



# **Texas**

# **Family Handbook**

## **2022 - 2023**

Revised April 2022

*The Headmaster of the Academy maintains the right to amend this handbook during the course of the year when it is deemed necessary. If this is the case, changes will be posted on the Academy's website.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>LETTER TO FAMILIES</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>1.0 OVERVIEW</b>   | <b>7</b>  |
| 1.1 OUR MISSION   | 7         |
| 1.2 OUR CHARTER, ACCREDITATION, AND AFFILIATIONS                              | 7         |
| <b>2.0 ACADEMY POLICIES</b>   | <b>7</b>  |
| 2.1 ATTENDANCE  | 7         |
| 2.1.1 <i>On-camera Presence</i>   | 8         |
| 2.1.2 <i>Compulsory Attendance</i>  | 8         |
| 2.1.3 <i>Notice to Parents</i>  | 8         |
| 2.1.4 <i>Attendance for Credit or Final Grade</i>                             | 9         |
| 2.2 STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE                                    | 9         |
| 2.2.1 <i>Jurisdiction</i>   | 11        |
| 2.2.2 <i>Approach to Student Discipline</i>                                   | 11        |
| 2.2.3 <i>Note Concerning Corporal Punishment</i>                              | 12        |
| 2.2.4 <i>Conferences, Hearings and Appeals</i>                                | 12        |
| 2.2.5 <i>Gun-Free Schools Act</i>   | 12        |
| 2.3 ABSENCE   | 13        |
| 2.3.1 <i>Types of Absences</i>  | 13        |
| 2.3.2 <i>Excused Absences</i>   | 13        |
| 2.3.3 <i>Unexcused Absences</i>   | 14        |
| 2.3.4 <i>Make-Up Work</i>   | 14        |
| 2.3.5 <i>Notification to Parents</i>  | 14        |
| 2.3.6 <i>Tardiness</i>  | 14        |
| 2.3.7 <i>Driver's License Attendance Verification</i>                         | 14        |
| 2.4 WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL  | 14        |
| 2.4.1 <i>Voluntary Withdrawal</i>   | 14        |
| 2.4.2 <i>Involuntary Withdrawal</i>   | 15        |
| 2.5 GREAT HEARTS POLICY: ADDRESSING THE "NO POP-CULTURE RULE"                 | 15        |
| 2.6 ACADEMY HONOR CODE  | 16        |
| 2.7 STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY                               | 17        |
| 2.7.1 <i>Technology Statement</i>   | 17        |
| 2.7.2 <i>Student Safety</i>   | 17        |
| 2.7.3 <i>Purpose</i>  | 17        |
| 2.7.4 <i>User Responsibilities</i>  | 17        |
| 2.7.5 <i>Acceptable Use of Technology</i>                                     | 18        |
| 2.7.6 <i>Monitored Use</i>  | 18        |
| 2.7.7 <i>Vandalism</i>  | 18        |
| 2.7.8 <i>Network Etiquette</i>  | 19        |
| 2.7.9 <i>Consequences</i>   | 19        |
| 2.8 PHOTOGRAPHY AND PUBLIC INTERNET POSTINGS                                  | 19        |
| 2.9 DISPLAYING A STUDENT'S ARTWORK, PROJECTS, PHOTOS, AND OTHER ORIGINAL WORK | 20        |
| 2.10 LOWER SCHOOL UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE                                      | 20        |
| <b>3.0 GREAT HEARTS AMERICA POLICIES</b>                                      | <b>21</b> |
| 3.1 BIOLOGICAL SEX AND GENDER POLICY  | 21        |
| 3.2 TOLERANCE AND PLURALISTIC SENSITIVITY                                     | 22        |
| 3.3 ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CHILDREN OF MILITARY FAMILIES                          | 22        |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 3.4 FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION   | 23 |
| 3.4.1 <i>Discrimination and Harassment (Prohibited Conduct)</i>  | 23 |
| 3.4.2 <i>Retaliation</i>   | 23 |
| 3.4.3 <i>Reporting Prohibited Conduct</i>  | 24 |
| 3.4.4 <i>Investigation</i>   | 24 |
| 3.4.5 <i>Appeal</i>  | 24 |
| 3.5 FREEDOM FROM SEXUAL HARASSMENT   | 24 |
| 3.5.1 <i>General Definitions</i>   | 25 |
| 3.5.2 <i>Reporting Sexual Harassment</i>   | 25 |
| 3.5.3 <i>Notice of Allegations</i>   | 25 |
| 3.5.4 <i>Grievance Process</i>   | 26 |
| 3.5.5 <i>Consolidating Formal Complaints</i>   | 27 |
| 3.5.6 <i>Dismissal of Formal Complaints</i>  | 27 |
| 3.5.7 <i>Investigating Formal Complaints</i>   | 27 |
| 3.5.8 <i>Determination Regarding Responsibility</i>  | 28 |
| 3.5.9 <i>Appeals</i>   | 29 |
| 3.5.10 <i>Emergency Removals</i>   | 29 |
| 3.5.11 <i>Informal Resolution</i>  | 29 |
| 3.5.12 <i>Retaliation Prohibited</i>   | 30 |
| 3.5.13 <i>Confidentiality</i>  | 30 |
| 3.5.14 <i>Non-Sexual Harassment Sex Discrimination</i>   | 30 |
| 3.6 POLICY ON HAZING   | 30 |
| 3.6.1 <i>Reporting Procedures</i>  | 31 |
| 3.6.2 <i>Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying</i>   | 31 |
| 3.6.3 <i>Reporting Procedures</i>  | 32 |
| 3.6.4 <i>Investigation of Report</i>   | 32 |
| 3.6.5 <i>Confidentiality</i>   | 32 |
| 3.6.6 <i>Appeal</i>  | 33 |
| 3.6.7 <i>Social Media</i>  | 33 |
| 3.6.8 <i>Alcohol-Free School Notice</i>  | 33 |
| 3.6.9 <i>Tobacco-Free School Notice</i>  | 33 |
| 3.6.10 <i>Drug-Free School Notice</i>  | 33 |
| 3.7 SUSPENSION   | 33 |
| 3.7.1 <i>Process for Suspensions Lasting up to Five Continuous Days</i>                                | 33 |
| 3.7.1.1 <i>Prerequisites to Suspension</i>   | 33 |
| 3.7.1.2 <i>Notification to Parents/Guardians</i>   | 34 |
| 3.7.1.3 <i>Credit During Suspension</i>  | 34 |
| 3.7.2 <i>Process for Out-of-School Suspensions over Five Days and Expulsion</i>                        | 34 |
| 3.7.3 <i>Expulsion Hearing Before VP of Academics</i>  | 34 |
| 3.7.4 <i>Appeal to the Superintendent</i>  | 35 |
| 3.7.5 <i>Appeal to the Board of Directors</i>  | 35 |
| 3.7.6 <i>No Credit Earned</i>  | 35 |
| 3.7.7 <i>Emergency Placement and Expulsion</i>   | 35 |
| 3.7.8 <i>Placement of Students with Disabilities</i>   | 35 |
| 3.7.8.1 <i>Suspension/Expulsion Requirement</i>  | 35 |
| 3.8 PLAN FOR ADDRESSING SEXUAL ABUSE OF STUDENTS & OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN                      | 36 |
| 3.8.1 <i>What is Sexual Abuse of a Child?</i>  | 36 |
| 3.8.2 <i>What is Other Maltreatment of a Child?</i>  | 36 |
| 3.8.3 <i>Reporting Obligation</i>  | 36 |
| 3.8.4 <i>Methods for Increasing Awareness Regarding Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment of Children</i> | 36 |
| 3.8.8 <i>Emergency Closings</i>  | 37 |
| 3.9 RESIDENCY VERIFICATION   | 37 |
| 3.10 IMMUNIZATIONS   | 37 |
| 3.10.1 <i>Provisional Enrollment</i>   | 38 |
| 3.10.2 <i>Exclusions from Immunization Requirements</i>  | 38 |
