



GILBERT CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

AGRITOPIA CAMPUS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**2021-2022
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

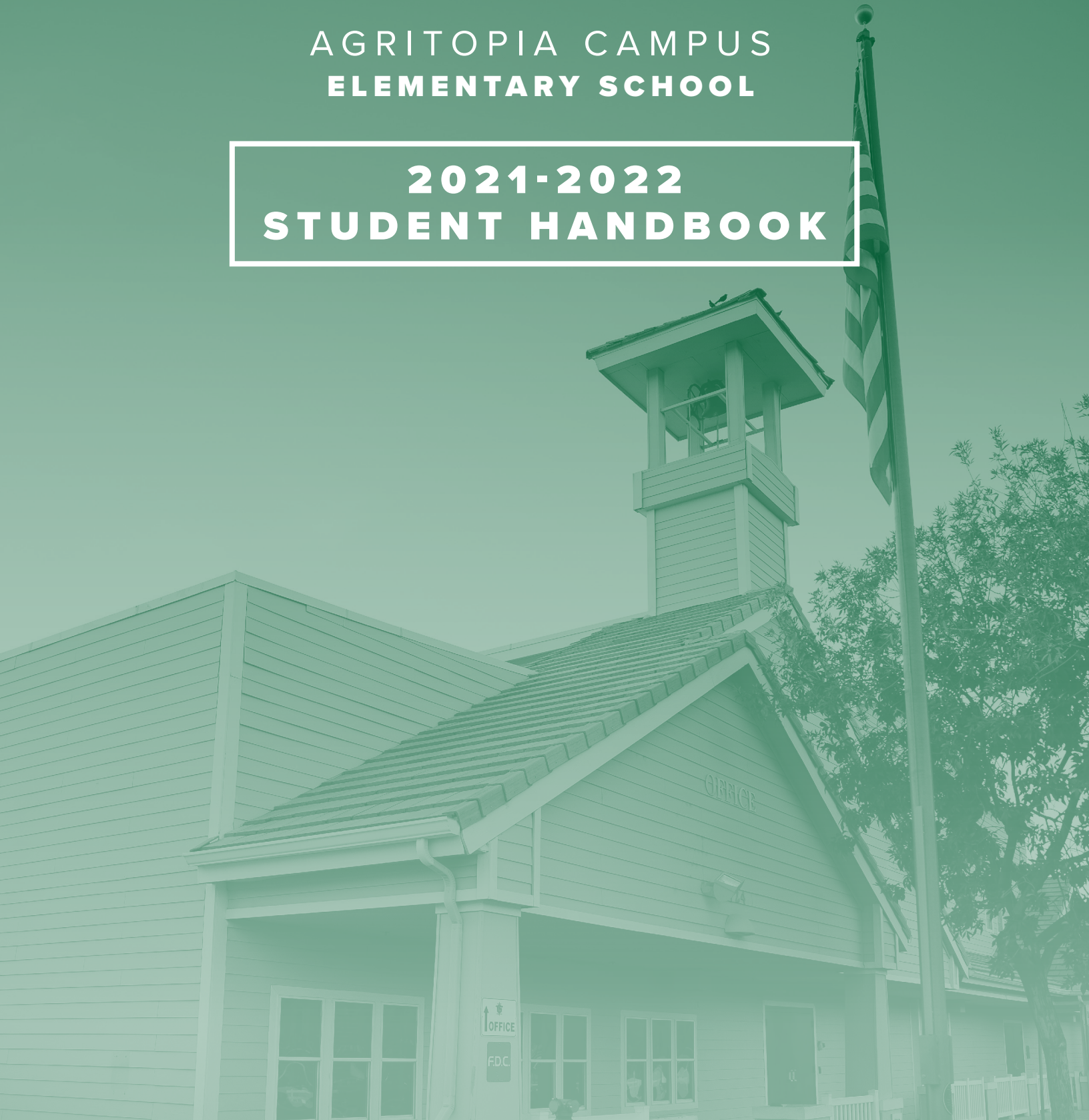


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Updated August 24, 2021



Gilbert Christian Schools

Agritopia Campus

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Campus Hours

The Gilbert Christian Agritopia day begins at 7:50 a.m. and ends at 3:20 p.m. Campus gates open at 7:30 a.m. and will remain open until 4:00 p.m. If a student is going to be absent or late for school, the parents or guardians must email or call or email campus office by 7:45 a.m. Please note there is no supervision before and after campus hours.

Introduction

Gilbert Christian Schools (GCS) was founded in 1996 as Surrey Garden Christian School and is a private, non-profit, non-denominational Christian school. GCS, not affiliated with any particular church, is operated by the administration officials who are under the authority and direction of a Board of Directors. Members of the GCS Board come from a variety of professional backgrounds and are leaders in the evangelical community. Parents and students of GCS attend a variety of different Christian churches and have diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds. While most GCS families are residents of the East Valley, we are also proud to host many foreign students.

The mission of GCS is twofold. We seek to encourage and strengthen young believers in their walk with Christ. We also intentionally witness the basic truths of the Christian faith to those who do not yet follow the Lord. Each child is treated with respect and taught in a manner that shows forth his worth as an individual created by God and who possesses a unique personality, skills, and life goals (Eph. 2:10).

A strong Christian worldview enables GCS to provide a rigorous academic education based on Christian doctrine and principles. Students study, practice, and learn the skills necessary for them to understand, analyze, and become effective communicators. While holding to a strong Christian standard in educational excellence and behavior, GCS holds dual accreditation with Cognia and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). In addition, GCS adheres to state graduation requirements, accreditation standards, and the expectations of competitive entry colleges and universities.

At GCS, the individual needs of each family are important. We are here to support parents who have been given by God the primary responsibility for the teaching of their children. We encourage all our parents to be actively involved in the school, and the classrooms, programs, and activities are always open for their observation.



Mission Statement

Partner with parents to prepare the next generation to impact the world for Christ.

“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.” Psalm 145:3-4

Core Values

Know that God has you here to make an impact.

Nurture healthy, God-honoring relationships.

Inspire a passion for learning.

Grow your skills to be a more effective teacher.

Help every student reach their academic potential.

Train students to use their God-given gifts and talents.

Show the love of God to every student, every day.

Accreditations and Memberships

GCS is accredited by and is a member of Cognia (formerly AdvancED), Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), and a candidate school with the Council on Educational Standards & Accountability (CESA). GCS also is a member of the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) and other organizations that help to accomplish the mission of the school.

