



# GPCS Family Handbook 2017-2018

Welcome!

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

Greater Portland Christian School was established for these purposes over four decades ago. It continues to stand for a high level of age-appropriate academic expectations based on the traditional biblical Christian worldview, and for high standards of morality and Christian behavior.

*This handbook is designed to help you understand how the school operates and to give you the information you need concerning our policies and procedures, but it is not exhaustive in any sense. As with any such document, the school may, from time to time, make changes to this handbook without notice to the families, and the revised document will be applicable going forward. The provisions of this handbook shall not be considered a part of the contract between GPCS and the individual student. In this handbook “parent” is understood to include guardians; “school” refers to GPCS.*

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

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

Blessings,

John Bishop  
Head of School

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# ABOUT THE SCHOOL

## Governance

Greater Portland Christian School is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation known as the Greater Portland Christian School Association. The association elects a representative Board of Directors, which is entrusted with the general care, operation, and function of the school. The board's duties include overseeing the general financial operation of the school (including budgeting, strategic planning, and major fundraising), recruiting and selecting the Head of School, developing policy, and serving as the link between school administration, staff, and the association while also guarding the founders' vision and the school's current mission.

The Head of School is appointed by the board as the Chief Executive Officer of the school and carries out the policies established by the board while overseeing the daily operation of the school. This includes administration of the school's staff, programs, and facilities and making recommendations to the Board of Directors in these and other areas.

## About the GPCS Association

The GPCS Association is the legal corporation which sponsors Greater Portland Christian School. It has two important functions: 1) approval of the annual school budget and 2) nomination and election of school board members.

**Association Membership:** According to our GPCS Constitution, Article IV, membership in this Association is open to all persons 18 years of age and older who:

1. Annually subscribe in writing to the basis of this School as in Article III (which includes our Statement of Faith),
2. Regularly attend an evangelical church, and
3. Pay annual dues (unless a current GPCS parent or staff member).

Once a student has been accepted for enrollment, parents/guardians who meet these criteria have the option of joining the Association by completing the Association Membership Form if they desire. Membership runs from July 1 to June 30 and is renewable each year. *Membership is not a requirement for having students enrolled at GPCS.*

**Association Responsibilities:** Association members are strongly encouraged to attend the two stated meetings of the Association in March, for the presentation of and vote on the budget, and June, for election of board members.

**GPCS Association Constitution and By-laws:** These are available from the Main Office and are posted on the school's website: [www.gpcs.net](http://www.gpcs.net).

## Board of Directors

Board members are elected for terms of up to three years each at the annual meeting of the association in late spring. The association delegates leadership of the school to the board, which establishes policies for the operation of the school. The Head of School, as chief executive officer, exercises oversight for all the operations and activities of the school's ministry. At the annual meeting in early spring, the board submits the school budget to the association for information and approval. GPCS is a board-directed, parent-sponsored school with a high measure of parental involvement at all levels of school activity.

## Mission Statement

Greater Portland Christian School provides a distinctively Christian education which complements the home and church, brings a biblical perspective to every subject, and helps parents prepare their children for a God-glorifying life.

## Core Values

- Truth:** We will seek and value truth, because God is the ultimate source of all truth. “Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding” (Proverbs 23:23).
- Wisdom:** We will seek God’s wisdom in our decisions, choices, and actions. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight” (Proverbs 9:10).
- Excellence:** We will seek the highest possible quality in everything we do. “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- Stewardship:** We will wisely use and care for the resources entrusted to us. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1).
- Servanthood:** We will follow the example set by Jesus Christ in how we serve others. “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

## Theological Basis of the School

The basis of the Greater Portland Christian School Association is the teaching of the Bible that man was made in the image of God to be a steward of His creation, and that parents are responsible to train their children to know and serve God. The basis rests further on the belief that such training can most effectively be carried on in a school where every area of knowledge is related to God: e.g., science is recognized as the investigation and use of God’s eternal purpose; and the arts are viewed as reflections of God’s creatures.

The theological basis which unites the members of this Association and binds the teachers of this School includes the following particular truths of Scripture:

### Statement of Faith

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, and in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

### School History

In the fall of 1971 a number of concerned parents met regularly to begin planning for the creation of a Christian school which would serve the needs of Christian families in the greater Portland region. They were convinced that the area needed a school that viewed every subject area from the historic Christian perspective and which would work in partnership with the Christian home and church.

Greater Portland Christian School opened its doors in September of 1973 with one teacher and ten students in grades one and two. The next year the school expanded, adding third grade and also kindergarten, and enrollment more than doubled to 24.

After several years of growth, GPCS moved in 1981 to the Presumpscot School, where the enrollment increased to more than 200 students, and the school was finally able to offer all four years of high school. June of 1984 was a very special time as the first senior class, fifteen students, graduated. Later that summer, the school moved once more, this time to the Lincoln School in South Portland, its present home. After nearly 20 years of renting the facility from the city of South Portland, GPCS was able to purchase the building in 2002.

More than 325 graduates, and hundreds of other students, have passed through our doors over more than four decades. We are grateful to the Lord as we see how He has honored the faith and vision of those parents many years ago. We believe that this school will continue its mission of providing a biblically based education for many years yet to come.

### **Tax Status**

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

### **Accreditation and Affiliations**

GPCS is recognized by the Maine Department of Education and is actively preparing for the accreditation process. We are a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and the Maine Principals' Association (MPA).

### **Teacher Certification**

Teachers are expected to hold a minimum of a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree and to obtain or maintain state certification. Some of our teachers and administrators also have Master's degrees or are pursuing them.

## **ADMISSION**

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

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

### **Admission Policies**

Greater Portland Christian School seeks to enroll students who may benefit from and are committed to the educational program and biblical values of the school. Admission to GPCS is selective and is based on factors which include parent/guardian compatibility with our traditional biblical values, the student's previous school performance, teacher recommendations, testing results, and a record of exemplary behavior at home, in school, and in the community.

Some of our basic admission policies include the following:

1. GPCS welcomes students of all racial and ethnic origins whose parents/guardians, despite their religious backgrounds or beliefs, are strongly willing to support their children being taught from this traditional biblical perspective and who agree to have their children comply with the policies stated in the GPCS *Family Handbook*.

2. The biblical and philosophical goal of Greater Portland Christian School is to develop students into mature, Christ-like individuals who will be able to exhibit a Christ-like life. Of necessity, this involves the school's understanding and belief of what qualities or characteristics exemplify a Christ-like life. Even though parents may personally believe differently, all students, while enrolled at GPCS, are expected to exhibit the qualities of a Christ-like life espoused and taught by the school and to refrain from certain activities or behavior. Thus, Greater Portland Christian School retains the right to refuse enrollment to or to expel any student who does not share our biblical values or who engages in, advocates, or promotes views or behavior, whether on or off campus, which contradict the school's biblical values.
3. Because we believe that parenthood is designed for adults, and our school program is designed for children and adolescents, GPCS does not ordinarily admit students who are married, parents, pregnant or who are the cause of a pregnancy. Students who become parents have entered into a complex, deeper stage of life than most high school students have ever experienced and for which our program is not designed. Students must be living with their parents/guardians unless in a situation approved by the administration.
4. The student must be able to demonstrate, by testing and/or professional evaluation, that he/she is able to profit from traditional classroom instruction and must have a good attendance record at his/her prior school(s). While we strongly desire to be able to educate every child who comes to us, GPCS regretfully does not have the resources to provide quality educational experiences for children with substantial learning disabilities, serious emotional or social problems, or severe physical disabilities.
5. Students must have a record of exemplary behavior at home, in school, and in the community. We do not require that students have come to personal faith in Christ, but they must be able to comply cheerfully with our policies and standards. Students in grades 6-12 must express a desire to attend GPCS and be able to affirm in writing their agreement to live in harmony with the GPCS *Statement of Faith*, *Code of Conduct*, and *Disciplinary Code*. Students will not be admitted or remain enrolled if they advocate religious, ethical, or moral perspectives or values that, in the opinion of the administration, contradict the biblical perspectives and values of the school.
6. Students must have satisfied all state immunization requirements.
7. In order for preschool and kindergarten students to be accepted into their respective programs, preschool students must be three or four years old (depending on the program level) and kindergarten students must be five years old as of **October 15** of the school year.
8. Re-admission following dismissal or withdrawal will be determined on a case-by-case basis at the sole discretion of the administration.
9. GPCS reserves the right to place students on academic and/or behavioral probation at the administration's discretion.

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

### **Tuition**

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

## Terms of Payment

Families have three options for paying their tuition:

1. Early payment in full by August 10 (receives 3% tuition discount)
2. Two payments: one-half due by August 10 and one-half due by January 10
3. 12-month payment plan: July 10 through June 10 (Registration fee is paid separately by June 1).

Payments are made online using FACTS, which allows parents to check on the status of their account, the schedule of payments, and view payments already made, as well as see a complete listing of all activity for the account. This is not a loan program, so no interest or finance charges are assessed. Visit [FACTSmgt.com](http://FACTSmgt.com) to learn more about the FACTS program.

The Business Office will start the process of setting up a FACTS account for new families upon receipt of their *Tuition & Fees Agreement*. Once GPCS has initiated the account, the family will receive an email link from FACTS in order to complete the registration process.

## Delinquent Payment

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

**Late payments and outstanding balances** are handled in the following manner:

1. If there is unpaid tuition at the end of an academic quarter, the student(s) will not be allowed to attend the following academic quarter until the overdue balance is paid in full.
2. Tuition must be paid in full before graduating seniors can receive their diplomas.
3. Students will not be permitted to begin a new school year if a balance is showing for any previous school year.

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

**Withdrawal:** Students who leave the school for any reason will be charged tuition on a pro-rata basis.

## Tuition Assistance

GPCS provides some tuition assistance for mission-appropriate students based on demonstrated need. We use the services of FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment to determine financial need. Families applying for financial aid will need to complete an online application and submit the necessary supporting documentation and \$35 application fee to FACTS by April 30 each year. To access FACTS, please visit our website ([www.GPCS.net](http://www.GPCS.net)), click on the "PARENTS" menu at the top, then on "FACTS (Tuition) Login."

Financial assistance decisions will be announced as soon as possible after the April 30 deadline. New families applying for enrollment to GPCS after the April 30 deadline may still apply for financial aid.

## Fundraising

Since tuition covers only a portion of the full cost of educating our students, leaving a gap of several hundred dollars per student, all families are expected to support the various fundraisers that help make up the difference for their children. Individual classes and various school organizations sponsor other, smaller fundraisers during the year to help reduce the cost of class trips and to purchase additional resources.

## “Passive” Support

“Passive” fundraising lets you contribute to GPCS while doing your everyday shopping. While these programs do not require a cash contribution, each seemingly small contribution adds up in a big way to benefit a variety of GPCS programs.

1. **AmazonSmile:** Amazon will give a portion of most of your Amazon purchases to GPCS if you simply start your Amazon shopping at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and (on your first visit) designate “Greater Portland Christian School Association” as your charitable organization. The site is identical to amazon.com; you use your regular Amazon account to do your shopping. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same. Once you have designated GPCS as your charitable organization, Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) in the future will result in a donation to GPCS. Please pass this message on to your friends and family. The more people who use [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and designate Greater Portland Christian School, the more money will go to GPCS. It does not cost you anything extra and helps our school a lot!
2. **General Mills Box Tops For Education:** Cash is awarded to the school for box tops from qualifying General Mills, Betty Crocker, and Pillsbury products with the “Box Tops for Education” logo. Simply clip your box tops, check the expiration date, and set them aside for future collection. Our earnings from this program go toward playground improvement. Encourage your friends, family, and church to support GPCS in this very easy way.

## ATTENDANCE

### Absences

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

### Excused Absences:

1. Illness or injury prohibiting a child from coming to school (more than three days requires a physician’s note to be excused)
2. School-sponsored activities during the school day
3. Serious illness or death in the family, bereavement
4. Planned absences for personal or educational purposes
5. Health professional appointments that cannot be made outside the regular school day
6. Family emergencies and other exceptional situations approved in advance by the administration
7. Serving a school-imposed disciplinary suspension
8. Winter weather: if school is in session but parent believes travel would be unsafe

A written note from a parent/guardian stating the specific reason for the absence must be submitted the day the student returns after an absence. The administration makes the final decision as to whether an absence is excused or unexcused.



## Excessive Absences

Students in Kindergarten – grade 12 are expected to be in attendance at school at least 85% of the 175 instructional days in the school calendar in order to keep pace and achieve success in their educational development. Therefore, any student in grade K – grade 5 who accumulates more than 26 days excused and/or unexcused absence, will be considered for retention in that grade. Students in grades 6–12 who accumulate more than 26 excused and/or unexcused absences (or 13 days in a single semester; pro-rated for classes meeting fewer than five days a week) will be in jeopardy of forfeiting credit for their courses, with the final decision to be made by the administration. Parents will be notified of excessive absences in a timely manner and students may be placed on academic probation in an attempt to prevent this kind of serious consequence.

## Student Early Dismissals

When a student needs to leave during school hours, a note from a parent/guardian must be submitted prior to early dismissal stating the dismissal time and reason. Students arriving late or leaving early must sign in or out at the main office.