| 3.10.2.1 <i>Medical Reasons</i>  | 38 |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 3.10.2.2 Reasons of Conscience   | 38        |
| 3.10.2.3 Military Service  | 39        |
| 3.10.3 <i>Immunization Records Reporting</i>   | 39        |
| 3.10.4 <i>Fitness Testing</i>  | 39        |
| 3.10.5 <i>Dyslexia and Related Disorders</i>   | 39        |
| 3.10.6 <i>Vision and Hearing Screenings</i>  | 39        |
| 3.10.6.1 Exemption   | 39        |
| 3.10.7 <i>Spinal Screening</i>   | 39        |
| 3.10.7.1 Exemption   | 40        |
| 3.11 FERPA NOTIFICATION  | 40        |
| 3.11.1 <i>Annual Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality Notice)</i>               | 40        |
| 3.11.2 <i>The Right to Inspect and Review</i>  | 40        |
| 3.11.3 <i>The Right to Seek Amendment of the Student's Educational Records</i>                               | 40        |
| 3.11.4 <i>The Right to Consent Prior to Disclosure</i>   | 41        |
| 3.11.5 <i>The Right to File a Complaint</i>  | 41        |
| 3.11.6 <i>Access to Student Devices and Classes</i>  | 41        |
| 3.11.7 <i>Access to Medical Records</i>  | 42        |
| 3.11.8 <i>Notice for Directory Information</i>   | 42        |
| 3.12 LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES  | 43        |
| 3.12.1 <i>Questioning of Students</i>  | 43        |
| 3.12.2 <i>Students Taken Into Custody</i>  | 43        |
| 3.12.3 <i>Child Abuse Reporting and Programs</i>   | 44        |
| <b>4.0 ADMISSIONS &amp; RECORDS</b>  | <b>44</b> |
| 4.1 ADMISSIONS POLICY  | 44        |
| 4.1.1 <i>Exception to Admission</i>  | 44        |
| 4.1.2 <i>Submission of Applications and Admissions Lottery</i>   | 45        |
| 4.1.3 <i>Exceptions</i>  | 45        |
| 4.2 STUDENT INFORMATION  | 45        |
| 4.3 NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)                             | 45        |
| 4.4 CHILD FIND   | 46        |
| 4.5 INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)   | 47        |
| <b>5.0 ACADEMICS</b>   | <b>48</b> |
| 5.1 FOCUS ON THE WESTERN TRADITION   | 48        |
| 5.2 ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS, EVALUATION, AND STUDENT PROMOTION   | 48        |
| 5.3 COURSE OF STUDY  | 48        |
| 5.3.1 <i>Physical Education</i>  | 49        |
| 5.3.2 <i>Exemption</i>   | 49        |
| 5.4 SPECIAL PROGRAMS   | 49        |
| 5.4.1 <i>Bilingual/ESL Services</i>  | 50        |
| 5.4.2 <i>Special Education Services</i>  | 50        |
| 5.4.3 <i>Section 504 Services</i>  | 50        |
| 5.4.3.1 Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services | 51        |
| 5.4.4 <i>Special Education Referrals</i>   | 51        |
| 5.4.5 <i>Contact Person for Special Education Referrals</i>  | 52        |
| 5.4.6 <i>Section 504 Referrals</i>   | 52        |
| 5.4.6.1 Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals   | 52        |
| 5.4.7 <i>Additional Information</i>  | 52        |
| 5.4.8 <i>Services for Title I Participants</i>   | 52        |
| 5.5 PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE  | 52        |
| 5.6 RECITATION OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE  | 53        |
| 5.7 PRAYER AND MEDITATION  | 53        |
| 5.8 STAAR (STATE OF TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC READINESS)  | 53        |
| 5.8.1 <i>STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness) Grades 3–8</i>                              | 53        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 5.8.2 TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment                   | 53        |
| 5.8.3 TELPAS  | 53        |
| 5.9 SUMMER SCHOOL   | 54        |
| 5.10 TUTORING   | 54        |
| 5.11 TEXTBOOKS AND CLASSICS TO KEEP                               | 54        |
| 5.12 HOMEWORK/INDEPENDENT WORK                                    | 54        |
| 5.13 EVALUATION   | 56        |
| 5.14 PROMOTION  | 56        |
| 5.15 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES                                   | 57        |
| 5.15.1 Student Success Initiative                                 | 58        |
| 5.16 FAMILY-TEACHER ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP                          | 58        |
| 5.16.1 Communication Roles  | 58        |
| 5.17 USE OF VISUAL/AUDIO CONFERENCING FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES    | 59        |
| 5.17.1 Academy Policies and Code of Conduct Apply                 | 59        |
| 5.17.2 Passwords and Meeting Security                             | 60        |
| 5.17.3 Data Collection  | 60        |
| 5.18 STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS: ON-CAMPUS AND OFF-CAMPUS      | 60        |
| 5.19 ACADEMY PARENT AND STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE               | 61        |
| <b>6.0 STUDENT SERVICES</b>                                       | <b>62</b> |
| 6.1 ACADEMIC/COLLEGE COUNSELING                                   | 62        |
| 6.1.1 Personal Counseling   | 62        |
| 6.2 EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES                                   | 62        |
| 6.2.1 Participation   | 63        |
| 6.2.2 Fees  | 63        |
| 6.3 STUDENT FEES  | 63        |
| <b>7.0 PARENT INVOLVEMENT</b>                                     | <b>64</b> |
| 7.1 PARENT SUPPORT  | 64        |
| 7.1.1 Material Support of the Academy: Time, Treasure, and Talent | 64        |
| 7.1.2 Time:   | 64        |
| 7.1.3 Talent:   | 65        |
| 7.1.4 Treasure:   | 65        |
| 7.2 PARENT SERVICE ORGANIZATION                                   | 65        |
| 7.2.1 Fingerprinting  | 65        |
| 7.2.2 Surveys and Activities                                      | 65        |
| 7.2.3 "Opting Out" of Surveys and Activities                      | 66        |
| <b>8.0 ADMINISTRATION</b>   | <b>66</b> |
| 8.1 BASIC SCHOOL INFORMATION                                      | 66        |
| 8.2 ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES                               | 66        |
| 8.3 OFFICIAL SCHOOL CALENDAR AND WEBSITE                          | 67        |
| 8.4 STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION                                | 67        |
| <b>APPENDIX A</b>   | <b>69</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX B</b>   | <b>75</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX C</b>   | <b>79</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX D</b>   | <b>85</b> |