School Governance

Gilbert Christian Schools operates under the authority of a published Board Governance Model available to all parents. The document establishes the authority, policies, and practices of both the Board and the Superintendent. The school recommends all parents familiarize themselves with it.

Parents can access the Governance Model at <https://gcsaz.org/about-us/boardatgcs/>.



Statement of Faith

The Scriptures

We believe the Scriptures, both the Old and the New Testaments, to be the verbally inspired Word of God, written by men in God's control, inerrant and infallible in the original manuscripts, and the final authority in faith and life. We accept the grammatical-historical system of interpretation of the Scriptures and accept the historical record of the Bible as accurate.

The Godhead

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are identical in essence, equal in power and glory, and possess precisely the same attributes and perfection.

The Person and Work of Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God; that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, in order that He might redeem sinful man. He accomplished this redemption by voluntarily giving Himself as a sinless substitutionary sacrifice on the cross, thereby satisfying God's righteous judgment against the sin of the elect. He gave proof that He accomplished that redemption by His bodily resurrection from the grave. He then ascended to the right hand of His Father where He intercedes on behalf of His people.

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Person who convicts the world of sin; that He alone brings new life to those who are spiritually dead; that He places all believers into the one true church, which is the Body of Christ and that He indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption and bestows spiritual gifts upon them.

The Condition of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, in innocence and without sin. But in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited the guilt of his sin, a sinful nature, becoming spiritually dead and alienated from God so that man is a sinner both by nature and by choice. Man, of himself, is incapable of remedying his lost and depraved condition.



Salvation

We believe that salvation is the gift of God's grace given to all whom God has elected to salvation. It includes all that God does in saving the elect from the penalty, power, and presence of sin and in restoring them to a right relationship with God. As such, it is solely the work of God from initiation to completion. The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is the cause, not the result, of the believer's saving faith. It cannot be gained by good works, but is a free gift for all who put their trust in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. All who trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are forgiven and saved from their sins and made righteous before God and are born into the family of God. God's purpose for saving His elect is so that they bring glory to Him by their lives.

Security, Assurance, and Responsibility

We believe that all saved, those in whom God has accomplished His transforming work of grace, are kept by His power and thus secure in Christ forever. This assurance, however, is not the occasion for sin, for God, in holiness, cannot tolerate persistent sin in His children, and in infinite love, He corrects them. True faith in Christ is expressed by a fruitful, God-pleasing life that endures until death.

Sanctification

We believe that God, in the Scriptures, has given us everything pertaining to life and godliness. This includes salvation from the penalty of sin and, just as surely the provision of sanctification (separation) from sin. Sanctification from sin affects both the positional and practical aspects. Positional sanctification is a result of the continuing work of the Spirit using the Word of God to provide nourishment for growth into maturity in Christ. While the process of practical sanctification is assured by the Word and the Spirit, it is yet imperfect in this life. There is some element of corruption in every part of the fallen nature that is the source for the war between the flesh and the Spirit. Spiritual growth occurs as believers feed on the Word and are in fellowship with other believers for encouragement and service.

Ordinances

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ instituted two ordinances to be observed by all believers as a matter of obedience, not as a condition for salvation: Water Baptism (subsequent to the believer's profession of faith) and the Lord's Supper.



The Eternal State

We believe that at death the souls of those who have trusted Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence and remain there in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body of Christ's coming for the Church when the soul and the body will be reunited. We then shall be with Him forever in glory. We also believe that at death the souls of unbelievers remain in conscious misery until the final judgment when the soul and body will be reunited and cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be separated from God forever in conscious punishment.

Eschatology

We believe, according to His promise, that Jesus will physically return for His people. This truth has been revealed to provide the believer comfort and encouragement in his life.



Position on Critical Issues

Gilbert Christian is a biblically-based school, holding to the biblical standards of morality. As such we will abide by those moral standards regardless of current social norms. We will continue to strive to communicate this to families and will expect that families who are part of GCS will support the school and its teaching of these biblically-based beliefs.

Biblical Authority

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. For purposes of school doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our school board is the school's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application. Parents and students undermining the statement of faith may be asked to leave GCS.

Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18, 7:2-5; Heb 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of GCS as a local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Gilbert Christian community, it is imperative that all persons employed by GCS in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture or the doctrines of GCS.



Admissions

Pre- K and Kindergarten Entrance Age

Students registering for pre-kindergarten must be four years of age prior to September 1st and incoming kindergarten students must be five years of age prior to September 1st of the current school year.

Gilbert Christian School may admit children who have not reached the required age if it is determined by the administration that it is in the best interest of the children. Such children must reach the required age of five prior to October 1st of the current school year. A child may repeat kindergarten with parent approval, a teacher's recommendation, and the direction of Gilbert Christian School administration.

Pre-K Sign In and Sign Out Procedures

A daily attendance sheet will be available at the Pre-K room door for parents to sign in and out their child. Parent or designated individual will need to prove their identity with a picture ID, until that individual is known by staff members, at which time a picture ID will not be required. A parent may designate another individual to pick up their child by signing a permission slip authorizing their release to someone other than the parent. A parent or designated individual may telephone to release the enrolled child to an individual not so designated by supplying a means of verification that has been agreed upon at the time of enrollment and indicated on the "Blue Card". If you choose to have your child participate in the Driveline process, a signed permission slip will be needed and kept on file with the Preschool Director.



School Day

Elementary Schedule

Class	Start Time	Regular Dismissal	Early Release	Lunch
Pre-K4-AM	8:00am	11:00am	8:00am-9:15am	None
Pre-K 4-PM	11:45pm	2:45pm	9:45am-10:50am	12:00pm-12:30pm
Kindergarten - AM	8:00am	12:00pm	11:00am	None
Kindergarten - All Day	8:00am	3:00pm	11:00am	11:15am-11:55am
1st Grade	8:00am	3:00pm	11:00am	11:25am-12:00pm
2nd Grade	8:00am	3:00pm	11:00am	11:35am-12:10pm
3rd Grade	8:00am	3:00pm	11:00am	11:45am-12:20pm
4th Grade	8:00am	3:10pm	11:10am	11:55am-12:30pm
5th Grade	8:00am	3:10pm	11:10am	12:05pm-12:40pm

Middle School Schedule

Class	Start Time	Regular Dismissal	Early Release	Lunch
6th Grade	7:50am	3:10pm	11:10am	12:15pm-12:50pm
7th Grade	7:50am	3:20pm	11:20am	12:28pm-1:00pm
8th Grade	7:50am	3:20pm	11:20am	12:28pm-1:00pm

Parent Drop Off Procedure

Parents are expected to escort pre-kindergarten children to and from their classroom. Leaving young children in the car unattended is completely unacceptable. Older students may walk to their classrooms unattended.