## Tardiness

Students who arrive after **8:10AM** (grades 6-12) or **8:20AM** (grades K-5) are marked tardy. Tardiness disrupts classroom routines and instruction, and chronic tardiness may develop a habit in a student which will be detrimental to success beyond school. Therefore, parents are expected to make every effort to ensure students are at school on time.

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

Secondary students (grades 6–12) with **five unexcused tardies** to a class in a quarter will receive an after-school detention. Continued tardiness will result in meeting with the administration to determine further disciplinary action if appropriate.

Secondary students (grades 6-12) must attend school for at least **three hours of classes** in order to participate in any after-school activity.

## Student Planned Absences

Since a number of extended recesses are scheduled during the school year itself, parents are strongly encouraged not to schedule vacations during school weeks, if at all possible, due to the disruption it can cause in a student's academic progress as well as the extra work it creates for teachers. A planned absence may make the difference in a student passing a grade or specific course(s). If a planned absence must be scheduled, the parent should complete a *Student Planned Absence Notice* form and send it to the main office preferably four weeks prior to the absence.

In the event that students miss school due to a planned absence, the teacher will use his/her discretion regarding the issuing of homework prior to the trip. Any homework given prior to the vacation must be completed and turned in as specified by the teacher; otherwise, no credit will be given for the assigned work. Further, if the teacher decides that no homework will be given prior to the trip, then all work missed is to be completed within the same number of school days that the student missed. The student must recognize that he/she is responsible for any work missed while he/she is absent from school, and that teachers will not be asked to provide tutoring or additional help due to planned absence. If there are multiple tests or major quizzes or projects to be made up, then the teacher(s) involved will coordinate the makeup requirement for these kinds of major grades.

## **Make-up Work**

On the day secondary students (grades 6-12) return from an absence, they are responsible for checking with their teachers about missed work. Students with excused absences will be allowed to make up all work missed in a time period equal to the number of days the student was absent. As a general rule, if an assignment or project is given in advance and the student is absent from school for 1-2 days during the assignment period, the assignment will still be due or the test taken on the assigned date; this is at the teacher's discretion. Special consideration will be given to students with long-term illness or disability documented by a physician's note.

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

## **SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

### **Spiritual Formation Overview**

As a Christian school, GPCS complements the efforts of the Christian home and church in helping students discover their purpose and destiny in Christ. We want every student to hear the good news of Jesus Christ; to come to personal, saving faith in Him, and to grow in their relationship with Christ.

With the goal of training students to view every aspect of life through the lens of God's Word, GPCS teachers integrate biblical truth with every subject area. At GPCS, God's natural creation and His supernatural Word come together to form a comprehensive Christian worldview, providing students the solid foundation they need to understand themselves and their world and to evaluate their culture. Developing a Christian mind helps students fulfill the First Great Commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37).

Spiritual development is also cultivated by providing a school environment where we seek, however imperfectly, to honor Christ in our actions, attitudes, and words. This begins with our school leadership, faculty, and staff, who have been carefully selected not only for their professional credentials and expertise, but also because they are committed to traditional biblical values and to the spiritual development of our students.

Bible classes, weekly chapels, daily prayer and Bible reading, community service activities, mission trips (high school) and an emphasis on biblical character are some of the other ways we nurture the spiritual growth of our students.

### **Cooperation with Area Churches**

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

### **Bible Version**

For consistency, students are asked to have an English Standard Version (ESV) Bible for school use. Other versions are sometimes used in class for various reasons, but the ESV is the one they will use throughout their years here.

## **Prayer Meetings**

Our Moms In Prayer group schedules school prayer meetings periodically to provide opportunities for our school family to come together to pray for the needs of the school and its families.

## **Chapels & Assemblies**

All students are required to attend our weekly chapel services, giving them the opportunity to sing, share testimonies, and hear a nondenominational, biblical message. Chapel programs involve many different kinds of speakers, activities, and videos. Area pastors, youth pastors, and missionaries are frequent guests. Occasionally special chapels or assemblies are announced when the opportunity arises to hear special guests or presentations. Special all-school (PreK–grade 12) chapels are held on occasion. Parents are always welcome to attend chapel services.

## **High School Mission Teams**

The Spanish teacher leads a group of high school Spanish students on a mission trip about every other year. Previous destinations have included Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Teams also have served in other communities, such as Staten Island, N.Y., and New Orleans, La., as well as with local churches and organizations in the Portland area such as the Root Cellar, Animal Rescue League, and Maine Military Museum.

## **Freshman Christian Service Requirement**

One of our core values is *servanthood*: “We will follow the example set by Jesus Christ in how we serve others” because “...Even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). High school freshmen are required to serve nine hours each quarter beyond the typically assigned projects given at school. No more than nine hours will count from the summer prior to the start of the freshman school year. Each activity should in some way benefit the community, no compensation should be given to the student, and the activity should not be for a family member.

# **ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

## **Elementary Program Overview**

GPCS’s elementary program serves students in kindergarten through grade five. Our caring, competent state-certified teachers use sound instructional practices and resources in order to provide our students with a biblically based foundation of learning on which to build future success. Our goal during these formative years is for our students to become excellent thinkers, readers, and writers who have mastered the core academic skills and content required for achievement in all subject areas. We want to help each student reach the full potential of his/her God-given abilities.

Elementary students are provided a comprehensive curriculum of Bible, language arts, math, science, history/social studies, physical education, and music, all taught from the Christian perspective. Dedicated classroom volunteers provide art projects for the elementary classes. We utilize standardized and curriculum-based testing to determine the individual learning needs of our students and to monitor their growth. Our small class sizes (usually fifteen or fewer) make it possible for our teachers to more easily understand the individual needs of our students.

## **Middle School Program Overview**

The GPCS middle school program serves students in grades six through eight. The goal of our middle school program is to come alongside students as they transition through these years, to prepare them for the significant challenges of high school, and ultimately to help them fulfill God’s plan for their lives. Students mature at different rates and benefit from our small class sizes (usually under fifteen). Our state-certified teachers use sound instructional practices and resources in order to provide our students with a biblically integrated education.

Preparing for the rigors of high school is stressed throughout the middle school program. Middle school students are provided a comprehensive curriculum of English, math, science, history, Bible, computer, physical education, Spanish, art, and music—all taught from the Christian perspective.

## **High School Program Overview**

The goal of the GPCS high school program is to prepare students for college and, ultimately, for discovering God's destiny for their lives. Our competent, state-certified teachers do this through a rigorous, biblically integrated academic program, the cultivation of critical and creative thinking skills, multiple opportunities to serve the needs of others, opportunities for extracurricular enrichment, and not least, a moral and ethical foundation anchored in God's Word, the Bible. All of this is done in active partnership with the Christian home and church.

GPCS high school students are offered a comprehensive academic program designed to provide them the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in higher education as well as in future employment. We focus on the traditional core academic areas but provide some electives beyond the basics, such as Spanish, accounting, and art. We offer an Advanced Placement course or two depending on demand (for which some colleges and universities offer credit with a high enough exam score) plus College Calculus each year.

In addition to the mission trips led by the Spanish teacher about every other year, the Travel Club plans educational trips on alternate years. The Travel Club trips are offered through Education First (EF) Educational Tours to places such as the United Kingdom (2011), Italy and France (2013), and Greece and Turkey (2015). A trip to Germany is scheduled for June, 2017.

## **Bible Instruction**

GPCS is an evangelical, interdenominational school that draws from about three dozen area churches. Our Statement of Faith reflects our commitment to the traditional understanding of the Christian faith shared by evangelical churches regardless of denominational affiliation. All classes, including Bible, are taught from this perspective which is anchored in the authority of Scripture.

While Bible instruction is squarely based in the evangelical perspective, we do not teach or promote the theological distinctives or worship styles of any single denomination. Secondary level students will learn that there is a wide range of interpretation on many issues even among Bible-believing Christians. Evangelical beliefs will be contrasted and compared respectfully with non-evangelical perspectives. When controversial questions relating to doctrine, Scripture interpretation, or worship style arise in the classroom, we will direct students to seek answers from their own parents and churches and to be respectful of those positions with which they do not agree.

## **Literature Instruction**

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

The teaching of literature fits into this scheme of development. Using good literature can help develop this process. Literature must be taught with analysis and evaluation. Selected and approved literature and authors that are not in total agreement with Christian values may be used at the secondary level in order to train students how to evaluate and analyze literature on the basis of Scriptural truth.

## **Science Instruction**

Consistent with the Scriptures and the historic Christian faith, Greater Portland Christian School teaches emphatically that the God of the Bible is the ultimate cause of the universe, the Creator of all that exists. Our students are taught that the universe and life are not the result of random events

but because of the intentional purpose and action of God. Evangelicals differ as to how and when God’s creative work occurred. Because of this diversity among Bible-believing Christians as to the “mechanics” of creation, GPCS does not take an official position on how or when creation took place—just that God did indeed create all that exists.

We believe that younger students only need to understand that God created the universe and that it is up to their parents and churches to discuss any views that go beyond a six-day creation. We believe that older students need to understand the theory of naturalistic evolution, which will be critiqued from a biblical and scientific viewpoint. Older students will also be made aware of the major evangelical perspectives on origins but again will be directed to their own parents and churches to decide what they believe to be the biblical position.

## **Grading System**

<b>Numerical Equivalent</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>4-pt Scale Equivalent</b>
92-100	A	4.00
90-91	A-	3.67
88-89	B+	3.33
82-87	B	3.00
80-81	B-	2.67
78-79	C+	2.33
72-77	C	2.00
70-71	C-	1.67
69	D+	1.33
66-68	D	1.00
65	D-	.67
64 & below	F	.00

## **Progress Reporting / Report Cards**

The school year is divided into four nine-week quarters, two quarters in each semester. Progress Reports (mid-quarter reports) are emailed to elementary parents after the fourth week of the first quarter. Middle school and high school teachers report any academic concerns mid-way through the quarter. Report cards are emailed to all parents (mailed on request) usually two weeks after the end of each quarter.

## **Sycamore Online Grades & Communications**

Grades are posted regularly on Sycamore School, our online student information system that tracks a variety of data to allow administration, teachers, parents, and students to track student academic performance at school. Engrade provides real-time, 24/7 access for students and parents to grades, assignments, and teacher communications. Teachers post grades on Sycamore at least weekly, and parents are encouraged to check grades regularly. By clicking on the desired class, parents can see the exact make-up of the grades, e.g., missing work, quiz and test scores, etc. If you look only at the home screen, you will not see the explanation for the grades.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for the end of the first quarter for grades K-12. Teachers and parents may schedule conferences at any time on an individual basis.

## **Grade Point Average (GPA)**

High school Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is based on all the student's academic course work (except physical education and fine arts) from grades 9-12. GPAs are calculated after each semester, so any transcripts sent out after January and before graduation of the senior year will include only the first semester of twelfth grade as well as the student's academic coursework from grades 9-11.

## **Honor Roll**

The High Honor Roll has no grade lower than an A- in academic subjects. The Honor Roll has no grade lower than a B- in academic subjects.

## **Course Failures**

### **Middle School (Grades 6-8)**

Any student failing two or more core academic subjects (English, Math, History, and Science) will repeat that grade for the next school year.

### **High School (Grades 9-12)**

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

1. Pass a comparable course of an approved correspondence or online program;
2. Repeat the course in the upcoming school year, schedule permitting.

## **Promotion & Retention**

1. Retention is occasionally required in order to give a student a better opportunity for success in school. Sometimes retention is necessary because of academic failure; this is more likely to occur in an upper grade. However, retention may be recommended in elementary grades due also to social, emotional, or behavioral factors that are having an adverse effect on a child. Children mature at different rates; it may be more advantageous in the long term to retain the child at an early age rather than experience “failure” at a higher grade level.
2. Understanding that there may also be negative emotional and/or social consequences to retention (especially for older students), our goal is to minimize the need for retention as much as possible. Developmental screening is one tool for reducing the need for retention—starting students at the best age is important. Also important is early communication between the home and school combined with vigorous intervention efforts help to reduce the potential for retention.
3. If, after careful observation, a teacher feels retention is a possibility for a student, he/she will consult with the Head of School and then schedule a parent conference to discuss the child’s academic and developmental progress. At this conference, the possibility of retention will be suggested, if appropriate, as well as specific plans for remediation. If the student fails to make the progress necessary to have success at the next grade level, a recommendation for retention will be made to the parents by the classroom teacher with the Head of School’s approval at the earliest time possible during the second semester.
4. Generally, the school will not retain a student without parental consent. However, in cases in which the administration believes that promotion would be educationally detrimental to a student or would have a negative effect on the progress of his/her classmates, the administration reserves the right to require a student to be retained if she/he is to remain enrolled at GPCS.
5. The general policy regarding retention is that a child may not be retained more than one time while enrolled at GPCS.

## **Academic Probation**

Secondary students who fail to make reasonable academic progress may be placed on academic probation at any time during the school year.