## Letter to Families

Dear Great Hearts Online Families,

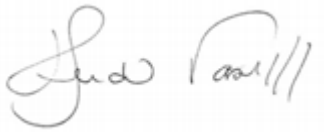
**Welcome to Great Hearts Online!** Parents and guardians, please take the time to read through our entire handbook. We encourage you to read pertinent portions with your children, such as the mission statement, dress code, and honor code. Please note that we revise and improve the handbook annually, so re-reading is important for returning families as well as new. The following pages clarify many of the essential details that a family must understand to participate fully in our community. In effect, knowing the handbook helps your family to join the larger Academy family as we share common values and expectations of one another.

The center of our school is the online classroom and the Socratic dialogue between the teacher and the student. Yet our community would be incomplete if the partnership between the Academy and each family stopped at the classroom door. As such, I urge every parent, student, and teacher to become wholeheartedly involved in at least one Academy activity. For a parent, this might mean volunteering. Through work and friendship, let's continue to build up each other's spirits and develop our community.

Before you turn the page, I would like to quote from The Athenian Oath. The young men of ancient Athens took this oath when they reached the age of seventeen. *"We will revere and obey the City's laws, and will do our best to incite a like reverence and respect in those above and below us . . . We will strive to quicken the public's sense of civic duty. Thus, in all these ways we will transmit this City, not only, not less, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us."*

What a powerful call to service from one of the great cities of the Western tradition! Each of us, as free citizens of the Academy, should equally strive to make our school a better place – a city of truth, goodness, and beauty – for those students, parents/guardians, and teachers who will follow us.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Heidi Vasiloff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Heidi" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Vasiloff".

Heidi Vasiloff  
Executive Director

## **1.0 Overview**

---

### **1.1 Our Mission**

The mission of Great Hearts Online is to cultivate the minds and hearts of students through the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty.

The Academy graduate has a foundation in the liberal arts of grammar and rhetoric, logic and mathematics, history, natural science, and philosophy. The graduate has also practiced the fine arts of music, poetry, drawing and painting, and drama. The graduate is thus prepared for every career, every course of advanced or specialized study, and every kind of leisure. In short, the Academy graduate is ready to live the lifetime of learning that is possible for a human being.

The Academy will fulfill its mission by the following means:

- Service to a rigorous, core liberal arts curriculum in the Western tradition that is the same for all students.
- Small class size.
- Dedicated, enthusiastic, and intellectually excellent teachers who serve as models of learning and of character.
- Detailed student evaluation, with an emphasis upon written, narrative evaluation of learning rather than upon grades and percentages.
- Regular and meaningful homework assignments.
- High standards of personal conduct and comportment for students.

Though the curriculum is rigorous and expectations of students are high, the Academy is not a school only for the best and the brightest. We provide an environment that allows every student who is curious and diligent the opportunity to fulfill his or her potential.

### **1.2 Our Charter, Accreditation, and Affiliations**

Great Hearts Online is a campus of Great Hearts Texas, the holder of an open-enrollment charter issued by the State of Texas and a 501(c)(3) organization.

Great Hearts Texas supports its schools with curriculum, data management, faculty orientation and professional development, human resources services, business management (such as accounting), special education services, and the development of funding and facility opportunities.

Great Hearts Texas is a subsidiary corporation of Great Hearts Academies, a non-profit charter management organization.

## **2.0 Academy Policies**

---

### **2.1 Attendance**

GH Online students will have a daily program of regular, structured school in which they must participate. Some of this will be live, synchronous Zoom video classes, lessons, and activities which take place at scheduled, regular times. Daily engagement in live class and independent work, through Canvas,

is required. Failure to attend live sessions on a regular basis will result in the implementation of an Attendance Contract.

Students will be accountable for daily work, and teachers will regularly and actively assess student progress. Discrete grades and scores will be given for activities, assignments, and assessments; there will be no “pass/fail” grading at the end of the quarter or semester.