We value punctuality at GCS. The campus and playground, with supervision, opens at 7:30am. Students should be on campus no earlier than 7:30am. Students may drop off their backpacks by their classroom doors and then go directly to the playground. A student is tardy for class when he/she is not in the room by 8:00am. After 8:00am the student must stop by the office and pick up a tardy slip to enter the classroom.

When dropping your student off, please pull up to the marked signs/cones where it is safe to let students off without having to cross where cars are moving. Agritopia staff members are able to help students out of the vehicle, please do not get out of your vehicle to walk your child in and leave your car parked in the drop-off lane.

You are welcome to park in a space opposite the drop-off lane and walk your child in. After drop off, please proceed out of the parking lot. If you want to watch your student walk to the courtyard or playground, please park instead. Please do not drop children off in any part of the parking lot, other than near the designated areas indicated by our school signage and safety personnel.



Building Entrance

All students must enter through the two sets of double white gates on the north side of the building. Students may walk on the sidewalk to reach the closest entrance gate and then proceed to their classroom to leave their backpack and head out to the playground. The playground attendant will announce the time to come to class via whistle and intercom at 7:55am.

Please do not talk on your cell phone while driving during drop off or pickup. This is not a safe practice and does not assist us in keeping all of our Knights safe during busy drop off and pickup times.

Student Pick-Up Procedure

Driveline Groups	Dismissal Times	Driveline Groups
Light Blue = PK ONLY	2:45pm	2:45-2:50pm
Green Group = Grades K-2	2:55pm	2:55-3:05pm
Gold Group = Grades 3-5 (plus younger siblings)	3:05pm	3:05-3:15pm
Maroon Group = Grades 6-8 (plus younger siblings)	3:20pm	3:15-3:20pm
No Driveline Group = Grades 6-8 (without younger siblings)	3:20pm	-

Park & Pick-Up

Parents who choose to park in the parking lot and meet the student at the classroom door may do so. Once you pick up your student, please supervise him/her. Running and throwing balls in the congested courtyard is not safe and hinders those making their way to the pick-up zone. Please remember, you may not park in the traffic circle on Agritopia Loop, at the clubhouse or in neighborhood designated parking spaces. This creates safety hazards, slows the process down for the school community, and makes for poor neighborhood relationships.

Driveline is the process used at the Agritopia campus in grades pre-kindergarten to 8th grade to coordinate a rapid student release in a safe, quick and orderly fashion. Driveline minimizes student exposure to extreme weather conditions, parent wait times, students wandering around school grounds, and local traffic problems. Students in Grades 7 and 8 without younger siblings will not use Driveline but will be released at 3:20pm from their classrooms to carry out their after-school get home plan.

Parking Lot

Agritopia has a one-way parking lot. The entrance is located by the tennis courts on Agritopia Loop, and the exit is on Promenade Lane. During Driveline (2:50 - 3:20pm) cars may only enter the parking lot by making a right turn into the lot. Left hand turns will be



allowed into the parking lot during Driveline only for those who wish to park in the parking lot. Please signal the attendant to be permitted to turn left. Please follow this attendant's directions as he is monitoring traffic flow. If you have to stop and wait to make a left hand turn, you may be asked to use the roundabout as not to block traffic on both sides of the street.

Lanes

There are two types of lanes within the parking lot: 1) the outer pull-through lane; 2) the inner pick-up lane. Parents who wish to use Driveline and have students come to their car must enter the school parking lot and pull into the inside, pick-up lane that is closest to the building. Parents proceed to the pick-up zone area which is at the end of the inner pick-up lane directly in front of the office which is where students will load into vehicles. Parents who wish to pick-up their student from the classroom should use the pull-through lane and park in an available spot.

How does Driveline work?

Each family is assigned a unique identifier number or Family ID. Color-coded car pick-up tags are issued to each family. The unique tag is to be placed on the vehicle's rearview mirror before entering the lot. The Family ID is used within Driveline to link the parent's vehicle with the student(s) in their family. Families are given two Family ID tags. These can be shared with others who may pick up your student or to share with carpools. Extra tags can be requested at the office or by emailing jamie.carver@gcsaz.org. You may also request another Driveline tag for the green or gold group for a younger sibling who has a middle school sibling participating in an after school activity.

Upon a parent's arrival to the school at release time, a staff member in an orange vest enters the Family ID from your clearly displayed pick-up tag into an iPhone. This sends the information to the classroom teachers' computers. The student is then released. It is crucial to stress with your students that they are to walk directly to the pick-up zone when the Family ID number pops up in their classroom. If your student does not come to the zone in a timely fashion, you may be asked to drive around and re-enter the parking lot to avoid clogging Driveline.

The parking lot attendant will only invite cars waiting in the pull-through lane with the appropriate color in the designated pick-up time. Please do not arrive before your pick-up time. Our parking lot cannot accommodate early arrivals. If you arrive too early, you will not be allowed to enter the parking lot. After 3:20pm students not picked up will be brought to the office and must be signed out.

Driveline numbers are assigned based on the oldest sibling. Families who have students in Grades 7 and 8 without a younger sibling will not be given a driveline number and will be released at 3:20pm. Of course, parents are always welcome to pick up their younger students at the classroom doors at the official dismissal times.



Should your family be a part of a carpool, the driver must display the Driveline tag issued by the office. Those in a carpool will display two (or more) family ID tags. Extra tags can be requested at the office or by emailing jamie.carver@gcsaz.org.

For your child's safety, students will not be released with a copy of the tag or by verbally sharing the number with the parking lot attendant. The classroom teacher must be fully informed about those authorized to pick-up your student. Adults must be on the student's pick-up file or have been given permission via the office to pick up a student for a child to be released to someone other than their custodial parent.

Walkers

Students in grades 2-5 will be allowed to walk home with parent permission. These students will be designated as walkers and released at 3:10pm. Walkers should leave the campus immediately and walk home. Note: Although we allow it, most second graders do not walk home alone; therefore, please use parental discernment concerning this choice.

Appointment Pick-Ups

It is recommended that if you schedule appointments at the end of the school day that you do so before Driveline begins at 2:50pm or after Driveline ends at 3:20pm.