# Diploma/Credit Requirements\*

*\*Subject to change as necessary*

Subject Areas	Credits	
Bible	4 (1 credit for each year of GPCS enrollment)	*While in high school, all students taking a foreign language must take two years of a foreign language.
Math	4	
English	4	
Social Studies	4 (1 credit must be in U.S. History)	
Science	4	
Foreign Language*	2	
Physical Education	1	**Fine arts credit may be earned by taking an art class (in or outside of GPCS) and by participating in drama, yearbook, and/or chorus as available.
Fine Arts**	1	
Computer Literacy	1	
Health	.5	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25.5</b>	

## Transfer Credit

All grades will be transferred to the GPCS grading scale by the most equitable method. The Academic Dean will evaluate transfer students' prior coursework for GPCS credit at the time of enrollment. Academic work accomplished through homeschooling will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

## Course Selection

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

## Schedule Changes

Changes in students' schedules that involve changing from one course or track to a different course or track must be completed by the end of the first marking period. If a student wishes to drop a course after that date, the student and his/her parent must confer with the Academic Dean for this change to be considered. Parents are required to sign off on any changes.

## Graduation

Graduation is based on the satisfactory completion of the requirements set by the board. A minimum of 21.5 units of credit above eighth grade, plus one credit of Bible for every year at GPCS, is required for receiving a diploma from GPCS. All credit requirements must be fully met and tuition account current in order for a senior to receive his/her diploma and have final transcripts released.

## Participation in Commencement Exercises

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

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

1. All required coursework must have been satisfactorily completed; if not, the student must be making sufficient progress as determined by the administration toward completion of approved alternative options by June 1 of the senior year. Should a senior fail any required courses for graduation, those courses must be retaken either in summer school or through an approved program at cost and obligation to the senior. A diploma will be issued only after the course is satisfactorily completed. If a student was in attendance throughout the senior year, but fails to satisfy the credit unit requirements by one credit unit or less, that student may participate in the graduation ceremony but will not receive a diploma until the credit requirement is satisfied.

2. Students must attend full time for both semesters of their senior year at GPCS in order to graduate. A transfer student’s remaining graduation requirements will be determined at the time of admission.
3. All tuition and fees owed to the school for the senior must be paid in full or the family must be current with its payment plan in order for the student to participate in commencement exercises. Students will regretfully not be allowed to participate in the commencement exercises if parents are in arrears on their payment plan.
4. The student must have a satisfactory disciplinary record in his/her senior year. *Serious or chronic misbehavior in the senior year may disqualify a student from attendance and participation at commencement activities at the discretion of the administration.* Students prohibited from attending and participating in these activities but who have met the other criteria may receive their diploma the week following graduation.
5. The student must be in conformity with the dress code requirements for commencement exercises in order to attend and participate.

## Student Testing

We utilize standardized achievement testing and curriculum-based testing to determine the individual learning needs of our students and to monitor their growth. Each spring students in grades K–8 take the TerraNova tests, one of the most respected and widely used achievement tests, which measures mastery in the core subjects.

High school students begin to prepare for post high school planning by taking the following tests at various locations in the area:

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

## Exams

Semester exams are given as a regular part of the academic program for students in grades 9-12. A semester exam will count no more than 20% of the final average for a course.

## Homework

Meaningful homework may provide a student with additional opportunities for

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

### Daily Homework Time Guidelines *(occasionally will be exceeded)*

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

These National PTA recommendations fall in line with general guidelines suggested by researcher Harris Cooper: 10-20 minutes per night in the first grade, and an additional 10 minutes per grade level thereafter (e.g., 20 minutes for second grade, 120 minutes for twelfth). High school students may sometimes have more homework, depending on what classes they take, but students will be given ample time to complete projects, papers, etc. If they work a little each day, they usually will not exceed the recommended time. Leaving work to the last minute is not recommended!



## Papers, Reports, & Projects

Students are required to do research papers, projects, and reports for various courses and subject areas as appropriate for their grade level. Teachers will explain the grading process and requirements for these assignments. While each teacher may vary somewhat in the requirements of the project, secondary work (grades 6-12) must be consistent with the GPCS Writing & Research Standards.

### Late Work

Late work policies among teachers can vary from grade point penalties for major assignments such as papers and projects to not accepting late work at all (especially for daily homework or daily practice assignments). Teachers thoughtfully consider the course content, class grade level/ability, and college preparatory nature of each class when developing these policies. Students need to know their teachers' policies for late work as printed in the course syllabi. The best solution is to turn in work on time.

### Extra Work

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

### Extra Help

Teachers make themselves available for extra help as much as possible. Students are encouraged to see a teacher for any additional questions, problems, and assistance that they may need.

## GPCS WRITING AND RESEARCH STANDARDS: GRADES 6–12

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

### Writing Standards

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

## Research Standards

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

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### Philosophy

Greater Portland Christian School is a school family based on the teachings of Jesus Christ as taught in His Word, the Bible. In such a community, we all—students, parents, and staff—are expected to engage in ways that build each other up and honor God. There is no place for language, appearance, or behavior that would show anything other than respect for God, ourselves, and those around us, for our facilities, and for our learning environment (Romans 12:10,16; 13:8-10; 14:19). We feel strongly that no one at GPCS should ever experience rudeness, disrespect, sexual comments, theft, intimidation, harassment, fighting, or any other type of behavior that would make that person feel unsafe, unwelcome, or less than equal. We have, therefore, developed policies to help ensure that GPCS provides students the safe environment necessary for optimal learning and training. Attending GPCS is a privilege that is extended on the condition that students and parents accept and support our policies, including this *Code of Conduct*. The *Code of Conduct* expresses basic principles by which we expect students to live as long as they are enrolled at GPCS.

### General Conduct Expectations for All Students

1. An attitude of respect for those in authority and a spirit of cooperation are to be maintained by all students. Insubordination, verbal abuse, persistent noncompliance, or open defiance of the authority of any administrator, teacher, or person assigned to supervise the student will not be tolerated. All GPCS employees have authority over all students, regardless of the employee's position. Students will at all times respect the authority of all teachers, school staff, and volunteers and address them respectfully, using the titles of Mrs., Mr., Ms., or Coach.
2. Students should understand that school rules are in effect at all school functions, whether on campus or not, and that teachers are authorized to establish reasonable classroom/course academic and behavioral expectations that comply with school policy.
3. Students will be considerate towards other students and adults, showing good manners at all times. They will not engage in conduct that will disrupt, disturb, or interrupt any school activity (e.g., talking without permission, rowdiness in hallways, coarse behavior, extreme clothing or grooming styles, etc.). Students will walk in the halls, use a reasonable tone of voice, and exhibit orderly behavior.
4. Students will arrive at school and classes on time, dressed appropriately, prepared to work and to complete assignments as instructed. They will not leave a designated location at school or at an off-campus school activity without permission from a school authority. If students have any problem that keeps them from class, they should speak to a teacher or the office immediately, or send word of emergency situations.

5. Students are encouraged to communicate and behave in Christ-honoring ways that build up and benefit. Examples of unacceptable conversation and behavior include inappropriate jokes, pranks, offensive symbols (e.g., gang symbols, racist symbols, suggestive sign language, etc.), pornography, gossip, derogatory remarks, degrading names and putting others down (e.g., “shut up”), misuse of God’s name or spiritually meaningful terms, vulgar or coarse language, profanity, suggestive stories or drawings, horse play, hiding book bags, invading private property, stealing lunches or snacks, acts of intimidation, and invading private space. Students will not bully, threaten, taunt, or harass anyone, including students and employees.
6. Student postings on social media must be consistent with the school’s Christian testimony. Students will not post derogatory, insulting, or threatening remarks about the school, its staff, or its students. They will not post or transmit coarse, offensive, or obscene language and/or inappropriate, embarrassing, or obscene pictures, graphics, or videos, whether using phones or Internet at home or school. While the administration does not scrutinize social media, when objectionable or questionable postings are brought to its attention, it will deal with any postings that are inconsistent with GPCS’s testimony as a Christian school.
7. All students are expected to comply with the GPCS PEDs Policy (below) and our *Responsible Use Policy* (Appendix).
8. Students will live in harmony with the biblical view of sexuality and abstain from all immoral sexual activity including, but not limited to, sexual activity outside of marriage and possession, distribution, and/or use of pornography (Hebrews 13:4; Galatians 5:16-2; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Ephesians 5:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8). They will not promote or advocate for unbiblical views of sexuality. Inappropriate physical contact (e.g., hugging, kissing, and sitting in laps) is not acceptable.
9. Students will not advocate religious, ethical, or moral perspectives or values that, in the opinion of the administration, contradict the biblical perspectives and values of the school.
10. Students will respect all property belonging to the school, its employees, and other students and will not handle or remove another’s personal belongings without permission, which will be dealt with by the school as theft.
11. Students are expected to avoid all forms of dishonesty including lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarizing, and forging.
12. No student is permitted to use or have in his/her possession while on school property or at any school function any object which is or can be used as a weapon or looks like a weapon, including firearms, knives, toy weapons, explosives, dangerous chemicals, or fireworks of any kind. Students will not behave in any way that can injure others such as horseplay and throwing objects.
13. Students will not obtain, use, or provide prohibited substances and devices including tobacco, e-cigarettes, vape pens, or any other electronic nicotine-delivery systems or any mind-altering substances such as drugs or alcohol, regardless of whether at a school function or elsewhere.

## **Elementary Playground Guidelines**

In order to help keep students safe on the playground, we have created the following guidelines which parents should review with their elementary students:

1. There should be no climbing on fences, swing set legs, or slide legs.
2. Please do not throw hard balls, rocks, or snowballs.
3. There should be no playing with sticks.
4. Do not push or hit other students or pull on their clothing.
5. Students are not to leave the playground area (or gym) without permission. Children may go inside only if they cannot wait to use the bathroom, but should not go in to retrieve forgotten toys or clothing.

6. There may be only one child on the slide ladder at a time, and the end of the slide must be kept clear of objects (including children). Children may not slide down headfirst. Toys should not be sent down the slide.
7. Balls may be bounced against walls that do not have low windows.
8. Students may sit on bleachers but not hop or run on them.
9. Students must hold onto all sports equipment, especially balls, when walking in and out of the building.
10. Due to insurance regulations, students may not use roller skates or skateboards.

## **DRESS CODE**

### **Philosophy**

Our dress code is based on the principles of modesty, neatness, safety, and appropriateness. It has been designed to help ensure a school environment in which learning can take place safely and without distraction and to help prepare students to deal with workplace requirements. We give our students wide latitude in how they dress as long as they comply with the principles and guidelines below. Parents have the primary responsibility to make sure their children are dressed appropriately for school and conform to the dress code.

### **General**

1. Students are to dress modestly, neatly, safely, and appropriately for the Christian school setting.
2. All clothing must be neat, clean, in good repair (not ripped or torn), and sized appropriately: not oversized, sloppy, or tight-fitting. All clothing must be modest—not revealing or see-through. Students are expected to be clean and well-groomed and to practice good physical hygiene.
3. Dress and grooming must never contradict GPCS's biblical values. Logos, styles, etc., that violate biblical principles of wholesomeness and modesty are never appropriate at school functions of any kind.
4. Any clothing, jewelry, or grooming style that calls attention to itself and/or is disruptive in any way at school or school functions is unacceptable.
5. Students are to remain in appropriate dress code attire while on school grounds from the time they arrive until they depart, including athletic practices and events.
6. Dress code for special functions and occasions such as field trips, awards events, athletic team events, banquets, and graduation-related activities will be announced as necessary.

### **Specific Guidelines**

1. No underclothing or bare midriffs should show at any time; pajamas and bedroom clothing are unacceptable.
2. Modest sleeveless tops are acceptable. Straps of tops should be no less than 2 inches wide. Tank tops, halter tops, crop tops, and anything that is excessively tight, short, or low-cut is unacceptable.
3. Shirts/tops must not expose skin beneath a line drawn across from armpit to armpit.
4. Skirts should be no shorter than one's finger tips when arms are fully extended to one's sides and should not "ride up" during the day.
5. Leggings/jeggings may only be worn with tops or skirts/dresses/shorts that are at least finger-tip length.
6. Boys' pants must be worn above the hips.
7. Modest shorts (no shorter than one's finger tips when arms are extended to one's sides) may be worn except December through February.

8. Hair should be clean and well-groomed; hair style, jewelry, and makeup should not be extreme and/or distracting. Excessive jewelry in size or quantity is not permitted for boys or girls.
9. Tattoos and body- or face-piercing jewelry (except girls' earrings) are not to be visible at school or any school functions including sports. No stretching or gauging of piercings is permitted. Boys are not to wear earrings at school or any school functions. Headgear (such as hats, hoods, bandanas, etc.) and sunglasses may not be worn inside the school building.
10. Shoes or sneakers must be worn at all times (for safety reasons, flip-flops are discouraged). Sneakers must be worn for PE and/or any activity on the gym floor.
11. Physical Education students are required to wear either shorts, athletic pants, or jeans (elem.), along with a T-shirt and sneakers.
12. Formal Dress attire is required at events such as awards ceremonies, banquets, and graduation. Formal dress for young men includes a dress shirt, tie, slacks (no jeans or shorts), shoes, and socks. For young women, formal dress includes either a dress or a skirt/dress pants and blouse, and dress shoes.

## Enforcement

1. The school administration and staff will seek to enforce the dress code with consistency, fairness, and respect, and with concern for not only an individual student but also for the larger school family. We do not want to foster negative attitudes unnecessarily, especially over these kinds of issues, but we do expect students and parents to cooperate when we bring something to their attention. **Parents are expected to support the school's position when questions arise.**
2. Students in violation of the dress code may be asked to remain at the main office until suitable clothing can be brought in and may be subject to disciplinary action (see Disciplinary Code), especially if a repeat offender. Students wearing acceptable clothing in an unacceptable manner may also be subject to disciplinary action (see Disciplinary Code).
3. The school reserves the right to evaluate and place restrictions as needed as new fashions and fads emerge.