A student will be considered as “present” on a given day of distance learning if any of the following occur:

- A student logs into a Zoom synchronous class or tutoring session.
- A student submits on-line “bell work”, or a daily attendance assignment.
- A student submits an assignment, activity, or completed assessment on its due date.
- The teacher communicates with the student regarding academic progress via phone and/or email.

In the regular classroom, students are invited by the teacher to engage actively in lessons, activities, and discussions. They volunteer, get called on (with or without raised hands) to share their work or answers, ask their own questions, and take part in discussions; in all of these activities, students build their understanding just as surely as they do by studying, practicing math facts, or completing homework independently. And as experienced Great Hearts families know, active participation in class, especially in upper schools, and especially in the seminars of Humane Letters, is a component of student grades.

Thus, it is doubly important that students attend *and actively participate* in synchronous, live Zoom video sessions. Not to do so will adversely affect student progress and may even have a direct impact upon students’ grades in certain courses.

### **2.1.1 On-camera Presence**

But merely being “present” at school does not ensure that students are learning as much as they need to be. Except in situations where accommodations have been discussed and approved by Academy leadership, students should have their device camera on and it should be angled straight on or slightly above the Student’s face. When in a live session, students should position the camera and themselves so shoulders and top of head are visible within the Zoom screen.

### **2.1.2 Compulsory Attendance**

The state compulsory attendance law requires that a student between the ages of five and 18 must attend school and school-required tutorial sessions unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused. The Academy employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission—including absence from any class, required special programs, or required tutorials—will be considered truant and subject to disciplinary action.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18th birthday is also required to attend each school day. The Academy may revoke a student’s enrollment if the student is 18 years of age or older and has accumulated more than five unexcused absences in a semester. The student’s continued presence on school property would be unauthorized and may, as allowed by applicable law, be considered trespassing.

### **2.1.3 Notice to Parents**

Under Texas Education Code § 25.095(a), you are hereby notified that if a student is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in any one school year or is absent for three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the parent is subject to prosecution under Texas



Education Code § 25.093, and a student age 12 through age 17 is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code§ 25.094 or to referral to a juvenile court in a county with a population of less than 100,000 for conduct that violates that section.

#### **2.1.4 Attendance for Credit or Final Grade**

Our general policy is that, in order to receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend at least 90% of the days the class is offered. These days include both excused and unexcused absences. A student who attends fewer than 90% of the days the class is offered may be referred to the Attendance Review Committee to determine whether the absences were due to extenuating circumstances (in which case credit may be granted) and how the student may regain credit or earn a final grade.

The Attendance Review Committee will consider the following factors when determining whether there are extenuating circumstances for an absence:

- All absences will be reviewed, both excused and unexcused, with consideration given to special circumstances discussed in the Texas Education Code.
- For a student transferring into the Academy after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- The committee will attempt to reach a decision that is in the student's best interest.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or parent could exercise control.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documentation expressing reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student, parent, or other representative will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to discuss ways to earn or regain credit.

If credit is lost or a final grade is not earned due to excessive absences, the Attendance Review Committee will decide how the student may regain credit or earn a final grade. If the committee determines that there are no extenuating circumstances and that credit and/or a final grade may not be earned, the student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the Superintendent by filing a written request with the Headmaster. The appeal notice must be received by the Academy within fifteen (15) days following the last day of instruction in the semester for which credit was denied or a final grade was not earned. After the Superintendent has reviewed the appeal and made the decision, the student or parent may decide to appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Board of Directors by filing a written request with the Superintendent. The appeal notice must be received by the Superintendent within fifteen (15) days following the issuance of the Superintendent's decision. The appeal will then be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Headmaster or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

## **2.2 Student Code of Conduct and Discipline**

All of the information below is directed toward the common good of the Academy and its maintenance as a place of learning and moral development. We believe that habits of behavior play a significant part in

forming habits of mind. The Academy's teachers will make every effort to enforce the rules below consistently, informatively, and with a heart of mercy for the student's overall well-being.

Students at the Academy strive to make the most of their educational opportunities. No less than their parents and the faculty, our students appreciate the overall environment that they help maintain for the good of the entire school community. It does not take long for our students to recognize the benefits of mutual encouragement, respect, courtesy, and helpfulness. As many students and parents will gratefully attest, the Academy is a very good place to be.

Nevertheless, our students are young and human, and they will make mistakes in speech or behavior—they are still learning how to appropriately comport themselves. Many such behavioral mistakes, while requiring correction, need not be punished. Sometimes, however, their mistakes can be disruptive to other students and to our teachers. Therefore, for the sake of orderly and productive community life, it is necessary to discuss school expectations and sanctions so that students and families can have a blueprint for conduct which contributes to a wholesome academic environment and to each student's self-esteem and success.

The philosophy of the Academy is that students are young adults in the making who will learn civil, polite and respectful conduct by the example of their teachers and other adults.

Consequently, students will be treated with respect and courtesy by the Academy staff and will be expected to treat not only all adults on campus with such respect, but one another as well.

Several very obvious signs of such respect are a student's willingness to refrain from talking in class when others have the floor; a respect for the property of the school and of other students; a willingness to refrain from sarcastic or critical comments towards others; and a willingness to ask (and give) forgiveness when someone has been wronged.

In conjunction with parents, the Academy has the goal of developing not only habits of good scholarship and critical inquiry, but the character traits of courtesy, promptness, forgiveness, self-control, responsibility, diligence, courage, generosity, and magnanimity. Good behavior is expected of all students and will not be specially rewarded at school. It is its own reward in the esteem the student earns from his teachers and his fellow students.

The Academy's guiding policy is to be fair, firm, and consistent in the application of discipline for inappropriate behavior. However, the following guidelines for discipline are not intended to be exhaustive. The school reserves the right to exercise reasonable judgment as an individual circumstance might dictate.

To function properly, education must provide an equal learning opportunity for all students by recognizing, valuing, and addressing the individual needs of every student. In addition to the regular curriculum, principles and practices of good citizenship must also be taught and modeled by school staff. To foster an orderly and distraction-free environment, the Academy has established this Student Code of Conduct ("the Code") in accordance with state law. The Code outlines prohibited behaviors and consequences for such behavior.