Elementary Dress Code

Dress Guidelines

To promote a standard of dress consistent with the school's goals for conduct and academic excellence, Gilbert Christian Elementary Schools students are to wear a uniform and follow the guidelines listed below. The school also asks parents to monitor their student's dress and grooming before he/she leaves for school each morning. Rules alone cannot guarantee good appearance; therefore, GCS expects the spirit, as well as the specific guidelines below, to govern each student's manner of dress. All Gilbert Christian Elementary students have the responsibility to dress modestly and in a manner respectful of the learning environment of the school. Students must be in uniform when on campus, including before class hours and until the campus closes at 4p unless "dressed out" for a GCS activity or sports program. All equipment and articles of clothing should be marked with the student's name.

School Uniforms

GCS works with great vendors to provide options for families to purchase quality and cost effective uniform items. Vendors and options are found on the GCS website at www.gcsaz.org/uniforms.

Uniform Exchange Closet

GCS offers a regular uniform exchange program to help make uniform compliance affordable for all. It is housed at our GCS Greenfield campus.

Shirts

- Monday through Thursday – approved, solid color polo shirts with a GCS logo. Shirts should be purchased from a GCS approved vendor. Any shirts not purchased from GCS approved vendor may not meet dress code requirements.
- On Fridays, elementary students may wear GCS "spirit shirts" or GCS team shirts from any uniform or sports apparel vendor on our website. Thursday, even if it is the last day of the school week, is not spirit/team shirt day.
- Solid, long t-shirts/camisole underneath the uniform are acceptable. A solid t-shirt/cami that provides a layered look is an acceptable and modest style.
- GCS polo shirts must extend below the waistband.
- The fit or style of the uniform polo may not be altered. For instance, scarves, knots, bows, sequins, or rubber bands may not be added to alter the uniform.

Pants, Shorts, Skorts

- Students may wear cotton or cotton-blend pants, shorts or skorts (skirt with attached shorts/Pk-5 only) in any approved school solid color. Approved solid colors are: black, navy, khaki, gray and blue denim. All pants, shorts, capris, or skorts are to be a solid color-no pattern. Skorts are permitted in pre-kindergarten to 5th grade, but not in grades 6th, 7th, or 8th.

- Fabric for pants should be cotton-blend or 100% cotton or blue denim. Nylon and knit fabric is not permitted.
- The fit and style of pants, shorts and skirts must be modest and school appropriate. Boys and girls must wear pants at or near the waist, and a belt may be required if pants slip too low as described above. Pants that are thin or skin tight are not modest and therefore not school-appropriate. Students should dress for school to honor God, classmates and GCS standards, not to draw attention to self.
- Shorts are to be “Bermuda” length and must be at or slightly above the knee. Parents are responsible to keep their sons or daughters in the appropriate length shorts during growth spurts or as the year progresses. The warming spring months are not an excuse for shorts that have become too short and therefore out of dress-code. GCS offers a regular uniform exchange program to help make uniform compliance affordable for all. Students who cuff their shorts to avoid the Bermuda length will receive a reminder and/or be required to change.
- All pants and shorts must be hemmed and in good repair. No holes, rips or frayed hems, cut-off shorts or cuffing is not permitted; however, cuffs sewn and hemmed by the manufacturer are permitted. Denim that is distressed so as to create thin spots or holes is not permitted. The length of denim needs to be “Bermuda” length.
- Students in grades Pre-K to 8th grade may wear navy blue denim jean pants or shorts on any school day, but jeans must be modest in cut, style and fit. No colored embellishments, camouflage, or patterned bottoms - solid only.
- Clothing not permitted: soccer shorts, athletic shorts, spandex, athletic pants, sweat pants, pajama jeans, leggings jeans, jegging, skinny spandex jeans, pants that reveal underwear, ripped, washed out, cut-off or distressed jeans.

Outerwear

- GCS uniform crests or modern cross logo hoodies are permitted in Pre-K through 5th grade inside the building any day of the week. On Fridays GCS Spirit hoodies are permitted as are other GCS sport apparel hoodies.
- No other hoodies are ever permitted --even as outerwear. This includes college, professional sports, travel souvenir hoodies, etc. Only GCS hoodies are allowed.
- Solid colored cardigan sweaters, solid zippered sweatshirts, or solid button up jackets are approved outerwear and may be worn in the classroom. Teachers must be able to see the GCS approved polo beneath the outerwear.
- Hats may not be worn inside any building at any time.
- On very cold days, any heavy outerwear may be worn outside, but for inside warmth, students should bring approved outerwear, as described above to wear in the classroom. Heavy outerwear is not worn inside the classroom (heavy jackets/vests/scarves/mittens/hats).

Footwear

- PK-5 students must wear sports shoes everyday with socks or tights (for girls). Shoes must be laced or Velcroed at all times. Slip on shoes like Vans or TOMS



will only be permitted if they fit snugly and do not pose a safety hazard for PE and outdoor play. GCS staff reserves the right to require students to change shoes if they are too loose and will fall off during these activities.

- Examples of unacceptable footwear include boots, rolling shoes, slippers, ballet flats, flip-flops, or any shoe that has a sole with a heel.

Grooming and Modesty

- Hair is to be neat, clean, and out of the eyes. Those with “fade” haircuts must keep the longer hair out of eyes and above the ears. Boy's hair length should not exceed mid-collar. Unkempt and shaggy hair is not permitted. Extreme haircuts, like mohawks, or words/designs shaved into the hair, or man buns are not acceptable. Only a natural hair color will be allowed. Administration reserves the right to require changes.
- Only girls may have pierced ears and wear fingernail polish.
- Prek-5 girls may not wear make-up.
- Girl's jewelry should be modest and age-appropriate. Only girls may have pierced ears.
- Uniforms must be neat, clean, in good repair, and appropriately sized. Tight clothing, excessively baggy clothing, or clothing with holes is not permitted.
- Students may not wear hats, sunglasses or heavy winter coats indoors.
- All students are to wear their school uniforms on field trips.

Consequences

Students not in compliance with the dress code will be sent to the office to change into approved clothing. When the loaned uniform clothing is returned, the student will receive his/her personal clothing back.

Recognizing that fashion trends are constantly changing, the administration reserves the right to make specific case by case judgements concerning the dress code that may not be addressed in the handbook. The school reserves the right to amend the dress code throughout the year as necessary.