*Final interpretation of the dress code rests solely with the administration.*

## STUDENT USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Greater Portland Christian School is pleased to offer its students access to a computer network and the Internet as an integral part of an engaging and collaborative learning environment. Our *Student Responsible Use Policy* provides specific guidelines regarding the access and use of the school's technology resources and may be found on the school's website, [www.gpcs.net](http://www.gpcs.net), as well as be obtained from the Main Office.

Students must comply with all school policies, rules, and expectations concerning student conduct and communications when using GPCS technology resources, whether on or off school property. **Access is a privilege—not a right.** To gain access to the Internet, a parent/guardian and student must sign their agreement with the *Student Responsible Use Policy* each year.

GPCS filters all Internet traffic for the purpose of safeguarding staff and students from harmful content and provides supervision and education related to appropriate online behavior and use of technology resources. However, despite the best efforts of the school, inappropriate materials could be encountered during students' educational research. If such inappropriate material is inadvertently encountered, students should report it to their teacher and then immediately disengage from it.

GPCS reserves the right to record and monitor all activity conducted on any school technology resources. Absolutely no level of privacy related to actions that are executed using school technology resources should be assumed by any users. **Users do not have a privacy right in the contents of their computer system, including messages sent, received, or stored on the email systems, or in their use of the Internet regardless of whether they use school devices or privately owned devices.** School staff and tech volunteers may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly.

# **PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (PEDS) POLICY** (Rev. 8/7/2017)

## **Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs), Cell Phones, & Use of Technology**

### **General**

Personal electronic devices (PEDs) such as cell phones, smartphones, laptops, iPads, tablets, eReaders, iPods, and similar devices can enhance a student’s school experience if used appropriately. However, unrestricted use of these devices can have detrimental effects for users and be disruptive to our program. Therefore, GPCS has established guidelines in order to maximize these devices’ benefits and minimize misuse.

### **Guidelines applying to all students include:**

1. *PEDs and school technology resources may only be used with expressed, explicit faculty or administrative permission.* Restrictions on use may be made at the discretion of the administration, including type of access and location of use.
2. All use of PEDs and school technology resources must comply with this PEDs policy and with the GPCS Responsible Use Policy.
3. Parents understand that no technical support is provided for PEDs by the school, and that *all PEDs are brought to school at the user’s own risk. Neither GPCS nor its staff are responsible for theft, loss, or damage to PEDs.*
4. Students may not use PEDs to make or receive phone calls during school hours (7:45AM–3:00PM) without specific permission. Parents are always welcome to call the Main Office to leave messages.
5. Use of PEDs is *strictly prohibited* in locker rooms, restrooms, or any other place where people have a reasonable expectation of privacy.

### **Elementary (Grades K–5)**

1. We strongly encourage parents to *not* send PEDs to school with elementary students as these easily provide a major distraction in class and are prone to being lost or taken without permission. In addition, devices with Internet-connectivity pose major safety risks for children and potentially even their classmates as elementary students generally do not possess the maturity or skills to use the Internet safely unsupervised.
2. However, an elementary student may bring a PED to school provided the parent provides a signed “PED Consent Form.” Upon student arrival, PEDs must be silenced and kept in the student’s backpack during the school day (backpacks for some classes hang outside the classroom). PEDs must not be seen, heard, or used during the school day (including recesses).
3. Students may use PEDs in AfterCare *only* if the device cannot connect to the Internet (no cell phones for this reason).
4. Elementary students shall not capture, publish, broadcast, or otherwise electronically transmit photos, video, or audio of students or staff at school or at school-sponsored activities *without the explicit parental permission* of those photographed, recorded, or videotaped, except for activities considered to be in the public arena such as sporting events or public performances.
5. Elementary Violations: If PEDs are brought to school without permission or used without permission, they may be confiscated and the parent be required to retrieve them. Any further misuse or unauthorized use of a PED may result in the loss of the privilege to bring a PED to school. If an elementary student uses a PED to photograph, record, and/or video while on campus without permission, the device will be confiscated by the teacher and must be retrieved by a parent. In such cases, disciplinary action will be taken with the student.

### **Secondary (Grades 6–12)**

1. PEDs must be silenced and put away out of sight (locker, pocket, book bag, etc.) during school hours (8:05 AM–2:30 PM, *including study halls and period changes*) except during lunch. Students are allowed to use PEDs during classes for academic or instructional

- purposes only when explicitly permitted by their teacher. In study halls, laptops may be used with explicit teacher permission to complete assignments but the use of any other PEDs is not permitted. All use of PEDs on campus must comply with the school's Responsible Use Policy.
2. Students must leave PEDs on the teacher's desk if leaving a room during class; they may pick up the PED from the teacher's desk when returning to class. Earbuds and headphones are not permitted during the school day (including study halls and lunch) and may only be used in the classroom with explicit teacher permission when there is an academic necessity.
  3. Students shall not capture, publish, broadcast, or otherwise electronically transmit photos, video, or audio of students or staff at school or at school-sponsored activities *without the explicit permission* of those photographed, recorded, or videotaped, except for activities considered to be in the public arena such as sporting events or public performances.
  4. Secondary Violations:
    - a. First violation: unauthorized use of a PED or disruption of a class or other activity by a PED will result in the device being confiscated and held in the Main Office until retrieved by a parent (the teacher will notify the parent).
    - b. Second violation: same discipline as the first violation, and the student will receive an after-school detention.
    - c. Third violation: results in a one-day suspension and the loss of the privilege to bring a PED to school the remainder of the school year.
    - d. PEDs seen, heard, or used during assessments (such as tests and quizzes) will be confiscated, and the student will receive a zero on any test or assessment in progress. Further disciplinary action may result as well, including suspension.
    - e. Use of camera/video devices or those functions on PEDs in violation of this policy may result in further disciplinary measures as listed in the GPCS Disciplinary Code, up to and including expulsion at the discretion of the administration depending on the severity of the violation. If a student uses a PED to photograph, record, and/or video while on campus, the Head of School has the right to view and/or confiscate the content; the device may be returned at the end of the school day or held for further review. In such cases, disciplinary action will be taken with the student.
    - f. Any violations of federal, state, or local statutes will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

## **APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN STAFF AND STUDENTS**

### **General**

Greater Portland Christian School expects all its staff (including volunteers), as Christian role models, to maintain the highest professional, moral and ethical standards in their conduct with students at all times, whether on or off school property, both during and outside of school hours.

GPCS encourages godly, healthy relationships between students and staff members that promote student achievement and success. At the same time, clear and reasonable boundaries for interactions between students and staff members help to protect students and to protect staff members from misunderstandings. These boundaries are not intended to preclude staff members and their children from having appropriate interactions and friendships with the families of students outside of school (such as church activities or recreational activities) provided that professional boundaries are maintained at all times.

These boundaries shall be maintained regardless of the student's age, the perceived consensual nature of the relationship or activity, the location of the activity, and whether the staff member directly supervises the student. Personal contact between students and staff members must always be professional, non-sexual, appropriate to the circumstances, and unambiguous in meaning. These guidelines are posted in our *Family Handbook* and *Staff Handbook* as a way to grow healthy, helpful boundaries as well as to increase our accountability.

## **Unacceptable Conduct**

Examples of unacceptable conduct by staff members that are *expressly prohibited* include but are not limited to the following:

1. Any type of inappropriate physical contact with a student or any other conduct that might be considered harassment under the GPCS Bullying and Anti-harassment Policy;
2. Overfamiliarity: disclosing inappropriate personal, sexual, confidential, family, employment concerns, or other inappropriate private matters to students; permitting students to address staff member by first name, nickname, or a pet name;
3. Maintaining personal contact with a student outside of school by notes, phone, text, email, social networking, etc. without the prior express permission of the student's parent/guardian;
4. Singling out a particular student for personal attention and friendship beyond the professional staff/student relationship;
5. Sexual banter, allusions, jokes, or innuendos; flirting; comments with sexual overtones or that are personal or physical in nature ("you have great legs," "you should wear that sweater more often," "you're really jacked");
6. Encouraging students to confide their personal or family problems, secrets, and/or relationships;
7. Giving, requesting, and/or accepting shoulder massages, lingering touches, squeezes, hugs, or kisses;
8. Giving or receiving gifts that are personal or extravagant in nature (beyond customary student-teacher gifts).

## **Appearances of Impropriety**

The following activities can create an actual impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Whenever possible, staff members should avoid these situations. *If unavoidable, these activities must be pre-approved by a lead teacher or the Head of School.* If not pre-approved, the staff member must immediately report the occurrence to the appropriate administrator.

1. Being alone with an individual student out of the view of others or in an inaccessible location, except for in the context of teachers working with students in an afterschool setting or during testing;
2. Socializing or spending time with students outside of school-related or school-sponsored curricular or extracurricular activities or organized community activities (including but not limited to activities such as going out for beverages, meals, or movies, shopping, traveling, and recreational activities);
3. Driving students home or to other locations;
4. Inviting or allowing students to visit the staff member's home;
5. Visiting a student at home or in another location unless on official school business known to the parent;
6. Hiring a student to perform any work for the staff member, whether at the staff member's home or at a business related to the staff member without the prior knowledge and express permission of the parent/guardian.

*Staff members are expected to be sensitive to the appearance of impropriety in their conduct with students.* Staff members are encouraged to discuss issues with the appropriate administrator whenever they are unsure whether particular conduct may constitute a violation of this policy.

## **Electronic Communication**

Digital technology and social networking provide multiple means for staff members to communicate appropriately with students and personalize learning. *Electronic and online communications between staff members and students must be transparent, contemporaneously*



*accessible to supervisors and parents/guardians, and professional in content and tone.* Such communication must be professional, nonsexual, appropriate to the circumstances, and unambiguous in meaning. Staff members must restrict one-on-one electronic communications with individual students to accounts, systems, and platforms that are provided by and accessible to the administration or with the prior express permission of the Head of School and the parent/guardian.

As with in-person communications, staff members shall avoid appearances of impropriety and refrain from inappropriate electronic communications with students. Factors that may be considered in determining whether an electronic communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

1. The subject, content, purpose, authorization, timing and frequency of the communication;
2. Whether there was an attempt to conceal, shield from or wrongly portray to the communication from the administration and/or parents/guardians;
3. Whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship; and
4. Whether the communication contained sexual innuendo, such as for purposes of grooming the student.

*Parents are encouraged to have access to their children's social networking and digital communications and to supervise their children's use of these methods of communication.*

### **Reporting Violations**

Students, parents/guardians and staff are strongly encouraged to notify the Head of School if they believe a staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates this policy.

Staff members are required to immediately notify the Head of School if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy. This obligation is in addition to the statutory responsibility to report suspected abuse and neglect. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Health and Human Services, the District Attorney and/or law enforcement.

## **DISCIPLINARY CODE**

### **Guiding Principles**

This Disciplinary Code outlines how we respond when the Code of Conduct has been violated. Certain principles guide the administration of discipline here, including the following:

1. We understand from the Scriptures that no one “keeps the law” perfectly (Romans 3:9-10, 23; Psalm 14:3). If a student does violate a school rule, it is expected that he/she will recognize and acknowledge the misconduct, respond with honest regret and desire to change in the future, and then graciously accept the consequences. It is our desire to help students grow in self-discipline.
2. When our guidelines are violated we will seek to be as fair, redemptive, and instructive as possible, respecting the image of God in each student.
3. If, however, a continued pattern of misbehavior develops, and a student fails to respond with sincere repentance and self-control, and the student indicates that he/she either does not desire our help or is incapable of living within such a self-disciplined community, then we reluctantly will be forced to ask that student to continue his/her education elsewhere.
4. The degree of discipline seeks to reflect the frequency and seriousness of the offense. The attitude, repentant spirit, and cooperation of the student and/or parents involved may be considered in the administering of consequences.
5. Voluntary disclosure of serious misbehavior will be taken into consideration in discipline. However, it does not guarantee that disciplinary procedures will be mediated. Voluntary

disclosure does not mean coming forward after the administration, faculty, or student council has knowledge of the incident.