The Code has been adopted by the Board of Directors and provides information to parents and students regarding expectations for behavior, consequences of misconduct, and procedures for administering discipline.

In accordance with state law, the Code will be posted at each school campus or will be available for review at the office of the Headmaster. Parents will be notified of any violation that may result in their student being suspended or expelled from the school.

Students must be familiar with the standards set forth in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules.

The Code does not define all types and aspects of student behavior, as the Academy may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Code. These rules may be posted in classrooms or given to the student and may or may not constitute violations of the Student Code of Conduct. When students participate in student activities, they will also be expected to follow the guidelines and constitutions that further specify the organization's expectations, student behavior and consequences.

### **2.2.1 Jurisdiction**

The Academy has disciplinary authority over a student:

1. During the regular school day;
2. While the student is in attendance at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
3. For any misconduct, regardless of time or location, that impacts the learning environment or another student's learning or well-being at school;
4. For any mandatory or discretionary expulsion violation committed while on or off school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of another district in Texas;
5. When retaliation against a school employee or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
6. When the student commits a felony, as provided by Texas Education Code 37.006 or 37.0081; and
7. When criminal mischief or acts are committed on or off school property or at a school-related event.

Note: In addition to disciplinary consequences, misdemeanor and felony offenses committed on campus will be reported to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

### **2.2.2 Approach to Student Discipline**

In general, discipline is intended to correct misconduct, to promote each student's development in character and the virtues, and to foster the common good of the school community.

Disciplinary action will draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of disciplinary techniques. Disciplinary action correlates to the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, and the effect of the misconduct on the school environment.

The following approaches may be used-alone or in combination-for misbehavior violating the Code or campus or classroom rules:

- Removal from live Zoom classes.
- Assignment of school service or community service duties.
- Behavioral agreements.
- Cooling off time or "time out".

- Counseling by teachers, counselors, or administrative personnel.
- In school suspension or detention, as specified in the suspension section of the Code.
- Expulsion, as specified in the expulsion section of the Code.
- Grade reductions as permitted as policy.
- Out of School Suspension, as specified in the suspension section of the Code.
- Parent-Teacher conferences.
- Referral to an outside agency and/or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by the School.
- School assessed and school administered probation.
- Send the student to the Dean, Assistant Headmaster, and/or Headmaster.
- Techniques or penalties identified in individual student organization's extracurricular standards of behavior.
- Verbal correction.
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities and eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, and/or membership in school sponsored clubs or organizations.
- Other strategies and consequences as specified by the Code.

Students may be removed from class for a short duration following a perceived disciplinary infraction while an administrator collects an account of the situation.

### **2.2.3 Note Concerning Corporal Punishment**

The Academy will not administer corporal punishment upon a student for misconduct.

### **2.2.4 Conferences, Hearings and Appeals**

All students are entitled to conferences, hearings, and/or appeals of disciplinary matters as provided by state and federal law and school policy.

### **2.2.5 Gun-Free Schools Act**

In accordance with the Gun-Free Schools Act, the Academy shall expel, from the student's regular program for a period of one year, any student who is determined to have brought a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school. The Headmaster may modify the term of expulsion for a student or assess another comparable penalty that results in the student's expulsion from the regular school program on a case-by-case basis. A student is not allowed to show a gun or firearm during a live or recorded class.

For the purposes of this law, "firearm" means:

1. Any weapon – including a starter gun – which will, or is designed to, or which may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive from the frame or receiver of any such weapon;
2. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer;
3. Any destructive device. "Destructive device" means any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than 1/4 ounce, mine, or device similar to any of the preceding described devices. It also means any type of weapon – other than a shotgun shell or a shotgun that is generally recognized as particularly suitable for sporting purposes – by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than 1/2 inch in diameter; and any

combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into a destructive device as described, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

For a list of Offenses and Consequences, please see Appendix A.

## **2.3 Absence**

In the event of a student absence, we ask that parents email the Registrar by 7:15am. If email is not accessible. Upon returning to school, the student must submit a note, signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted. Notes must be received within two days of the absence, or the absence will be unexcused.

If a student absence is anticipated, we recommend that the parents email the Student Information Specialist. The student should notify his or her teachers to request assignments prior to the absence. In the event of an unplanned absence, students should make every effort to acquire their homework assignments. Middle and Upper school students/parents may email the teacher or call his or her classmates. It is the responsibility of the student to make up all missed assignments after any absence, planned or unplanned. Each teacher will have an established make-up policy, including required deadlines, for missed work.

Because excessive absences are considered truancy under state law, the school reserves the right to take extreme absence cases to court.

### **2.3.1 Types of Absences**

The Academy recognizes two kinds of absences: excused and unexcused. Students and parents should read this section carefully to understand the school's expectations. Students and parents should also be aware of the school's policy regarding homework, quizzes, and tests following an absence.

### **2.3.2 Excused Absences**

State law provides several exemptions to the compulsory attendance law for certain absences, so long as the student makes up all work missed. This includes absence for the following reasons:

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's return to class;
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state;
- Mental health or therapy appointments; or
- Court-ordered family visitations or any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

Absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments.

For religious holy days, required court appearances, activities related to obtaining citizenship, and services as an election clerk, one day of travel to the site and one day of travel from the site shall also be excused by the Academy. Please note that excused absences are considered absences and count toward the yearly total.

### **2.3.3 Unexcused Absences**

Any absence not listed above will be considered an unexcused absence. Examples of unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to send a written note within two school days following an absence
- Oversleeping
- Personal business
- Vacations

### **2.3.4 Make-Up Work**

If a student misses class for any reason, a teacher may assign make-up work that incorporates the instructional objectives for the class and that will assist the student to master the essential knowledge and skills necessary to meet subject or course requirements. Students are responsible for obtaining and completing the make-up work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher if the teacher has determined to assign it make-up work in this context is distinct from “extra credit”, which is not assigned.

### **2.3.5 Notification to Parents**

After three absences the Academy will send an “Attendance Warning Notice” to the parent by mail. If a student acquires three absences within a four-week period, the notice will state that it is the parent’s duty to monitor the student’s school attendance and require the student to attend school. The parent is subject to prosecution for contributing to nonattendance under Texas Education Code §25.093. If a student continues to accrue absences, the parent will receive additional notifications by mail and be advised that a meeting with the attendance committee is required.