Conferences

Children and their parents should plan to attend each of the three scheduled conferences. Conferences are held each of the first three quarters. Pre-k and K conferences are held once at the end of Quarter 3. Parents receive their child's grade report and in-depth information about their child's academic, social and spiritual growth at each meeting. To maximize the time with the teachers, arrange for a babysitter for younger siblings who are of a preschool age. A conference spot is reserved online via an electronic sign-up system. The link will be emailed to all families on a publicized date. If both parents are not able to attend once conference, please do not ask the teacher for an additional time slot. Multiple conference slots per child are not available. If this policy presents a hardship that cannot be resolved, the parent should contact the building principal to make alternative arrangements. Any parent who does not attend conferences must pick up the child's report card from the front office. Report cards cannot be sent home with students.

Health

Speech Therapy

Speech therapy is offered to any student during the school day who meets the requirements of a speech delay and/or disorder in grades Pre-K to 5th. There is an additional charge for speech therapy, as this is not covered by regular tuition. If it is determined that therapy would be beneficial, the speech provider will contact the parents to arrange for a conference and payment plan. Services will be offered once a week in individual and/or group settings.

Health Aide

The school has a Health Aide trained in CPR and First Aid, and provides an infirmary in order for students to rest and wait for parents to pick them up and take them home. A student who is injured or who feels ill during the course of the day may request permission from his/her teacher to see the Health Aide.

The Health Aide will attend to the student's concerns and advise the student about continued class and athletic attendance for the day. The Health Aide will notify the student's parents or guardians if the student must be sent home because of illness. The Health Aide must authorize all departures from school due to injury or illness.

Immunizations

All students must be in compliance with current state immunization guidelines. Parents should review their child's immunization record with their child's physician to ensure the student is current on all necessary immunization requirements.

Communicable Disease Guidelines

- If a student has nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or an elevated temperature (100° or more by thermometer), the student should be kept home and not be sent to school. Students must be symptom-free and without an elevated temperature for 24 hours before returning to school without the assistance of medication. In order to maintain a healthy environment, the school asks that families observe the following guidelines:
- If a student has strep throat, he/she must stay home at least 24 hours after the first dose of antibiotics has been administered.
- If a student has conjunctivitis (pink eye), he/she must stay home for 24 hours after the first dose of medicine has been administered. The student's eyes should also be free of drainage before returning to school.
- If a student has head lice, he/she must be treated and be louse and nit-free before returning to school. If the lice are discovered during the day, the school will call the parent or guardian to pick their child up at school. The school Health Aide will need to check the child before he/she returns to the classroom.
- If a student contracts measles, meningococcal meningitis, mumps, pertussis (whooping cough), rubella (German Measles), tuberculosis, chickenpox, Lyme disease, hepatitis A, or other communicable diseases of food-borne illnesses, please notify the school Health Aide immediately.
- If a student has evident bumps, red blotches, rash, hives or other skin ailments, parents should send a note clearly identifying the skin disorder. The school reserves the right to require a doctor's release for a child to enter the classroom.

Medication

Medications taken during school hours must be administered by the school Health Aide or trained office staff. The exception is asthma inhalers, which may be carried by students if a permission slip is signed by parents. No prescription or over-the-counter medication is allowed to be in the possession of a student.

The Gilbert Christian Schools Medication Administration Release form (available in the Health Aide office) must be completed and signed by the parents/guardians and physician. Medication must be in the original container with the pharmacy label, student's name, prescribing physician's name, medication name, dosage, and the time and route of administration.

Backup Medication

Backup medication(s) for a student's health condition may be kept in the school's Health Aide office. Parents who provide the school with backup medication(s) should note the medication expiration date and provide current medication when necessary. If a student requires daily medication that is not taken at school, parents should consider consulting with the Health Aide about storing a three-day supply of the medication at the school in case of a lock-down.



EpiPen

If your student's allergies require the use of an EpiPen, please provide their prescribed EpiPen, along with a signed EpiPen care plan form, to the health aide. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the provided EpiPen is current and not expired.

Emergency Protocols

Gilbert Christian Schools will practice three types of drills:

- Perimeter Lockdown - Perimeter of campus is locked down and no classes are allowed to go to field or courtyards.
- Lockdown - All persons on campus are to lockdown behind a locked door, stay out of sight, and be silent.
- Evacuation - All persons on campus will evacuate to their designated location until they are instructed to return.

During any drill or emergency, please know that the safety of your child is our utmost concern. During an actual emergency, all of our attention will be directed to protecting your child(ren). Please do not try to contact the school office by phone, cell phone, or text.

If we conduct a routine emergency drill, as soon as the drill is over, we will notify parents, via an email, to inform you of the drill. In an actual emergency, we will be under the direction of our local police department. You will be notified, via an email regarding the status of the emergency and how to proceed as soon as the police department gives us permission to do so.

Gilbert Christian Schools administrators retain the right to remove, relocated, or evacuate students due to an emergency situation. If students are removed from the GCS campus for any reason, each student will only be released to an authorized parent or adult by their classroom teacher under the direction of the administration. The Gilbert Christian Schools K-8 campus follows emergency procedures in compliance with NIMS.

Reporting Child Abuse

Protecting the health and welfare of GCS students is fundamental to the mission of GCS. In accord with A.R.S. 13-3620, school personnel are required to report to a peace officer or to child protective services any reasonable grounds to believe a child is the victim of neglect, physical or sexual abuse. The school will not contact parents before making a report to authorities. The law is clear on the duty of school personnel to report, and there is no legal alternative except to make the report to the proper authorities for their investigation.

Playground

Rules

- Students need to exit the lunchroom from the designated doors and go directly to the playground. Food may not be brought onto the playground except leftovers sealed in the lunch box.
- Students put water bottles and their lunch boxes in front of their classroom.
- Students are not allowed in the hallways, unless they are going to a class or tutoring and have a pass from the playground aide.
- Use kind words.
- Keep hands and feet to yourselves.
- No open containers of food or leftovers on the field or playground. No glass containers on the playground at any time.
- Do not leave the playground unless you first check with an aide (nurse, bathroom, drink, etc.).
- No running or running games (tag, monkey on the ground, etc.) on the playground equipment, swings or basketball court. Running games on field only.
- No jumping off, running under or thru, side swinging or twisting on the swings.
- No hanging on basketball rims or nets.
- No jump ropes, hula hoops, or balls on any playground equipment.
- No climbing or hanging off the soccer nets and field goals.
- When the whistle blows, put away balls and equipment, and pick up items left on the field.
- Jump ropes are for jumping only, no tying up anything or anyone, and no tug-of-war.
- Line up promptly when your class is called.