6. When misconduct occurs that may also be a violation of law, the school will notify the appropriate law enforcement authorities when, at the sole discretion of the administration, it is determined to be required by law or otherwise deemed appropriate. When these authorities are involved, the school is not obligated to wait on or concur with the findings of those authorities in determining the appropriate action under GPCS's policies.
7. The school reserves the right to consider any attempt to commit a violation of the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Code as a completed violation. Accomplices may be considered as violators and face similar consequences. *We strongly recommend that students avoid situations where others are violating the school's conduct policies.* When students find themselves in such situations, they should remove themselves immediately to avoid being implicated (2 Timothy 2:22).
8. This Disciplinary Code is not intended to be an exhaustive list of misconduct that will subject students to discipline. Therefore, the school reserves the right to discipline a student for any conduct the school, in its sole discretion, considers worthy of discipline, even though the specific conduct is not mentioned in this code. The faculty and administration use policy, practice, professional knowledge, experience, and discretion when making disciplinary decisions. It is the right of the administration to determine the degree of consequence within the school policy in each case.
9. GPCS reserves the right to discipline students for off-campus conduct that has an adverse effect on the GPCS community and/or its reputation, or in the event that a student is charged with or convicted of a crime. Under those circumstances, the Head of School may suspend the student immediately. Reinstatement shall be at the sole discretion of the Head of School.
10. The use of corporal punishment is prohibited as a disciplinary measure. GPCS does reserve the right to use reasonable physical contact and/or restraint in situations where the student's behavior poses imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others.
11. We understand the school's authority to be an extension and delegation of the parents' authority while children are under our care, and we will deal with children on this basis. At the same time, attending GPCS is a privilege that is extended on the condition that students and parents accept and support our policies, including those in the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Code. Persistent failure to adhere to the standards of the school will result in separation from the school. *If a parent/guardian believes that it is no longer possible to work together with the school in a spirit of unity or is unable to support the decisions of the administration, and all reasonable avenues of communication are exhausted, he/she will be expected to withdraw their child(ren) from the school.*

### **Elementary Discipline (Grade K–5)**

Rules are communicated clearly in each grade by the teacher who keeps parents informed as any problems arise. Normal elementary disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to, verbal reprimand, time-out, loss of privilege, loss of recess time, lunch detention, or writing assignment.

More serious misbehavior or repeated misbehavior may be dealt with by the elementary lead teacher and/or the Head of School, who may use any of the disciplinary measures listed in this Disciplinary Code, including detention, suspension, requested withdrawal, probation, or expulsion.

### **Secondary Discipline (Grades 6–12)**

The Board of Directors has given authority for all behavioral/disciplinary matters to the Head of School. The Head, in turn, has delegated authority to teachers to administer routine discipline on a daily basis. The Head makes the final decision if there is an appeal of a teacher or staff member's disciplinary decision. More serious and/or chronic misbehavior is handled directly by the Head of School.

## SECONDARY MISCONDUCT POLICIES (GRADES 6–12)

The following policies and procedures are intended to provide a general sense of how misbehavior is normally handled, since it is impossible to list every possible infraction and situation that can arise or to outline every possible disciplinary response. The use of corporal punishment is prohibited as a disciplinary measure. GPCS does reserve the right to use reasonable physical contact and/or restraint in situations where the student's behavior poses imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others.

**While GPCS has no direct control over and accepts no responsibility for the behavioral choices GPCS students make when off-campus, we reserve the right to discipline a student for off-campus conduct (as described below) which negatively impacts the school's Christian testimony. Students do not cease to represent GPCS when they are not at school.**

### Bullying and Anti-harassment Policy

#### General Policy

The policy of Greater Portland Christian School is to provide an academic environment that is free from all forms of harassment (including sexual harassment), bullying, and intimidation, and where all individuals treat each other with dignity and respect. We believe all types of bullying and harassment to be major violations of Christian teachings and principles such as humanity's creation in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) and the requirement to love one's neighbor (Matthew 22:36-40). This policy applies to the actions of employees, parents, volunteers, and students. Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination or expulsion.

1. **Definition of Harassment, Bullying, or Intimidation.** "Harassment, Bullying, or intimidation" means any written, oral, or physical act or gesture that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of harming a student or damaging his or her property or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, or that has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or the education of any student. Harassment, bullying, or intimidation includes a gesture or an act, whether written, oral, or physical, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by a characteristic such as sex (gender), race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, or disability. This policy applies to all harassment, including any that occurs by or through any type of electronic communication.
2. **Examples of Harassment, Bullying, or Intimidation.** Unwelcome conduct of this type can include a wide range of verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual or other nature. Among the types of conduct that would violate this policy are the following:
  - a. Unwanted sexual advances or propositions.
  - b. Offering academic benefits in exchange for sexual favors.
  - c. Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances.
  - d. Visual conduct such as leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, or posters.
  - e. Verbal conduct such as making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, and jokes about a student's race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, or disability.
  - f. Verbal abuse of a sexual or other nature; graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, or disability; sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; suggestive, obscene, or offensive letters, notes, or invitations.
  - g. Physical conduct such as touching, assaulting, impeding, or blocking movements, e.g., blocking stairwells or doorways.

- h. Any conduct that has the effect of insulting or demeaning a student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school's educational mission or that is severe, persistent, or pervasive so that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

### **Scope of Bullying and Anti-harassment Policy**

Conduct violating the GPCS's biblical standards—whether occurring at school or during school-sponsored events, activities, or functions or not, or on campus or not—is subject to appropriate action by the school.

### **What to Do If You Experience or Observe Harassment, Bullying, or Intimidation**

Students who feel that they have been subjected to conduct of a harassing, bullying, or intimidating nature are encouraged to promptly report the matter to a teacher or the Head of School. Students who observe conduct of a harassing, bullying, or intimidating nature are also encouraged to report the matter promptly to a teacher or the Head of School. All complaints will be promptly investigated.

### **Confidentiality**

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

### **Protection Against Retaliation**

It is against the school's policy to discriminate or retaliate against any person, including any student, who has filed a complaint involving harassment, bullying, or intimidation or who has testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in any investigation, formal proceeding, or hearing concerning harassment, bullying, or intimidation. However, if in the course of an investigation or subsequently the school learns that a student or others have made a complaint that was not in good faith or that was known to be false at the time of the complaint, the school reserves the right to take appropriate action. Making false complaints or complaints not made in good faith can jeopardize someone's reputation, which is a violation of biblical principles (Psalm 15:1-3).

### **Procedure for Investigation of a Complaint and Taking Corrective Action**

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

## **ADDITIONAL SECONDARY DISCIPLINARY POLICIES (GRADES 6–12)**

### **Hazing**

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

## **Criminal Behavior**

Criminal behavior on or off campus, whether at a school function or not, will result in immediate suspension and an expulsion review. Any student who engages in any illegal activity is subject to immediate suspension from school, probable expulsion, and possible arrest by the civil authorities.

## **Threats of Violence**

Any threat of violence, whether on or off campus, in jest or otherwise, will be taken seriously. Such threats may result in immediate termination, at the discretion of the Administration. A student may be turned over to law enforcement officials.

## **Fighting and/or Assault**

Fighting or the use of physical force against another person that is not reasonably necessary for self-defense is prohibited and may result in a suspension. All parties involved in fights are subject to suspension. Subsequent offenses may result in an expulsion review. In addition to the school consequences, alleged criminal infractions may be reported to law enforcement.

## **Academic Integrity**

A student's academic work is his or her bond of trust with his or her teacher. Whether writing an essay, solving a math problem, or taking a reading quiz, the work a student represents as her/his own accomplishment must be offered to his or her teacher with complete personal integrity and honor. Incidents of plagiarism and cheating are serious violations of the GPCS Code of Conduct.

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

1. Giving or receiving unauthorized help on tests (including the use of smartphones, electronic devices, or any unauthorized help), copying homework, allowing someone else to copy one's own work;
2. Using study aids not permitted by the teacher, including old tests, exams, quizzes, projects, or answer keys;
3. Using prepared materials during a test or quiz, e.g., notes, formula lists, notes written on skin or clothing, etc.;
4. Sharing information from tests or quizzes with others;
5. Fabricating or inventing information or data, e.g., citing sources not actually used or inventing sources that do not exist, inventing data for a lab experiment, etc.;
6. Forging notes or parent's signatures

Any student violating this policy will receive a zero on the assignment and may face additional disciplinary action depending on the seriousness of the offense. Repeat offenses will result in further disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Please note that both the person sharing and the person receiving the material in question will face consequences.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarizing is copying work and claiming it as the student's own original work. It is the usage of someone else's thoughts or ideas without giving them credit for their work. This includes copying and pasting work from the Internet or another document. It also includes taking statements from other works and modifying them only slightly. When other works are necessary for conveying an idea, proper citation is taught and required.

The first offense of plagiarism will earn a zero on that assignment and a notification to the home by the overseeing teacher indicating the problem. A second offense will earn a zero and suspension at the discretion of the administration. A second offense will preclude a high school student from or remove a high school student from membership in the National Honor Society. A third offense will result in further disciplinary action including losing credit for the class, suspension and/or expulsion at the sole discretion of the administration.

While not necessarily subject to the same penalties, gaining academic advantage by staying home to get more time to study or to complete a project, misleading or lying to the teacher regarding academic work, and other such behaviors are violations of academic integrity.

## **Break-In or Vandalism**

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

## **Theft**

Taking another person's property without permission, whether belonging to a student or school employee, is prohibited. This includes removing someone's property as a prank and/or stealing lunches and snacks from lockers or desks. Damaged or destroyed property belonging to others is to be replaced by the student responsible. Violation of this policy may result in immediate suspension and an expulsion review and may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement officials.

## **Weapons and Incendiary Devices or Substances**

Students are prohibited from the possession of weapons anytime on campus and at any school-related functions off campus. Weapons include but are not limited to guns, knives (this includes pocket knives, switchblades, etc.), box cutters, and bombs or explosive materials. Possession or use of any incendiary or explosive devices (including lighters, matches, fire crackers, etc.) at school or school functions is strictly prohibited. Weapon facsimiles, such as BB guns, Airsoft™ guns, or paintball guns, also are prohibited. Any item brought into the school or used by a student that is perceived by faculty or staff to be dangerous is subject to confiscation whether or not it is a weapon. If a weapon is needed as a prop for a school performance or as part of a school project, the teacher supervising the activity will assume responsibility for the use and storage of the item. Violation of this policy may result in immediate suspension and an expulsion review.

## **Sexual Purity, Pregnancy, Abortion**

This policy applies equally to male and female students.

### **1. Sexual Purity**

The Scriptures reveal that sexuality is a gift from God to be enjoyed within the context of marriage between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:22-25), and when this gift is abused and God's standards ignored, the Bible calls this "sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 5:1-3). As a distinctively Christian ministry, GPCS requires its employees and students to adhere to these traditional biblical principles of morality including abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage (1 Cor. 6:9-20; Eph. 5:3-5; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; 1 Tim. 4:12; II Tim. 2:19-22, etc.). Even if parents do not share these biblical values, GPCS students shall not engage in, advocate, or promote sexually immoral behavior (for example, premarital sexual relations, homosexuality, bisexuality, use/distribution of pornography, etc.) whether on or off campus and/or using technology such as personal electronic devices.

If a student engages in, advocates, or promotes sexual immorality, we will partner with parents to address this in a way that best serves the family and honors God. We believe that God is honored when relationships are reconciled—relationships with Him, with fellow students and family members (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Ultimately, the school reserves the right to respond to inappropriate student sexual conduct with any combination of discipline (as described in our Disciplinary Code) and accountability that leads toward reconciliation of these relationships (Hebrews 12:7-11). However, in some cases sexual immorality and/or advocacy for it regardless of the location or medium of the activity may result in a student's dismissal from Greater Portland

Christian School depending upon the seriousness of the offense, the repentance or lack of repentance of the student, and/or the response of the parents.

## **2. Students Who Become Parents**

Premarital sexual activity (“sexual immorality”) is a violation of the biblical requirement to live chaste lives (I Corinthians 6:9-20; Ephesians 5:3-5; I Thessalonians 4:3-8; I Timothy 4:12; II Timothy 2:19-22, etc.) and sadly results in numerous negative consequences even when followed by sincere repentance. Consistent with our commitment to traditional biblical morality but also with the need to nurture a reverence and gratitude for God’s gracious gift of human life, we will respond as graciously as possible to those students who are facing parenthood at such a young age but who give evidence of genuine repentance. At the same time, we understand that students who become parents have entered into a complex, deeper stage of life with much greater needs and responsibilities which our program (created for children and adolescents) is not designed.

a. Because the situation may be disruptive to the educational process not only for the immediate student(s) involved but also the entire school community including younger children, the continued enrollment of the student parent(s) for the current school year shall be reviewed on an individual basis by the administration in consultation with the student’s parents. If a student’s response appears to be one of genuine repentance and acknowledgement of wrongdoing, and if the student’s parents are cooperative, then our anticipation would be that the student would be provided the opportunity to continue course work from home with limited GPCS teacher supervision until at least the end of the semester in which the child is born and/or to the end of the school year at the discretion of the administration. The student parent(s) may then apply for re-enrollment in regular classes for the beginning of the next full semester after the birth of the child.

During the time of homebound education, the student:

1. does not come to the campus without administrative permission;
2. forfeits any student leadership positions and is ineligible to participate in any student activities;
3. participates in graduation (if a senior) and receives all appropriate academic honors provided that all graduation requirements have been met;
4. does not bring children to the campus during the regular school day;
5. The student’s family will continue to pay tuition and may be subject to additional fees that will be assessed to compensate for the additional time and resources that may be needed to provide and monitor meaningful homebound coursework.
6. meets on a regular basis with a pastor and/or Christian professional counselor at least through the pregnancy.

b. Failure to follow these requirements and/or the decisions of the administration may jeopardize continued enrollment at GPCS.

c. If a student does not indicate genuine repentance and acknowledgement of wrongdoing and/or if parents are uncooperative, then the administration may request the withdrawal of the student or petition the board for expulsion.

