Student Dismissal	2:30 p.m.
After School Care	2:30 – 6:00 p.m.

## **STUDENT RECORDS:**

Student records and grades cannot be released until property and textbooks have been returned or paid for. All accounts must be brought up to date from the library, cafeteria, and aftercare program, etc. prior to any records being released.

## **STUDENTS' RIGHTS**

Students have the right to feel safe from threats and bodily harm. Disruptive behaviors are never acceptable, and when they occur, they will result in time out, exclusion from participation in class activities, suspension or expulsion. Administration will handle disruptive behavior regarding issues that are serious.

**Parents who have a conflict with a student other than their own child are requested to speak to the Administration. At no time may parents approach the student directly.**

All students and employees will be treated with respect. Slurs, innuendoes, hostile treatment, violence or other verbal or physical conduct against a student or employee will NOT be tolerated.

## **TARDY POLICY:**

A child is tardy when he/she is not in the classroom at the school start time (7:40 Intermediate School 7-8 only and 8:30 Elementary K-6). A student that enters a classroom with a late pass is considered tardy.

**Excused tardies are given for doctor's appointments with notes from the doctor and extreme emergencies.**

After 5 unexcused tardies in a grading period:

- A letter will be sent to the parents requiring a conference to explain the seriousness of the matter and go over the consequences of another tardy. Suggestions will be discussed with parents to alleviate the tardiness problem.

If another tardy occurs in the same grading period:

- Parents will have the option of:
  1. Child can return to school, if accompanied by the parent for the entire day.
  2. Parent can complete 6 hours of volunteer work at the school within one month.

**After 20 tardies, a child may not be invited to return to GATEWAY CHARTER SCHOOL the following school year.**

## **TELEPHONE:**

**The school has business telephones to help transact the business of the school and the lines must be kept open. Students may not use the telephone except for emergencies.**

*Elementary School Office: 768-5048*

*7-8 Intermediate School Office: 768-2491*

It is difficult to deliver a personal message to an individual student without interrupting the instructional program. Please do not ask the office staff to deliver messages to students except in an emergency.

Students that bring a cell phone to school, must turn it in to the office when they arrive in the morning, before school starts. Cell phones will be returned to students at the end of the day just prior to dismissal. Cell phones will be confiscated from a student who has it in his/her possession during school hours.

## **TEXTBOOKS:**

Students are responsible for ALL textbooks issued to them and for ALL library books you check out. Satisfactory payment will be REQUIRED for all lost or damaged books. **Failure of the student to pay for lost or damaged books shall deprive the student of further use of free textbooks and/or use of the library as well as prevent the student from participating in extra-curricular activities and attending special events such as dances, field trips, etc.**

## **SEVERE WEATHER INFORMATION:**

GATEWAY CHARTER SCHOOL will follow the same instructions as Lee County Public Schools in case of severe weather emergencies. Parents should watch the local news for information about school closings.

## **VISITORS:**

Visitors, **INCLUDING PARENTS**, are **NOT** permitted to go to their child's class unannounced during school hours because this disrupts normal routine and instruction. Observations of classrooms are only permitted for up to 30 minutes with administrative approval.

**For the safety and protection of all students, visitors (including parents) must sign in and out with the office, state whom they are visiting, state the purpose of the visit, provide a driver's license, and obtain a pass only from ADMINISTRATION before proceeding to a classroom.**

## **VOLUNTEER HOURS:**

Parents have many opportunities to volunteer their time both at school and at home. Volunteer opportunities will be available throughout the school year, based on the school's needs. Name badges will be given out at the office in order to volunteer in a designated location.

Parents are required to submit their own volunteer hours for credit through SIS. Teachers will approve the hours once they have been inputted in SIS. Please be sure to enter your volunteer hours so the hours can be accounted for each quarter. A statement of hours completed will be sent home quarterly on report cards and can be viewed on SIS any time so that parents know how many hours they have completed. Parents are required to volunteer 20 hours for the first child and 10 hours per sibling for the school year.

- Volunteer Coordinators will use Room Parents to disseminate information regarding volunteer opportunities.
- 1/2 of all volunteer hours should be completed by the end of December.
- All volunteer hours must be completed by the second Friday in May OR this may result in your child being withdrawn from the school.

## **VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES:**

- The safety and education of students must be the main concern of volunteers while engaged in school activities.
- Individual student's grade records and abilities are personal and confidential information. Students have the right to confidentiality under Florida Statutes 227.093 that covers academic work completed, standardized test scores, health data, interest inventory reports, reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns, family background information, attendance records, grades and teacher or counselor rating and observations.
- Students may not be given medication by volunteers.
- Volunteers will not contact parents regarding student performance or behavior.
- Classroom supervision and student discipline are the responsibilities of the teacher and school
- Permission for a student to leave the classroom must always be given by the teacher.
- Volunteers are required to sign in and out. The office will determine where and when a volunteer is needed within the school.
- For identification, volunteers are required to wear a name badge when helping with school activities.
- **Volunteers will be assigned only to staff members requesting assistance.**
- Punctuality and reliability are expected since teachers plan for volunteer assistance.
- Comparing and criticizing teachers and students is not acceptable volunteer behavior.
- Volunteers should be in good physical and mental health.
- Volunteers are expected to be well groomed and dressed appropriately.
- Volunteers should set a good example for students by their manner, appearance, and behavior.
- Volunteers will be allowed in the classrooms during instructional time ONLY when scheduled by the teacher in writing at the front office.
- Volunteers are invited to assist in their own child's classroom ONLY with permission from the classroom teacher. Your help is needed in many areas throughout the school that may not be disruptive to your child's learning.

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Gateway Charter School. In hopes of working together for a successful school year, we have created this handbook to make everyone aware of our school policies and procedures. Since all students are required to have a parent sign their Agenda Book on a nightly basis, it will be helpful to be able to refer to various sections as needed throughout the year.

**PLEASE SIGN THIS DOCUMENT OF THE HANDBOOK SECTION, TEAR IT OUT, AND RETURN IT TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER.**

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**PARENT HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS K-8  
2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR**

**STUDENT**

I certify that I have received a copy of the Gateway Charter School Parent Handbook and together with my parents we have read and discussed this document.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature- Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**PARENT**

I am the parent/legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_. I have had the opportunity to read the Gateway Charter School Parent Handbook and have discussed it with my child.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature- Parent/Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Acknowledged by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
School Official