Consequences

Playground aides will give a fair verbal warning to children who are not following the rules. If a child does not make an adjustment and follow directions, the following consequences will be implemented:

1. Students will sit out for 5 minutes on the playground bench and be written up on the playground report for their teacher and administration to read. If student self-corrects and (if applicable) makes an apology, the child may rejoin the playground play.
2. If the student is corrected a second time in one play period after sitting out or if he/she cannot self-correct in step 1, the student will be sent to the office to see the principal. The principal will follow up with the teacher and parents will be notified.

3. Students fighting or swearing or intensely arguing will be sent directly to the principal without sitting out first. These students will be written up on the playground report. The principal will follow up with the teacher and parents will be notified. See handbook for consequences for extreme behavior.

Ball Game Rules

- Use balls for their intended purpose.
- Balls must be returned to the rack.
- No kicking balls while someone is walking in front of the kicking area.
- Student referee calls or adult rulings must be respected.
- Students who are lined up to return to class should not be kicking or playing with any of the balls.
- All students must play with each other not exclude anyone.

Spinner Rules

- No more than 10 students at a time
- 2-3 students may push by jogging lightly, no fast speed running
- As soon as the spinner starts going fast, pushers need to let go and stand back. If a runner or anyone else falls, STOP the spinner
- No hanging from top or ropes
- No jumping on or off while spinner is moving
- Feet must face outward if sitting
- No leaning back towards pole
- When standing, students must hold on to the ropes with both hands and feet must be on the rope – no kicking feet out
- When sitting, students must hold on to the ropes with both hands and have feet on the outside (feet down not out)
- 2 or 3 pushers are first to ride next turn, everyone else goes to the end of the line
- Students cannot crowd around the spinner, must be lined up at the bench and back toward the fence
- Students wanting a turn must be in line
- When the spinner slows down, all students must get off and go to the end of the line except for the pushers who are the next to ride.
- No students can stand on the inside
- The spinner is for Kindergarten through 5th grade only.
- Teachers must be at the spinner during extra recess if your students are using it.



Cafeteria Rules

- Walk at all times.
- No jumping, pushing or spinning in any lunch line, face forward always.
- No screaming or yelling in the lunchroom.
- No throwing any items.
- Make sure all your trash is picked up.
- Remind friends to pick up their trash too.
- Stay inside until dismissed to go.
- Eat what is in your lunch or take it home. No throwing uneaten food away.
- Use kind words.
- You may not be in the hallways during lunch without a clip from your teacher or playground aide.



Cell Phones & Music Devices

Gilbert Christian Schools actively promotes a sense of community on all campuses and is intentional in building an interactive culture between and among faculty and students. Therefore, GCS chooses to limit the use of personal technology devices while students are on campus.

Cell Phones

During School

Student use of cell phones is not allowed on the GCS campus during school hours. Phones are to be turned off, not put on silent or vibrate. Cell phones must be kept out of sight in a purse, backpack or locker. Any visible cell phone is subject to confiscation. In case of an emergency, students must go to the office to place a telephone call.

Parents should not contact children via cell phone or cell watch with a phone call or text during school hours, but should call the office who will contact the child. If parents contact his/her child during the day on a cell device, teachers reserve the right to remove the device for the day from the child per the guidelines below.

Elementary students caught with a cell phone/watch turned on during the school day must surrender the phone/watch to the teacher for the rest of the school day. Repeated abuse may result in the loss of his/her cellular device for additional days during the school day, and the parents will be contacted. On days when phone keeper privileges have been removed, students must check the phone/watch into the school office each morning and check it out at the end of the day.

If an elementary child's phone or watch vibrates/dings/rings in a backpack or locker or on a wrist, the teacher will remind the student that phones must be off. If it happens twice, the cell item will be kept in the school office according to the rule above.

Wrist watches with phone capabilities fall under the same rules as cell phones.

After School & Before School

Students may use cell phones outside the classroom at the end of the day to contact an adult, but before school cell phones are not to be in use on the playground or in the courtyard.

Music Devices

Music devices are not permitted on campus in grades PK-5.



Fundraising and Service Projects

GCS follows the mandates of the Bible and believes that students should learn to serve others and support the Kingdom of God throughout the world (Matthew 28:18-20). Working together to reach these goals brings to the PreK-8 campus the job of giving and the understanding that we all share in the body of Christ and the work of His Kingdom. The fundraising and service projects for the school year are determined by the administration in June. Each spring, new projects are prayerfully considered in light of school goals, and requests to be considered may be submitted via email to the building principal at any time during the school year, for approval in June.

Communications

Throughout the academic year, the office of GCS receives many requests for information to be shared with the school. As a general principle, we do not advertise outside events, fundraisers, services, productions, concerts, etc., to our school community. If you have questions regarding this, please contact the office. Any school-wide communication must be approved by an administrator including posters around school or distribution of flyers. GCS families may not use our distribution lists in FACTS or the mailboxes in the office for personal, business, or church-related matters, but individual children are welcome to tell their individual friends about upcoming events or opportunities that he/she is excited about.

Classroom & Campus Discipline

Discipline is an integral part of the education teachers provide. Passages such as Hebrews 12 serve as a model where God's love is displayed for us in the discipline of His sons and daughters through corrective and instructive training.

GCS does not impose corporal punishment. Rather, encouragement plays an important role in training students. Verbal praise, giving stars or stickers, encouraging comments and awards as well as an encouraging touch on the arm or shoulder are all used to help students know they are doing well. When correction is needed, discipline may include warnings, the loss or recess, heads down on desks, phone calls home, or a visit to the office to talk to the principal.

General Classroom Management Principles

- Teachers smile, enjoy the class, and get to know each student. A safe, well-ordered and positive classroom is the best learning environment.
- Teachers expect respect for themselves, the students, everyone.
- Teachers clearly communicate expectations early and often.
- Teachers do not raise their voices or speak harshly to students.
- Teachers do not use group consequences; however, group rewards and incentives are encouraged.



- Teachers begin with the least repressive consequence and move to great consequences as needed.
- Teachers pray for students often and regularly.

General Student Behavior Guidelines

As a GCS student, you (student), should make choices that please God, parents, and the school.