## **3. Abortion**

GPCS holds firmly to the biblical teaching that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image; human life is, therefore, of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 9:3-6; Job 31:15; Psalm 139:13-16). We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. For a student to in any way encourage or facilitate another person having an abortion is considered a major violation of our biblical values and is subject to requested withdrawal or expulsion at the discretion of the administration. A student who has an abortion as a student at GPCS is viewed as a student parent and will be subject to requested withdrawal or expulsion at the discretion of the administration.

# PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES: ALCOHOL, DRUGS, TOBACCO

## General

A student's procurement, use, sale, or provision of illegal and/or controlled substances such as drugs, marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, and mind-altering substances and related paraphernalia violates biblical principles (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 13:1-5), seriously jeopardizes the health and safety of students and others, is a violation of Maine law, and negatively affects the reputation of GPCS. Therefore, the use, procurement, or provision by GPCS students of any of the prohibited substances listed below is strictly forbidden regardless of whether or not at school or a school function. The only exceptions to this policy are for the use of prescribed medications which are being taken in accordance with that prescription, for parent-approved substance use in the home, and for the use of wine for sacramental purposes.

## Prohibited Substances

Prohibited substances include all of those which are defined in 17-A M.R.S.A. §1101 and 1102 and those specifically listed below:

7. Narcotic Drugs (as defined in 17-A M.R.S.A. s1101, paragraph 6)
8. Alcohol
9. Marijuana (as defined in 17-A M.R.S.A. s1101, paragraph 1)
10. Potent medicinal substances (as defined in 22 M.R.S.A. s1102)
11. Hallucinogenic drugs (as defined in 17-A M.R.S.A. s1102)
12. Volatile materials such as glue, paints and aerosols when possessed for the purpose of inhalation
13. Steroids and look-alike drugs
14. Tobacco Products
15. E-cigarettes
16. Over-the-counter stimulants, depressants or other mood altering substance such as No Doze, diet pills, etc.
17. Paraphernalia and substance residue.

## Disciplinary Consequences

1. Alcohol and Drugs Use: Any student violating these regulations and using, in possession of, or under the influence of alcohol or other controlled drugs or mind-altering substances will receive immediate suspension and an expulsion review.
2. Alcohol and Drugs Sale or Provision: Any student selling or distributing alcohol or other controlled drugs or mind-altering substances on- or off-campus will receive an immediate suspension, be recommended for expulsion, and may be turned over to appropriate law enforcement personnel.
3. Tobacco Use: Any student using or in possession of any tobacco products and/or e-cigarettes will be suspended. A second offense will result in a recommendation for expulsion by the administration.
4. GPCS also enforces an "in the presence" policy: if a student shows up at a location at which alcohol or other controlled drugs or mind-altering substances are being used by minors, he/she must leave immediately. Failure to do so will subject the student to disciplinary action, including suspension.
5. The school will report to law enforcement authorities any adults (including parents or other family members) who violate state law by providing or knowingly facilitating student access to alcoholic beverages or other prohibited substances as listed above. Violation of this policy may result in the termination of the relationship between that family and the school in order to protect other students.



# **DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS & CONSEQUENCES**

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

## **Verbal Warning/Reprimand**

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

## **Lunch Detention**

A lunch detention may be given by a teacher for minor infractions or to complete a homework assignment.

## **After-School Detention**

1. Detention is usually held after school from 2:35-3:20 p.m. on Thursdays. Students report to the classroom of the duty teacher. Students reporting late to detention will receive additional detention time.
2. Parents are notified in writing (Misconduct Notice) at least one day prior to the day to be served so that transportation arrangements may be made if necessary. Detention will not be postponed due to extracurricular activities, practices, games, inconvenience, etc., but may be postponed for emergencies, genuine hardship, or medical appointments at the discretion of the issuing teacher.
3. Failure to return the signed Misconduct Notice or to serve the assigned time will result in additional detention.
4. Students may be given copying assignments or work detail at the duty teacher's discretion during the time of the detention and will be unable to do homework, read books, or use electronic devices.
5. The third detention received within any three week period will automatically result in an in-house suspension. It is important to note here that the student is no longer being suspended for the original offences but for contempt and/or lack of respect for our school community's effort to maintain a healthy educational environment.

Examples of violations that may result in after-school detention include, but are not limited to:

1. Chronic tardiness to class
2. Frequent refusal to come prepared for class (no books, paper, pen, etc.)
3. Disruptive and/or inappropriate behavior in the classroom, chapel, hallway, field trips, etc.
4. Dress code violation
5. Horseplay resulting in damaged school, staff, or student furniture or property
6. Unkind and hurtful verbal treatment of other students
7. Disrespect to teachers; arguing or bickering with an adult in authority at school or a school activity
8. Public display of affection on campus or at school events
9. Malicious throwing of objects
10. Any unauthorized use of cellphone during school
11. Using coarse or inappropriate language

## **Community Service**

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

## **Suspension from Extracurricular Membership/Activities**

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

## **Suspension**

Suspension is the removal of a student from the classroom and all school activities for a specific amount of time at the discretion of the Head of School depending upon the nature and/or frequency of the offence as well as the student's prior behavioral record. This step is taken when there is a serious violation or repeated violations of the Code of Conduct that jeopardizes the student's continued enrollment at GPCS. It is intended to signal clearly that unless change takes place, the student will be separated permanently from the student body. It may be served at home or at school at the discretion of the administration. As with any disciplinary measure, suspension may be accompanied by other measures including required counseling, community service, loss of membership and/or participation in extracurricular activities such as Student Council, National Honor Society, class trips, missions trips, and interscholastic sports. In the most serious situations, suspension may be followed by requested withdrawal or expulsion. A parent/administrator conference is required before the student can be reinstated at school after an at-home suspension due to the seriousness of the discipline.

Teachers will provide work to be accomplished during the suspension. Suspended students are expected to turn in completed assignments (for credit) and take missed tests and quizzes immediately upon their return to school. A suspended student may not appear at *any* school-sponsored activity at or away from campus (including games and practices) while suspended until the day after the suspension is served. A record of a student's suspension will be placed in the cumulative educational record. This notice will be removed from the permanent educational record when the student graduates from GPCS or is promoted from grade 8 to grade 9.

Examples of violations that may result in suspension include, but are not limited to:

1. Criminal activity: violations of municipal, state, and/or federal law
2. Serious offenses such as, but not limited to, those listed in our Disciplinary Code policies, regardless of whether occurring at school or school functions or not: bullying, harassment, threats of violence, hazing, break-ins, vandalism, possession of weapons and/or incendiary devices and substances, sexual immorality, production of and/or distribution of pornography (including "sexting" and social media), prohibited substances (alcohol, drugs, tobacco)
3. Theft, destruction, vandalism, or abuse of any property, on campus or off campus
4. Critical or derogatory remarks, disrespect, insolence, disobedience shown toward those in authority
5. Violations of the "Terms of Use" for the computer or science labs
6. Falsely ringing a fire alarm
7. Deceiving by means of plagiarism, cheating, lying, forging signatures
8. Repeated or chronic violations of "lesser" misconduct such as those listed under "After-School Detention"
9. Cutting class or leaving campus without permission
10. Swearing, using obscenities
11. Inappropriate or dangerous use of vehicle on school property or when entering or leaving school property
12. Any serious breach of conduct inside or outside of school which adversely affects the testimony of Christ and/or the reputation of the school

## **Disciplinary Probation**

A student may be placed on disciplinary probation by the administration for a specified period. Probation gives a student an opportunity to correct unacceptable behavior. This will normally follow other disciplinary action outlined in the Disciplinary Code but may be established for a new student as a result of questionable references or disciplinary issues at a previous school. Parents/guardians and student will be asked to sign a contract; failure to meet contract conditions may result in requested withdrawal or expulsion.

Reasons for being placed on disciplinary probation include, but are not limited to:

1. Continued deliberate disobedience;
2. Unchanged rebellious spirit;
3. Continued negative attitude;
4. Negative influence on other students;
5. Advocacy of religious, ethical, or moral perspectives or values that, in the opinion of the administration, contradict the biblical perspectives and values of the school;
6. Serious breach of conduct inside or outside of the school which has an adverse effect on the reputation, atmosphere, and standards of the school;
7. Failure of the parents/guardians to comply with the disciplinary procedures of the school.

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

## **Withdrawal**

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

## **Expulsion**

Expulsion is reserved for the most serious violations of school policies and/or repeated offenses which lesser disciplinary measures have not succeeded in preventing. In such cases the student will be suspended at home until the Board of Directors can hear the Head of School's recommendation of expulsion and make a decision. Parents will be notified of the board's decision. Any student convicted of a criminal offense may be expelled from Greater Portland Christian School.

Violations that may result in expulsion include, but are not limited to:

1. Any of the violations listed as examples under "Suspension" and/or "Disciplinary Probation;"
2. Endangering the welfare of another by fighting or by threatening another with physical harm;
3. Acting in a dangerous manner on or about the school premises or at a school sponsored event, athletic or other;
4. Serious breach of conduct inside or outside of the school which has an adverse effect on the reputation, atmosphere, and standards of the school.

A student can be expelled only by the executive committee of the school board, upon recommendation by the Head of School. When the Head of School recommends that expulsion is warranted, he/she shall suspend the student immediately from the school until such time as the

recommendation to expel can be heard by the executive committee. The student and her/his parents or guardian shall be notified immediately and will be given a hearing with the executive committee of the board prior to their taking action, if requested.

If the Head of School believes that a student's presence poses a significant threat to his or her physical or emotional safety or well-being, or may disrupt the safety or well-being of another student, faculty, staff, guest, or other GPCS community member, the head may take any action that he or she believes to be appropriate and reasonable under the circumstances without respect to the Disciplinary Procedures. In addition, GPCS reserves the right to take unilateral action against students for off-campus conduct that has an adverse effect on the school community, or in the event that a student is charged with or convicted of a crime. Under those circumstances, the school may suspend the student immediately. Reinstatement shall be at the sole discretion of the Head of School.

### **Expulsion Appeal Process**

The student and his parents or guardian may ask to appeal the expulsion to the entire school board if they believe the decision was unfair. The request for appeal shall be in writing and shall be presented to the Head of School within five days of expulsion. Either the parents or guardian may represent the appeal to the board. The decision of the school board will be considered final.

### **End-of-Year Disciplinary Review**

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

### **Restoration and Reinstatement**

When a student is withdrawn or expelled, there is the possibility of restoration and reinstatement in the future if, at the sole discretion of the administration, 1) the student has demonstrated sincere repentance, 2) there is sufficient reason to believe the student will remain in full compliance with the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Code, and 3) the return of the former student will not be disruptive to the school community or cause anxiety for other students. The exception to this possibility of restoration and reinstatement is if the situation prompting the withdrawal or expulsion involved criminal activity or threats against others.

### **Disciplinary Code Scope**

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

### **Grievance Procedure**

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

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

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

The ultimate concern in any conflict must be the glory of God and the effect on our students and unbelievers. The world (including our children) must be able to see it is possible to walk in love toward one another (John 13:34-35) even if our differences are so great we decide we must part company. It is perhaps for these reasons that the Apostle Paul teaches us that unbelievers should never be part of the mediation process (1 Corinthians 6:1-10).

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

### **General Guidelines**

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

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

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY POLICY**

### **General Policy**

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

### **Extracurricular Probation**

The grades of secondary students are checked at the end of the fifth and ninth weeks of each quarter. Students are placed on extracurricular probation if they have one or more grades below a 65 at those checkpoints. Students placed on probation are required to work out a plan with their teacher(s) to get their grades to 65 or higher. Students on extracurricular probation must still continue their commitment to extracurricular activities including athletic teams.

Grades for all students on extracurricular probation are rechecked every two weeks. If students have brought all their grades up to at least a 65, they will be taken off probation. If their grades fall below 65, they will be placed on the ineligibility list for the next two weeks.

## **Ineligibility List**

Students who are placed on the ineligibility list may not participate in any extracurricular activities including team practices and competitions. In order to regain eligibility, they must raise their grade to 65 or higher by the two-week recheck day. If any grade is below a 65 at this point, the students remain ineligible for two more weeks. Students who are ineligible at the second week of the quarter are not rechecked until the fifth week. Adjustments are made to this sequence to accommodate the Christmas recess.

## **Summary of Checkpoints**

Weeks 5 and 9 of the current quarter: all students checked

Weeks 7 (of the current quarter) and 2 (of the next quarter): grades of probation or ineligible students rechecked

## **Extracurricular Activity and Discipline**

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

## **Extracurricular Fundraising**

1. All GPCS fundraisers must be approved by the Head of School prior to the activity or any announcement or promotion of the activity. The purpose of any fundraiser must have prior approval by the appropriate administrator before any fundraising activities will be approved (e.g., a team wishing to raise funds for purchasing new uniforms needs the athletic director's approval for purchasing new uniforms before any fundraisers will be approved, etc.).
2. All fundraisers must be noncontroversial within our Association and in harmony with the school's mission and Christian values.
3. All monies involved will be handled with integrity and carefully accounted for; receipts are required for all reimbursements.
4. No funds are allowed to remain in the school other than in the Business Office.
5. All fundraisers must have adequate responsible adult supervision (21 years and older) present at all times. The group contact will be responsible for the condition and security of the building and equipment and for the behavior of the group.
6. All groups using the facilities are responsible for cleaning up after their events and leaving the facility in pre-event condition. Users are responsible for returning equipment, desks, chairs, etc. to their original locations, for picking up any rubbish and placing in trash containers, for placing any food/garbage in the dumpster outside the school, and for closing all windows, shutting off all lights, and locking all doors.
7. There shall be no fundraising or sale of items conducted by individual students and/or staff that is not associated with an approved school fundraiser.