### **2.3.6 Tardiness**

Repeated tardiness to school/class will result in more severe disciplinary consequences as allowed by the Student Code of Conduct.

If your children will be late, please send an email to [AttendanceTX@greatheartsonline.org](mailto:AttendanceTX@greatheartsonline.org). In cases of excessive tardiness, a meeting with the attendance committee will be scheduled and further disciplinary measures may be taken.

### **2.3.7 Driver’s License Attendance Verification**

The Texas Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) is required to verify the attendance records of a student between the ages of 16 and 18 that is seeking to obtain or renew a driver’s license. In order for DPS to access this information or, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the attendance information to DPS, written parental permission must be obtained. Students may obtain the required Verification of Enrollment (“VOE”) form from the school office.

## **2.4 Withdrawal from School**

### **2.4.1 Voluntary Withdrawal**

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent or legal guardian. The Academy requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. A withdrawal form may be obtained from the Student Information Specialist. The Headmaster or other administrator will verify the information on the withdrawal form when the parent submits the signed withdrawal papers to complete the process. The parent shall also provide the name of the new school

in which the student will be enrolled and must sign the formal withdrawal form.

A student who is 18 years of age or older, who is married, or who has otherwise been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor may withdraw without parental signature.

Withdrawing students and parents are expected to:

- Return all textbooks and checked-out materials and equipment;
- Complete any make-up work assigned;
- Pay any unpaid balance for student fees, if any; and
- Sign a release of student records if transferring to a private school.

In all cases, withdrawal forms must be appropriately completed and signed before withdrawal is complete.

#### **2.4.2 Involuntary Withdrawal**

The Academy may initiate withdrawal of a student under the age of 18 for non-attendance if:

- The student has been absent ten consecutive school days; and
- Repeated efforts by the attendance officer and/or Headmaster to locate the student have been unsuccessful.

Additionally, the Academy may revoke the enrollment of a student 18 years of age or older who has more than five unexcused absences in one semester.

### **2.5 Great Hearts Policy: Addressing the “No Pop-Culture Rule”**

Great Hearts is very intentional about creating a common and civil community among its students and in preserving an educational environment free from distractions. This includes manners of speech, habits of respect during discussions with others, attention to the content of the curriculum to the exclusion of references either to current pop-culture personalities, music, movies, and even politics and current events. To further this educational environment, Great Hearts also requires students to use back-bags, lunch bags, and other accessories that are free from such images or references.

The intention and educational purpose is to pull students out of the parochial thought- worlds of their times and that of their peers, and introduce them into the broader and more permanent concerns of the human community. In this environment of learning, students will take authors and artists of historical times and different cultures seriously and better envision and entertain ideas such as goodness, virtue, and heroism from many prior historical and cultural contexts within which they have arisen.

Great Hearts also seeks to avoid cultivating a “chronological snobbery” in our students, and in furtherance of this, we avoid contemporary comparisons during classes and school activities. Overall, Great Hearts asks and challenges students to step out of themselves—to step out of their times, their familiar idioms, even their preferred styles in art and music, in order to appreciate the goods and virtues of other times and places. This is the essence of a classical education.

Great Hearts seeks to develop the unique character and quality of each student; however, this uniqueness and true self is not encouraged through participation in consumerism and mass marketing. Great Hearts desires to free the educational environment from consumerism and external marketing influences through this policy of “no pop culture” in school. Its purpose includes:

1. to give young people an educational space free from popular examples that may be merely superficial and time-bound, while we try to introduce them to more permanent and universal aspects of human nature and human community
2. to give them educational space from the peer pressure to be media and celebrity “literate”
3. to elevate their imaginations and their thoughts above the low the base, and the mediocre
4. to create points of reference and a common ground for conversation that transcends the student’s age, experience, and the biases of his peer group
5. to give them the broadest range of images and ideas from which they will eventually address the concerns of their own time and place.

This policy creates and preserves the desired educational environment and improves the educational process for the benefit of all students, and acts as a shield against what is shallow and temporary in popular culture on behalf of what is serious and permanent. Students will learn to think for themselves and develop deep critical thinking skills and analytical ability. It is in that ability that we hope to see meaningful distinctions in our students and not in clothing or accessories. It is also the intention of this policy to improve student learning, to reduce disciplinary referrals, to improve morale and to instill self- worth and self-confidence in students that are lasting traits.

## 2.6 Academy Honor Code

The objective of the Academy Honor Code is to build trust among students and to maintain an academic community in which a code of values is shared. The Academy Honor Code is given below:

As a student and citizen of the Academy, I agree to the following when I sign on the Signature Page at the end of this *Family Handbook*:

- ☐ *I will not lie, cheat, or steal in any of my academic endeavors.*
- ☐ *I will forthrightly oppose each and every instance of academic dishonesty.*
- ☐ *I will not request, receive, or give aid in examinations/tests/quizzes.*
- ☐ *I will not give or receive illicit aid in class work, homework, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the teacher as the basis of grading. I will understand the difference between studying and reviewing with others (which often is acceptable) and producing written documents that are submitted under my name for credit (which can only be done alone).*
- ☐ *I will not copy from or collaborate with others in completing homework. When I put my name on a homework assignment, I attest that all of the work on the assignment is my own in origin and content.*
- ☐ *In the case of all essays and research papers, I will carefully cite all external sources. I will not represent someone else’s work as my own. I will do my very best to learn from my teachers the clear distinctions between appropriate research and plagiarism, intentional or unintentional.*
- ☐ *I will never use any “study aids” such as Cliff’s Notes, Sparknotes, or other materials, nor will I watch a movie/video version of a work of literature before or during study of it in school, unless I’ve been given specific permission (in a unique circumstance) to do so. I will do the reading for myself and strive to understand it for myself.*



- ☐ *I will give prompt (and confidential) notification to the appropriate faculty member or the Dean and Headmaster if I observe academic dishonesty in any course. I will let my conscience be my guide if I should make such a report.*
- ☐ *I will never attempt to pass off work completed in class or during instructional time as if it had been completed the night before as homework.*

The faculty manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code. On some occasions, teachers may ask students to write “AHC” (Academy Honor Code) on the heading of their assignments to remind them of the details and spirit of this honor code.