- Always do your best, as described in the GCS Honor Code. (Colossians 3:17)
- Listen and obey the first time direction is given
 - Look at and listen to the teacher when he/she is talking to honor the teacher.
 - Do not interrupt when others are talking.
- Respect all teachers and school personnel.
 - Acknowledge adults when they speak to you.
 - Follow directions given to you by any GCS staff member. The Honor Code gives helpful suggestions.
- Respect others. Be kind in word and action.
 - Treat others the way you would like to be treated.
 - Encouraging and uplifting words are expected.
 - Apologize and seek forgiveness when you have wronged someone.
 - Be quick to forgive others.
- While working at your desk:
 - Stay on task (be doing what you were asked to do).
 - Do your work without bothering others. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
 - Keep your work area neat and clean.
 - Do your best always to honor our Lord.

Discipline Procedures

Gilbert Christian Schools keeps high behavioral standards for elementary students. Loving, consistent enforcement of these expectations provides the framework needed to produce growth in academic excellence and godliness. All students at Gilbert Christian Schools are expected to meet these expectations, and follow the GCS Honor Code:

Classroom Expectations

- Respect and obey your teacher.
- Respect and encourage classmates.
- Stay on task with the lesson objective.
- Speak in turn.
- Use only humble, pure, honest, encouraging, and obedient words.
- Keep hands and feet to yourself.
- Complete assignments with excellence and in a timely manner.
- Use only humble, pure, honest, encouraging, and obedient words.



- Respect campus property and those in authority.
- Keep hands and feet to yourself.
- Include others; be friendly to all.
- Boys and girls should treat one another as sisters and brothers in Christ. Boyfriend/girlfriend comments are inappropriate.

Shaping the Heart – Student Planners

It is our desire to help shape the hearts of our students as they grow in Christ-like character. One of the ways we do this is by utilizing student planners as a communication tool. Each student in grades K-5 has a planner to log assignments, events, etc. There is also a square for daily comments from your child's teacher. Parents should read this section nightly with their student and check to see if there is an "encouragement code," "reminder code," or a "character code" included. If your child receives a reminder, it is simply that. We're just letting parents know the child's teacher worked on an issue during the school day. No follow up is necessary at home, we're just keeping you informed. If your child receives a "character code," the teacher will call home because follow up and support is needed.

When a child does not make adjustments to the poor behavior, or receive correction, the child may be required to take a time out and regroup for several minutes. If the same poor behavior continues, the child may earn additional consequences. If this still does not correct the problem, or the problem is severe at the start, the child will be sent to the principal's office and the parent will be called or emailed by the end of the principal's school day. The teacher will record all corrections in the planner for the parents to read and discuss at home. If a child makes effort in the area of his/her struggle, the teacher will be sure to note improvement or movement towards improvement. The vice principal or principal may follow up with students; these conversations do not require a phone call home to parents.

GCS 5 Steps of Loving Correction

1. **Remember** – A verbal warning is given by the teacher to help the student change their behavior.
2. **Redirect** – Student is sent to a designated area in the classroom; heart talk and reminder in planner.
3. **Regroup** – Student given time in a different classroom or in the office to rethink their behavior; email home.
4. **Restart** – Student will be sent to the principal for additional heart help; phone call home.
5. **Rejoice** – Teacher gives encouragement and celebrates when student adjusts behavior; celebratory note in planner.



Suspension

Suspension may be given for behaviors such as: disrespect to teachers, the use of profanity or inappropriate language/gestures, destruction of property, stealing, cheating, and fighting. A child will receive half-day in-school suspension for a first offense, whole day in-school suspension for the second offense, and whole day or more out of school suspension for the third offense.

Behavior Plan

Students sent to the office for behavior issues 3 times in a semester may be put on a behavior plan designed to help the student correct his/her behavior. Behavior plans are signed by the students and the parents. The vice principal or principal and the superintendent will monitor students on behavior plans. Students who do not make significant progress in their behavior will be subject to removal from the school.

Expulsion

Expulsion is an option reserved for students who violate a major school rule or who have an ongoing failure to abide by school rules and respect authority. All expulsions must be approved by the superintendent.

Tardiness

We value punctuality at GCS. The campus and playground, with supervision, open at 7:30am. Students should be on the campus no earlier than 7:30am. Students may drop off their backpacks in the courtyard or halls and then go directly to the playground. A student is tardy for class when he/she is not in the room by 8:00am. After 8:00am, the student must stop by the office and pick up a tardy slip to enter the classroom. The only excused tardies will be for doctor appointments. Administration will be notified after 5 tardies and families will be contacted at the administration's discretion to insure the success of students.

Absences

Generally speaking, students are not to miss class. Students absent for more than nine (9) days in a quarter will be called by the principal to discuss the child's academic progress. Students with 10 absences per quarter may not pass the quarter successfully and may need to repeat the grade. An email sent home will alert the parent that a conversation with the principal is necessary due to frequent absences.

Families planning extended trips during the school year should notify the attendance secretary and the classroom teacher one week in advance to make arrangements for make-up work.

Violation of Major School Rules

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a God-honoring manner while on campus. Major violations (such as theft, bringing weapons to school, alcohol use, etc.) will subject a student to swift and appropriate discipline-most likely expulsion. The school reserves the right to require the withdrawal of any student from the school when, in the opinion of the principal, in concert with the superintendent, such action would be in the best interest of the student or school.

Bullying

The administration, teachers, and staff of Gilbert Christian Schools are committed to providing a compassionate, receptive, and non-threatening atmosphere for each pupil whom God entrusts in our care. This is an outgrowth of the values that we promote as an intentionally Christian community. Because the Bible teaches us that love and respect are the foundations for our relationship with God and with others, bullying will not be tolerated at GCS. “Bullying occurs when a person or group is intimidated, frightened, excluded, hurt or discomfited by a pattern of behaviors directed at them by others.” (Greg Griffiths, *Bullying in Schools - The Hidden Curriculum*, 2003). Bullying will be handled in a timely and fair manner according to GCS policy. Bullying will not be excused by GCS staff or parents as “teasing” or “kids just being kids;” however, single incidents of inappropriate behavior do not constitute a pattern of bullying.

Problem-Solving Procedures

In keeping with Matthew 18, most classroom concerns will be addressed directly to the classroom teacher. The building principal may also hear classroom concerns when appropriate. If the teacher does not address the concern in a timely or satisfactory manner, the parent may contact the building principal for additional support. If the building principal does not address the concern in a satisfactory manner, the superintendent may be contacted. The principal may also request that the superintendent is included in problem-solving discussions. Most decisions end with the superintendent, on rare occasions, a letter to the school board may be appropriate.