## **Field Trips**

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

*No students are allowed to leave campus without the express knowledge and permission of their parents/guardians.* All day field trips are approved by the lead teachers; overnight trips and trips requiring significant travel also require approval by the Head of School. Information about the trip

must be sent home in advance by the teacher or advisor. This will include itinerary, dates, times, cost, expectations, things to bring, and medical release statement. Permission slips signed by the parent/guardian for field trips are required in advance of the scheduled trip. Students without a signed permission slip will not be able to go on a field trip.

We encourage parents to participate if possible as drivers or chaperones. In order for us to provide the fullest level of supervision of our students possible, we ask that drivers and chaperones not bring any other children. Please make your interest known to the teacher. All overnight chaperones are required to have a background check conducted prior to the trip.

## **High School Trips Abroad**

The Spanish teacher leads a group of high school Spanish students on a mission trip about every other year. Previous destinations have included Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador. On alternate years, the Travel Club plans educational trips through Education First (EF) Educational Tours to places such as the United Kingdom (2011), Italy and France (2013), and Greece and Turkey (2015). One year they went as far as Australia!

## **Student Council**

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

## **National Honor Society**

GPCS sponsors a chapter of the National Honor Society, which is duly chartered and affiliated with the national organization. It is open to any student in grades 11-12 who meets the eligibility requirements in four areas of evaluation: scholarship (must have a cumulative GPA of 3.2 or higher), leadership, service, and character. Standards for selection are established by the national office of NHS and have been revised to meet our local chapter needs. Students are selected for membership by the Faculty Council, which bestows this honor each spring upon qualified students on behalf of our school faculty. *Consideration for membership in the NHS is a privilege, not a right; merely achieving the minimum GPA does not automatically result in an invitation to be a member.*

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

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

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

## **Model United Nations**

Model United Nations is an academic competition where students role-play as diplomats operating in a simulated international organization at the Maine Model United Nations Conference held on the Gorham USM Campus each spring. A team of student delegates from grades 7-12 prepare by researching a country and developing an understanding of what that country's policy would be on one or more international topics. At the competition delegates are judged on their ability to stay in character, resolve conflicts, negotiate and write resolutions, speak publicly and exhibit knowledge of procedures. Approximately 600 middle and high school students from 30 private and public schools around Maine, Vermont and New York participate in the three-day conference.

## **Student Parties**

To prevent embarrassment of students at school, parents are asked not to distribute party invitations in school unless the entire class or all the students of the same gender are being invited. Otherwise, parents should communicate privately through other means (e.g., email, social media, phone).

## **SPORTS PROGRAM**

### **General**

Our athletics program is an integral part of the overall GPCS program, providing secondary students with opportunities to learn and demonstrate Christian character such as self-discipline, commitment, perseverance, and fairness; to develop athletic skills; and to provide a Christian testimony to other families in the area. GPCS is a member of the Maine Principals' Association (MPA) and complies with its guidelines for varsity sports.

### **Middle School Program**

We currently have a middle school soccer team (coed, open to students in grades 4–8) that plays in the Maine Christian School Sports League. We also have middle school basketball teams that play in local leagues. Our middle school track team competes in Western Maine Conference regular season meets. Sports at the middle school level are foundational and emphasize basic rules and skills, sportsmanship, and teamwork. Every player will play approximately 50% of each game depending on number of players on team, attendance at practices, and behavior.

### **Varsity Program**

GPCS currently fields five teams in three varsity sports. Our baseball team, boys' and girls' basketball teams, and boys' and girls' soccer teams all compete in the Maine Principals' Association's (MPA) Southern Maine Region. All GPCS interscholastic athletic activities are governed by the rules and regulations established by the MPA. At the varsity level, teams strive to be as competitive as possible within our philosophy. Coach expectations are higher at this level. There is a greater time commitment (daily) and the possibility of an extended season due to play-offs and tournaments. Playing time will vary depending entirely on skill, attitude, and work ethic.

### **Attendance Requirement**

Attendance is mandatory at all practices and games. Exceptions may be granted for excused absences at the Athletic Director's discretion. Missing a practice for any reason other than illness may result in the student-athlete not starting the next game. Missing a game for any reason other than illness may result in a suspension from the next game. The student-athlete will serve the suspension in uniform on the bench. The athlete should notify the coach ahead of time when possible. Secondary students (grades 6-12) must attend school for at least three hours of classes in order to participate in any after-school activity. It is each student's responsibility to make arrangements with the teacher for any work missed due to early departures.

### **Physicals**

A current physical examination is required by Maine state law before students can participate in interscholastic sports. A physical within the last two years is required to participate in sports.



## **Injuries**

Any injuries during practices or games must be reported to the coach immediately. An accident report will need to be filed with the Athletic Director's office as soon as possible after the accident or injury. Any student-athlete who misses multiple games/practices due to the same injury must provide a doctor's note to return to games and practices.

## **Concussions**

Any student-athlete experiencing any symptoms of a concussion must report it to a coach immediately. Anytime there is any type of contact or collision involving a student athlete's head the coach needs to do immediate assessment. If there are any signs or symptoms of a concussion the student athlete must be removed from all physical activity immediately. The coach needs to contact the Athletic Director immediately and fill out an incident report with the athletic director immediately. The student-athlete must go to a doctor for evaluation and possible treatment. The student-athlete will not be allowed to return to any activity; games or practices, until they provide the Athletic Director with a signed return to action plan from their doctor. The athletic director will provide a copy of the return to action plan to the coach.

## **Christian Testimony**

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

## **Uniforms & Game Day Attire**

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

## **Parent Responsibilities**

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

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

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

## **Pick-Up of Students**

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

## **Sportsmanship**

All our school family—parents, staff, and students—are strongly encouraged to come and cheer for our teams in competition. Spectators are asked to remember, however, that good sportsmanship on the part of fans enhances our testimony as a Christian school, while poor sportsmanship sets a negative example for our children and harms our witness to the community. School personnel will respond to fans who fail to conduct themselves in a Christ-honoring way at athletic events involving our students.

## **Awards**

An awards night, which student athletes are required to attend, is held at the end of the spring season to celebrate athletic accomplishments. Certificates, letters, pins, and trophies are awarded based on criteria established by the athletic staff and administration.

# **HEALTH & SAFETY**

## **Accident Insurance**

GPCS provides supplementary student accident insurance which covers your child for an accidental injury sustained while he/she is under the care and direction of the school, subject to several conditions and exemptions. A deductible applies. For more details, read the Student Accident Insurance Information sheet found on our website (Parents > Forms & Downloads).

## **Health Screenings**

A nurse provides annual vision and hearing screenings for grades K, 1, 3, 5, and 7 as required by the state. Parents will receive notification as to when this is scheduled each year.

## **Immunizations**

GPCS must have an immunization record for each new entrant showing that immunization requirements have been met before a student may attend school. The state requirement includes a minimum of: 5 DTP (4 DTP if 4<sup>th</sup> is given on or after 4<sup>th</sup> birthday), 4 Polio (3 Polio if 3<sup>rd</sup> is given on or after 4<sup>th</sup> birthday), 2 MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), 1 Varicella (chicken pox) or reliable history of disease. Each immunization entry must include: vaccine type, date administered, and the name of the provider. Check [www.immunizeme.org](http://www.immunizeme.org) for more information.

## **Medications at School**

No student will receive any medication, prescription or over-the-counter, without written consent of the parent or guardian. Only a school nurse or trained unlicensed personnel can administer medications that are prescription or over-the-counter; GPCS office personnel receive training from a nurse and so may administer medications.

Students in grades 6-12 may receive Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or Ibuprofen (Advil) provided their parent has submitted an “Authorization to Administer Acetaminophen & Ibuprofen” permission form. We do not administer any medication, prescription or over-the-counter, to elementary students (Preschool – gr. 5) without a doctor’s written permission.

The personnel administering a medication records the date, time of dispensing medication, and dosage and sends the parent/guardian an email notification. No other over-the-counter medication will be given without written consent of the parent or guardian.

Students who regularly receive prescription medication must have an “Authorization to Administer Medication During School Hours” form completed and on file.

## **Allergies and Asthma**

A student may self-medicate with an inhaler or EpiPen if GPCS has an “Allergy/Anaphylaxis Action Plan” and/or “Asthma Action Plan” for the student signed by their healthcare provider. A record of medication needs to be completed every time an inhaler or EpiPen is used. If the student has permission to self-medicate, the student completes the record. If the school’s authorized

personnel medicates, they complete the record. A back up inhaler and/or EpiPen need to be provided to the school to have on hand in case of emergency. The inhaler or EpiPen should be labeled appropriately as with all prescription medication.

## Health Information & Emergency Authorization Form

It is critical that each family provide an up-to-date Health Information & Emergency Authorization to the school and keep the school current on any changes. This form is copied for use by your student's teachers and trip chaperones in case of a medical emergency. A separate form may be completed for each student if you do not wish the health information of all your children to be available to the various adults who may have access to this form.

## Medical Emergency Procedure

In emergency situations, first aid treatment will be administered as possible, and school personnel will make a decision whether to call 911 for emergency assistance. The school will make every reasonable attempt to contact the parents (and/or the emergency contacts listed by parents on this form) at the earliest possible opportunity. A representative of the school will stay with the child until the parent assumes responsibility. Greater Portland Christian School does not assume responsibility for the payment of any fees or costs incurred in connection with an injury/illness, including hospital, doctor, ambulance, or transportation fees.

## Medical Appointments During School Hours

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

## Communicable and Infectious Disease Policy

### 1. Illness at Home

In order to protect students from the possible spread of illness, ***please keep your child home if any of the following symptoms are present:*** fever, vomiting, diarrhea, red or inflamed eyes, skin rash, headache, sore throat, incessant coughing, pain, exhaustion or aching all over. Please do not send your child to school when he/she is ill. ***Any student with a fever (temperature over 100.4°F) or who has had any of the above symptoms in the previous 24 hours should not attend school.*** Students must be fever-free, without the use of antipyretics (such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen), for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

### 2. Illness at School

Students who develop the following symptoms will be isolated from the rest of the students and parents will be notified to take their child home: diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat with fever, persistent earache with fever, rash of unknown etiology, pink eye, fever (temperature over 100.4°F), impetigo, scabies, or head lice. All such conditions will be treated sensitively with as much confidentiality as possible. Please remember to update your emergency contact information as necessary during the school year to ensure that we can reach you.

### 3. Return to School

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

## Lice Policy and Procedure

### 1. Lice at Home

Head lice is not uncommon in school, especially in the lower grades. Because head lice is highly communicable, anyone can become infested with this condition. You can become alert to this condition in your own children by watching for signs such as severe scratching of the

scalp. Children with head lice will have tiny bugs and/or grayish white dandruff-like particles that seem glued to the hair shaft. If you detect this:

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

## **2. Lice at School**

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

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

## **3. Return to School**

Students must be checked by school staff prior to returning to the classroom. If nits are discovered, the student may be sent home for further treatment; school staff does not remove nits. Parents should remember that while head lice is certainly an inconvenience, it has nothing to do with health or housekeeping practices.

## **Reporting Child Abuse**

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

## **Suicide Crisis Response Policy**

When any staff member identifies a student as potentially suicidal, i.e., verbalizes about suicide, presents overt risk factors such as agitation or intoxication, an act of self-harm occurs, or a student self-refers, the staff member will immediately notify the Head of School. School staff will continuously supervise the student to ensure their safety. The Head will contact the parents/guardians if possible and will assist the family with obtaining immediate intervention. When appropriate, this may including calling emergency services. If the student's parents/guardians cannot be reached, emergency services may be called without parent/guardian permission.

## **Fire Drills**

GPCS is required to hold two fire drills during the first two weeks of school and to hold an additional eight fire drills during the year. Instructions for leaving the school are posted in each room. When

students hear the fire alarm, they are to move quickly and quietly in single file out the designated exit. They assemble in a designated area outside away from the building until instructed to return. *Absolute silence is to be observed and will be insisted upon.* Students are then to proceed directly to the room which they left.

### **Lockdown Procedure**

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

### **Lockout Procedure**

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

### **Crisis Procedure**

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

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

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Arrival

7:45 a.m.	Elem. students wait outside (weather permitting) Secondary students wait inside
8:05	Secondary students go to homerooms
8:10	Elementary students are led to their classrooms Attendance taken in gr. 6-12; marked tardy after this time
8:20	Attendance taken in gr. K-5; marked tardy after this time

## Dismissal

11:30 a.m.	Half-day Preschool/Nursery School dismissal
2:30 p.m.	Dismissal: grades K-12
3:00	All students must be picked up except AfterCare students AfterCare begins for any remaining students gr. K-8

## Driveway & Parking

Traffic flow is *one-way* around the school (except during recesses when cones are placed at one end of the entrance driveway). Vehicles normally enter the **right/west** driveway (closest to Cash Corner), drive *slowly* around the building, and exit out the **left/east** driveway. *Elementary* parents park on the **right/west** side of the building; *secondary* parents and students park on the **left/east** side. We have some rare times when our parking is insufficient; some prefer to park on Peary Terrace for those events—please do not block our neighbors’ driveways!