Please see the Discipline Section for information on how violations of the Academy Honor Code are addressed by teachers and the Headmaster. Since academic dishonesty is viewed as a serious offense, even first offenders may be punished with a suspension. The Academy Honor Code is typically reviewed in class with students during the first week of school each year.

*Portions of this honor code are derived from the current Duke University and Stanford University honor codes.*

## **2.7 Student Acceptable Use of Technology Policy**

The Academy has made a substantial investment in technology for instructional purposes. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher’s supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents must read and agree to abide by the Student Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.

### **2.7.1 Technology Statement**

The Academy is committed to utilizing appropriate technology to enhance student learning and increase teacher effectiveness in accordance with its mission and vision.

### **2.7.2 Student Safety**

The Academy is aware that resources that are inappropriate or not designed for use in the educational setting may be accessed on the Internet. To protect students and staff from such inappropriate material, the school’s Internet access is filtered with one of the highest-rated Internet filtering systems available. However, users must recognize that it is impossible for the Academy to restrict access to all controversial material and individuals must be responsible for their own actions in navigating the network.

### **2.7.3 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure school-level compliance with all procedures and regulations regarding the local area network and Internet usage. All students, parents, teachers, administrators and school employees who obtain their Internet access through the Academy are expected to use these services appropriately.

### **2.7.4 User Responsibilities**

The use of the Internet is a privilege. Inappropriate or abusive conduct will lead to the privilege being revoked. **The Academy is providing Internet resources for educational purposes only.** Student/staff use of Internet resources must be related to an expressed educational and/or administrative goal or

objective.

1. The use of the Academy Internet and computer network must be in support of educational goals, research, and class assignments and be consistent with the educational objectives of the school.
2. Users must have a valid, authorized account to access the network, and use only those computer resources that are authorized. Accounts may be used only in accordance with authorized purposes.
3. Individual accounts may be used only by the owner of the account except where specifically authorized by the Academy administration. In the case of class accounts, all use must be under the supervision of the sponsoring teacher/supervisor.
4. The user is responsible for safeguarding the computer account. Users are expected to protect access to accounts by periodically changing the password and keeping it confidential. They must respect the privacy of others by not tampering with their files, passwords or accounts.

### **2.7.5 Acceptable Use of Technology**

Users are to properly use school network resources for educational and/or administrative purposes. Respectful and responsible network etiquette and behavior should be in keeping with the school's mission statement. Students and staff are expressly prohibited from accessing obscene, profane, vulgar, or pornographic sites or materials.

Students are prohibited from sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, students involved in "sexting" or the sharing of inappropriate images or other content may also be disciplined for violating the Academy anti-harassment and bullying policies.

### **2.7.6 Monitored Use**

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by students and employees shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated school staff to ensure appropriate use for educational or administrative purposes. Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic mail messages is prohibited. Only the school's authorized IT Manager may read, delete, copy or modify the electronic mail of other system users.

### **2.7.7 Vandalism**

Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, disrupt or destroy data of another user of the Academy network or any other agencies or networks that are connected to the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses. Any of these actions may be viewed as violations of school policy, administrative regulations and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. Users must respect the privacy of other users, and will not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify any file, data, or password belonging to another user, or represent themselves as another user unless explicitly authorized. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance and/or degrade, disrupt or bypass system security are violations of school policy and

administrative regulations, and may constitute criminal activity under applicable laws.

Any prohibited behavior under this policy will result in the cancellation of technology privileges. The Academy will, in accordance with school policy, cooperate with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the Academy network.

### **2.7.8 Network Etiquette**

Each network user is expected to:

1. Be polite (i.e., an all-caps message implies shouting);
2. Use appropriate language;
3. Refrain from any activity that may be considered “cyber bullying,” including but not limited to threats of violence, extortion, obscene or harassing messages, harassment, stalking, child pornography, and sexual exploitation;
4. Maintain confidentiality of the user, colleagues, and students;
5. Respect copyright laws; and
6. Be respectful in all aspects of network use.

### **2.7.9 Consequences**

Violation of the Academy policies and procedures concerning use of the computer on the network will result in the same disciplinary actions that would result from similar violations in other areas of school policy, including the Student Code of Conduct. Any or all of the following consequences may be enforced if a student violates the terms of this policy:

1. Loss of computer privileges/Internet access, with length of time to be determined by campus administration. Any campus-based disciplinary consequence, including suspension, as deemed appropriate by the administration.
2. Suspension and/or expulsion may be considered for flagrant violations or violations that corrupt the educational value of the computers or the Internet.
3. Expulsion may be considered in instances where students have used the Academy Internet access to engage in conduct that constitutes felony criminal mischief, and/or have deliberately attempted to bypass installed security software or copy/modify another student’s work files.

## **2.8 Photography and Public Internet Postings**

1. The name and crest of the Academy are the property of the school and may be used only for official school business. Any Academy student who, without written permission from the headmaster, posts the crest or logo of the Academy on the internet or in any other public forum for purposes of identifying themselves or other students is subject to school disciplinary action.
2. All personal photography, including the taking of videos, is banned on zoom sessions and school events. No photos of minors may be publicly displayed without the consent of the parent(s) or guardian. Any Academy student found to be in violation of these rules is subject to school disciplinary action.
3. Any public display or posting by an Academy student, on the internet or in any other public forum, of derogatory, offensive, or harassing speech directed against another student, teacher, or other

member of the school community is in violation of the standards of the Academy and is subject to school disciplinary action.

## **2.9 Displaying a Student's Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work**

Teachers may display student work in classrooms as recognition of student achievement. However, the Academy will seek parental consent before displaying student artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and other original works on the Academy website, on any campus or classroom website, in printed materials, by video, or by any other method of mass communication. The Academy will also seek consent before displaying or publishing an original video or voice recording in this manner.

## **2.10 Lower School Uniform and Dress Code**

Great Hearts Online has a primary objective of developing a "community of learners," dedicated to the highest standards of academics and deportment. As such, a distinctive uniform is a unifying factor within our school community. It is also a visible signature of our school to the larger community, an indicator of our unity and of our pride of purpose. This is one of the most important functions of a uniform: it identifies its wearer as part of a distinctive group with a distinctive purpose. It is a reminder to its wearer of that purpose and of one's responsibility to that group.