Campus Transfers

Mid-year campus-to-campus transfers are not encouraged or recommended. Although GCS K-8 curriculum and programs are the same, pacing and coverage of material may vary making it difficult for the child to academically transfer. If a transfer is still deemed necessary, parents must first contact their current building principal to receive a recommendation for transfer. Once the principal of the receiving school receives the sending principal's recommendation, the transfer student and his/her parents will be asked to appear before an acceptance committee consisting of administration and teachers. To finalize the transfer, the committee must approve the student.



A student who is expelled may not appeal for a transfer to another GCS campus. Students who are suspended are considered on a case-by-case basis. School behavior records and grades are always considered by the committee.

Parental Support

The unique culture of Gilbert Christian Schools depends on harmony and mutual respect between the administration, teachers, and parents. We should be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” as is taught in Ephesians 4:3. The key to this is love and strict adherence to Scriptural standards of conduct in all of our relationships, including demonstrations of unity (1 Peter 3:8), respect for authority (Romans 13:1-7), and conflict resolution according to Matthew 18:15. The administration reserves the right to withhold the privilege of enrollment or re-enrollment if it is deemed the school partnership is detrimental to the common good.

Field Trips

Field trips are designed carefully by each grade level to enhance GCS curriculum. Minimizing distractions help children to learn and participate fully. For this reason, parents who are not chaperones or drivers and siblings are not permitted on field trips. Parent participation is essential to quality field trips. If you would like to chaperone or be a driver, please sign up with your child’s teacher. In order to attend a field trip, parent volunteer training including a mandatory background check must be completed. If you would like to be a driver, you must have a license, insurance information, and sign a disclosure statement that is on file with the office. Unfortunately, teachers do not always have room on trips for every parent who may wish to attend.

Prior to each field trip, the teacher will provide parents with the information concerning the purpose and destination of the trip, date, time of departure and estimated time of return. Parental permission slips must be signed by a parent and turned in to the teacher before the trip takes place.

After School Clubs

Gilbert Christian delights in addressing the gifts God has given each child; therefore, after school clubs are designed to help children further explore their interests and develop important skills. Administrators interview outside vendors and interested GCS employees who have the proposals for clubs to see if the proposed club fits GCS standards. Children who enroll in clubs must pay additional fees directly to the vendors, and the vendor is responsible for the child’s safety and learning. Students with poor conduct during a club may be expelled from the club at the discretion of the club leader. Club participation is a privilege, not a right. All club leaders have fingerprint clearance cards and are insured and screened by their organization, with GCS being assured of their professionalism before the club is allowed on campus. Parents are encouraged to promptly pick up children at the end of each club session and club supervisors reserve the right to charge parents who make a habit of late pick-ups.



Athletics

Please see the GCS Athletics Department handbook for information on our wonderful GCS sports programs here <https://gcsaz.org/sports-home/>.

Helpful Reminders

Hallway Use

The hallway is shared space between all students on the K-8 campus. Students are expected to comply with the following rules:

- The hallway is to remain quiet during regular school hours. Students passing between classes are to keep their voices quiet.
- The hallway is off limits for middle school students during the lunch break and before school except in passing.
- Students using the hallway to access restrooms are to use Godly and appropriate speech and behavior.

Books and Musical Instruments

Instruments and Specific books may be assigned to each student at the beginning of each year. Students are expected to keep all instruments and books they are assigned or use in good condition. Students are not to write in or deface books in any way. If instruments or books are returned at the end of the year damaged or defaced, GCS will require the student's parents to reimburse the school for excessive wear and tear that require replacement of any school instrument or book. Lost or damaged instruments need to be reported to administration as soon as possible for the appropriate fee. All monies for lost or damaged items may be paid for online via the GCS website.

School Bus Regulations

Students who ride a school "activity" bus or vehicle are always under the supervision of the driver, who has as much authority as any school official. Seatbelts must be worn by the driver and all passengers on the bus. In order to insure the safety of all students, student misbehavior will not be tolerated. Students are required to ride to and from special events or activities, i.e., field trips, concerts, etc., in a GCS bus. The driver/coach reserves the right to limit or deny cell phone or electronic usage on the bus. Parents should not plan to take their own child home after a field trip. Non-enrolled siblings are not permitted on the bus at any time. Drivers are not permitted to use cell phones while driving a school bus.



Reporting to the Office

Students who are dismissed from class because of improper conduct, will report immediately to the office and will be required to see the principal. Dismissal from class may require a joint parent, teacher, principal conference before the student is reinstated.

Leaving School During the Day

GCS is a closed campus. Students are not to leave the school by themselves, or in groups, without official school permission during the school day. They may only do so if they are excused by a parent for doctor/dental appointments or serious family matters requiring their presence at home. The school will not approve parent requests for students to leave unaccompanied during the school day for recreational purposes, including lunch. Students given parental permission to leave campus become the parent's responsibility and liability as soon as they have left campus.

Items Not Allowed at School

Students should not bring to school or use anywhere on the Gilbert Christian Schools campus any items that present a danger to themselves or to others, or that are incompatible with the culture we seek to create here. Administration officials retain discretion in identifying these items. Examples of items that are not acceptable to bring to school would consist of skateboards, rollerblades, plastic squirt guns, etc.

Empty Classrooms

Empty classrooms should always be locked. Students are not allowed to be in a classroom unless supervised by a paid GCS employee member inside or just outside the classroom.

Courtyard and Hallways Before School

Elementary children are to drop their backpacks off at the classroom door and enter the playground where there is supervision before school. Students with parents supervising may wait in the courtyards before school. No one may linger in the hallways due to congestion.

Bathrooms & Locker Rooms

Students may only enter bathrooms and locker rooms designated to their biological sex.



Dog Policy

Friendly, calm, vaccinated dogs are permitted on Gilbert Christian campus. All dogs must be leashed and carefully controlled by an adult owner. Service dogs are always permitted according to law. As a courtesy and for cleanliness reasons, please do not permit your dog to defecate or urinate on artificial turf or school grounds. Administration and campus security reserves the right to ask any family to remove a dog from the school premises if they deem the dog to be a potential hazard to anyone on campus.

Dogs are not permitted inside any buildings (e.g., office, hallways, gym, classrooms, etc.). If a dog is small enough to be carried down the hallway between courtyards, this is acceptable. If not, please walk the dog around the building outside. No pets are allowed on the playground at any time for student safety and health reasons.