## Arrival

### Elementary (Grades K – 5)

Elementary students are dropped off between 7:45 a.m. and 8:10 at the rear of the building next to the field where they are supervised by a teacher until they are led inside. When weather is inclement, elementary students are dropped off at the gym foyer entrance on the left/east side of the building. When driving into the parking lot, *please drive slowly and use extreme caution*—children can fly out from between cars without warning—*expect* them to do this!

*There is no supervision available for students prior to 7:45 a.m. —Please do not drop them off earlier than this!*

### Secondary (Grades 6 – 12)

Secondary students are dropped off between 7:45 a.m. and 8:05 at the gym foyer entrance on the left/east side of the building. When driving into the parking lot, *please drive slowly and use extreme caution*—children can fly out from between cars without warning—*expect* them to do this!

## Dismissal

1. Elementary students are dismissed at 2:30 p.m. and are brought out to the playground unless the weather is inclement, in which case they are brought to the gym foyer entrance on the **left/east** side of the building. If the teacher or administrator does not recognize the adult seeking to sign out a child, he/she will ask for identification—please do not be offended! We will not release children from the school to any unknown adult. The main office must be notified if a parent gives another individual permission to pick up a child.
2. Secondary students are dismissed at 2:30 p.m. and exit the gym foyer entrance on the **left/east** side of the building
3. Students are not to be in the building following dismissal unless they are participating in an after-school activity or sport, receiving extra help from a teacher, serving a detention, or helping a staff member.

4. Students in grades K – 8 who have not been picked up by 3:00 p.m. are taken to the elementary classroom in which AfterCare is being held that afternoon. There is a separate fee for the AfterCare service; signup is available through the school office for those who need it on a regular basis.

## School Closings & Delays

The closing or delayed opening of school due to inclement weather will be announced as soon as possible, usually by 6:00 a.m. These are posted on our website home page ([www.GPCS.net](http://www.GPCS.net)), on our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/gpcs.maine](http://www.facebook.com/gpcs.maine)), on these TV channels: WCSH-6, WMTW-8, and WGME-13. You are encouraged to sign up for text alert notifications from these local TV stations.

If there is a delayed opening, it will be a two-hour delay; we do not do one-hour delays. *If there is a delay, please do not drop your child off until 9:45 a.m. even if you see cars in the parking lot.* Doors will not be open, and staff will not be available to supervise students.

Should there be an emergency early closure of school, we will immediately post the announcement as described above, and we will attempt to contact every parent and/or the emergency contacts you have provided. If you hear of other schools closing, please check our website or Facebook page instead of calling the main office, which ties up our phone lines and may delay our calls to parents.

Your family's safety is our priority! While we do our best to make decisions for our school community as a whole, we are aware that GPCS families come from nearly 30 different towns. We understand that some of you may live in an area that restricts you from traveling to school. In our commitment to partner with parents, we respect and defer to your judgment to make the safest decision for your family. If your children will not be able to get to school due to weather, we will work with you so your children will not fall behind academically.

If school is closed, all sports and activities are cancelled for the day and evening unless you are notified otherwise by the coach or advisor for the activity (who have been authorized to do so by the administration). Sometimes the roads are cleared and safe by late afternoon, and it makes sense to proceed with the activity.

## Sign-In / Sign-Out

Secondary students who arrive in school after 8:10 a.m. and elementary students arriving after 8:20 must sign in at the main office or be signed in by a parent. Students leaving before 2:30 p.m. must sign out at the main office or be signed out by a parent.

## Student Drivers

High school drivers need administrator authorization to drive to school and must park only in the areas specified by administrators. A registration form should be obtained from and filed with the main office. Students are not permitted to use their vehicles at any time during the school day without permission; this rule applies particularly to lunch time. No other students are to have access to student vehicles during the school day. Student drivers are expected to arrive at school on time and to park along the perimeter nearest the fencing on the east/left side of the lot (the gym foyer side). Students are not to "hotrod" (spin tires or endanger) on campus or on the main streets around the school at any time. Failure to abide by these guidelines and responsibilities may result in loss of driving privilege for a period of time. *Student drivers must not be tardy to school.*

## Senior Privileges

Seniors are allowed certain privileges commensurate with their higher level of maturity and self-discipline as young adults. Our goal is to reward those whose behavior and academic progress are a positive example for underclassmen. This also provides time for seniors who have other responsibilities such as Christian service opportunities or part-time jobs.

## **Guidelines for Senior Privileges:**

1. Seniors should remember that these are *privileges*, not *rights*, which may be forfeited any time at the discretion of the administration if, in its opinion, a student shows a lack of maturity or self-control and/or violates these guidelines. Loss of senior privileges may accompany other disciplinary actions. These privileges are subject to the requirements of the *Extracurricular Eligibility Policy*, and seniors need to keep this in mind when making commitments to employers. Parents/guardians must sign their consent for their senior to receive these privileges.
2. With specific parental permission, seniors with privileges may:
  - a. Leave campus for lunch (but not during any free periods);
  - b. Arrive later at school if they do not have a first period class;
  - c. Leave school at the end of their last scheduled class;
  - d. Transport other seniors (no underclassmen) in his/her vehicle at lunch and/or ride in vehicles operated by other seniors during lunch

## **Closed Campus Policy**

In the interest of student safety, GPCS is a closed campus, which means that once a student reports to the school grounds, he/she may not leave until dismissal without written parental permission, and that school-age visitors are not permitted during school hours except with permission from the administration. Students are not allowed to leave the school once they have arrived, even if prior to the start of the school day (e.g., to go to buy coffee, etc.). The exceptions are for students with senior privileges and juniors who have been approved to leave early for work reasons only.

## **Visitors**

All visitors, including parents, must sign in at the main office; no one may enter a classroom without first signing in at the office. This is because we are responsible to know who is in our building at any time for safety reasons such as fire drills, emergency drills, etc.

We generally do not permit school-age visitors (except prospective students by appointment) due to potential issues with supervising students unfamiliar with our policies and guidelines, due to our unfamiliarity with their health issues, due to liability issues, and due to the extra work required for teachers. We ask that students not invite friends or relatives to school because they are out of school elsewhere or visiting from a distance.

## **Parent Visits**

Parents are always welcome to visit the school at any time but prior arrangements with the teacher and office are requested. Classes cannot be disrupted for personal conferences, so please schedule these ahead of time. Teachers have been asked to respond to parent calls, notes, or emails usually within one business day (however, they are not expected to respond during weekends, holidays, vacations, illness, etc.). Please remember that teachers have very limited availability to respond during school hours, but they are committed to responding as quickly as possible.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteering offers a major opportunity for parents to be involved in the lives and education of their children. An additional benefit of volunteering is that when our children see how important something is to us, it will become important to them as well. GPCS is dependent upon the volunteer service of its parents. All volunteers need to sign in at the main office upon arrival and are expected to adhere to all school policies.

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



## **Fundraising and Solicitation**

Students and parents who wish to solicit funds for private purposes, or advertise for-profit or charitable services or functions, must have permission from the Head of School. The *GPCS School Directory* may not be used for solicitations or personal mailings (other than for parties and similar social activities) and should not be given to or shared with any organizations or businesses, or persons outside the immediate GPCS family community. Students and parents are strictly prohibited from selling items on school property without the expressed written permission of the Head of School. They are also prohibited from putting fundraising materials in faculty and staff mailboxes or asking members of the GPCS faculty and staff to distribute materials on their behalf via email or other means.

## **Access to Education Records**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

1. Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
2. Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
3. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - a. School officials with legitimate educational interest;
  - b. Other schools to which a student is transferring;
  - c. Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
  - d. Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
  - e. Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
  - f. Accrediting organizations;
  - g. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
  - h. Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
  - i. State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

## **Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students**

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

## Communication Between Parents, Teachers, and School

GPCS makes every effort to communicate effectively with parents and inform the school community of events and other news. The main office sends to parents twice-weekly emails with important dates and announcements. Other communications and announcements for individual divisions, grades, classes, athletic teams, etc. are also sent as needed. Our Head of School sends occasional emails as well called “HeadLights” to our school family. Email is the primary vehicle of communication.

Our website, [www.gpcs.net](http://www.gpcs.net), posts important announcements and various kinds of calendars in order to keep our school community informed. Teachers can be reached during the school day by calling the main office and leaving a message with the secretary or through email. Teachers will return calls and email as soon as possible, usually within one business day. Students and staff will not be called out of class except for genuine emergencies. All teachers have email addresses as well, which is the most direct way to contact them. Some parents prefer to use the Pass-a-Note feature on Sycamore, our online communication site. We often post announcements on our Facebook page in addition to photos.

## Contacting Staff at Home or in Public Places

Parents are asked to call school staff *during school hours only* (8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.; later if you wish to leave voicemail) when they wish to discuss their children’s school experience. Thank you for not contacting staff at home or in public places such as church, stores, social gatherings, etc., to discuss school issues. This allows us to protect your privacy as well as to protect the worship time and family time of our staff.

## Matthew 18 and Proverbs 18 Principles for Handling Personal Conflict and Concerns

As a distinctively *Christian* school, we seek to operate in harmony with the principles of God’s Word. The “Matthew 18 Principle” and the “Proverbs 18 Principle” offer effective biblical models for dealing with personal concerns that will sometimes arise when people are working together.

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

If, however, private discussion between the two does not resolve the issue, then the next step is to involve the appropriate administrator (*“But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you...,”* v. 16). In the school setting, this could be the Lead Teacher, Academic Dean, or Head of School as appropriate. An administrator should *not* be contacted before a private attempt at reconciliation is made unless there is a true safety or moral issue—in which case the Head of School should be contacted immediately.

The **Proverbs 18 Principle** is based on Proverbs 18:13, 17: *“If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame....The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.”* In other words, it is best to suspend judgment upon hearing a negative report until all the facts have been gathered. Every parent with more than one child understands this principle! In a school setting we ask our parents and staff to suspend judgment on “reports” until they have received the “rest of the story.” It is natural to be incensed or appalled when first hearing a negative report—but getting more information very often leads to a different conclusion.

It is important that authority be held in honor before our children, even when the authority is in error (Acts 23:1-5). Students need to see that the school and parents respect each other’s authority and that if there is any doubt regarding the appropriateness of a disciplinary action, the parent will

be supportive of the staff's position until there is an opportunity to fully discuss the action with the staff member. Any parental response that erodes the school's authority contributes to the erosion of any adult authority, including that of the parents.

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

## **Lockers**

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

1. Students are not to swap lockers with anyone else without the approval of the student's homeroom/classroom teacher.
2. Only poster putty or magnets are to be used to put up pictures inside lockers. Stickers that do not peel off are not allowed. *Nothing is allowed on the outside of the locker.*
3. Discretion is expected in regard to material displayed in lockers. Items must be compatible with our Christian school philosophy and mission. Items considered inappropriate by a faculty member or administrator must be removed by the student upon request.
4. Lockers are to be kept clean and neat at all times. Periodic locker checks and cleanouts may be held during the school year.
5. Chronic failure to maintain a neat and clean locker or failure to maintain the locker by these guidelines may result in a detention and/or losing the privilege of using a locker for a period of time.

## **Restroom Use by Students**

**Secondary students** (grades 6-12) are to use only the restrooms in the high school wing near the gym changing rooms. They are not to use the staff restrooms. **Elementary students** (Preschool – grade 5) use the restrooms in the basement in the elementary wing.

## **Lunch**

Students bring their own lunches to be eaten in their homerooms. The travel club (EF) usually sells pizza on Tuesdays, and sometimes other lunch options are offered as fundraisers. Secondary students may purchase snacks and drinks from the school store.

## **School Store**

The Senior Class runs the school store, which sells snacks and other food items. Proceeds are used toward graduation expenses.

## **Recess**

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

## **Copier Use**

Students must have explicit authorization to use the copier in the Teachers' Work Room. Students are asked to be good stewards of our resources by only printing only what is truly necessary and avoiding printing of graphics and photos.

## **Office Phone Use**

Students may not use the phones in the school offices unless authorized by the office staff for genuine emergencies or unexpected schedule changes. Students may not use cell phones during the school day without explicit staff permission. We are happy to forward messages to students from parents for transportation changes that have to be made occasionally, but please avoid calling after 2:00 p.m. if possible as the office staff and teachers have numerous end-of-day responsibilities. Written messages may be left for staff; neither students nor staff will be called out of class except for genuine emergencies.

## **Textbooks**

Texts and workbooks are supplied to students. Prorated replacement charges for lost or damaged texts or property may be billed to parents at the administration's discretion.

## **Library**

With limited space available, GPCS has a small library, and students are encouraged to make use of their own local public libraries as well as Internet resources. Regardless of a student's town of residence, GPCS students may get a card at the South Portland Public Library, which is helpful for research purposes.

## **Lost & Found**

Unclaimed articles will be placed in the hallway of room 207, in the high school wing, and are removed and discarded on the last Wednesday of every month.

## **School Pictures**

Student pictures are taken in the fall, and parents have the opportunity to purchase them. Makeup pictures will be scheduled.

## **School Supplies Lists**

Student school supply lists are posted on our website under Parents > Forms & Downloads; they are also found under Quick Links > Downloads.