Our Academy is also committed to the development of individual personality and character-- not through the external 'expressions' of dress and appearance, which can easily be purchased or affected, and which can quickly divide students through the power of snap judgments and prejudices—but through personal qualities, virtues, quirks and traits. It seems countercultural to assert this in our age, but the Academy holds that the school uniform is an essential condition for cultivating genuine individuality in the school community. It is not this or that particular element of the uniform that "matters" more than any of the others; rather, the uniform as a whole is what matters.

While students are responsible for their clothing and appearance, it is the parents who are responsible for providing the conditions required for meeting the standard, e.g. proper shoes, shirts, skirts and pants that fit properly, etc. Parents are urged to understand the uniform requirements below, and to ensure that their children go to school each day in the right attire, from head to toe. It is an uncomfortable experience for a child to be corrected for a uniform violation, and repeated uniform issues can become an enormous distraction for students.

The uniform is the basis of a dress code with a "professional," business-like standard. Our students should dress their best, look their best, and do their best. All clothing must be clean, neat, reasonably pressed, and in properly fitting condition. If a child is deemed to be wearing inappropriate attire, the parent will be notified and a change of clothing may be required for attendance that day. If in doubt about the appropriateness of an article of clothing, check with the Operations Manager before purchasing.

Decisions about the appropriateness of apparel may be referred to the Headmaster, whose judgment will be final. The school will make specific exceptions to the dress code as required by particular religious customs; parents should address specific concerns to the Headmaster before the second week of school. Students must stay in uniform uppers whenever they are in live class sessions (i.e. live/synchronous class, tutoring, or small group instruction) and when recording an asynchronous assignment.

Parents must provide their student(s) with the required uniform, except in the case of educationally disadvantaged students as provided in the Texas Education Code. The Academy may provide a uniform

for such students. A request for school assistance for purchasing uniforms must be made in writing to the Headmaster and include evidence of the inability to pay. Please contact the Operations Manager for more information.

**Required:**

- Short-sleeve or long-sleeve polo; white or light blue
- GH0 patch with white border stitching (provided in the SSK) placed over the left chest

**Optional:**

- Navy blue button up sweater
- GH0 patch with navy border stitching (provided in the SSK) placed over the left chest

**Sources**

Polos and Sweaters may be purchased from various vendors (e.g. French Toast, Amazon, Target, WalMart, etc.)

**Grooming**

Hair should be groomed to be out of the face and allow for clear eye contact with Teachers in zoom classes. No artificial coloring of the hair, extreme spiking of the hair or mohawks (including combed down or over and some facsimile of a mohawk). For girls, hair accessories may only be blue or white and should not be large or overly distracting. Hair gel that helps the hair stay in place or controls curly hair is allowable. Hair styles which reflect a family's particular religious heritage or culture are allowed.

## **3.0 Great Hearts America Policies**

---

### **3.1 Biological Sex and Gender Policy**

Great Hearts is responsible for ensuring the safety of all students during the school day and during school activities. This includes providing for the physical privacy rights of students. Great Hearts is further responsible for maintaining order, decorum and discipline during school. Great Hearts is further responsible for ensuring the educational environment is free from disruption and disturbance and provides equal educational opportunity to all students. The following policy is found by the Board of Directors to be in the best interest of students and necessary for maintaining privacy rights of students, maintaining safety, discipline and order, and in preserving the educational environment:

***ASSUMPTIONS:***

1. That the recognition of any distinction between “gender identity” and biological sex is not yet a matter of settled law in the United States;
2. That there exists no general consensus but rather disagreement between the State of Texas and the United States and in the United States as a whole—legal, scientific, educational, philosophical—about the relationship between “gender identity” and biological sex;
3. That GH will comply with all settled law (plain language of statute, controlling case law and duly adopted administrative regulations) for the states in which it operates schools;
4. That GH will take into account each student’s right to privacy and safety in accessing facilities as is relevant for the context of the school;
5. That EVERY CHILD entrusted to our schools, regardless of sex, class, race, religion, and national

origin, is to be educated with exactly the same level of care and respect for his/her dignity and innate human potential.

DEFINITION: “Sex” means an individual’s biological classification as male or female at the time of birth and as recorded on their official state-issued birth certificate.

***POLICY:***

**A. Student enrollment and instruction**

1. Schools will record, report, and classify each enrolled student as male or female according to the sex as indicated in the submitted enrollment documents. In the event of a discrepancy, the sex as indicated on the birth certificate will be considered as accurate.
2. In the event of an update or change to a birth certificate, the school shall consider the information upon the most recent birth certificate as accurate, and shall modify all school records as pertinent.
3. Schools will record and report the legal name of the child as recorded in enrollment documents submitted by the family. School staff may either a) refer to a child by the name as indicated in school records, or b) refer to the child by a variant nickname sanctioned by the student and his/her family. School personnel may use the personal pronouns consistent with the sex of students as recorded in school records described above.
4. When a learning activity calls for the separation of students by sex, students shall be classified according to sex as recorded in current school records described above.
5. Students must adhere to the uniform code and grooming standards of their sex as recorded in current school records described above.

### **3.2 Tolerance and Pluralistic Sensitivity**

The Academy is a public, non-sectarian institution serving a variety of Texans. All members of the Academy community—the administration, teachers, parents, and students—should show profound respect and tolerance for the religious, political, and cultural traditions and perspectives of others. The administration and teachers will take the lead at the Academy in actively promoting tolerance, civility, and sensitivity. Teachers are not permitted to encourage a particular religious or political perspective in the courses they teach. Rather, they encourage a civil and tolerant discussion of ideas when such topics naturally arise in class or on campus.

### **3.3 Accommodations for Children of Military Families**

Children of military families will be provided flexibility regarding certain Academy requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements;
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement;
- Eligibility requirements for participating in extracurricular activities; and
- Graduation requirements.

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who has been called to active duty for, is on leave from, or is returning from a deployment of at

least four months will be excused by the school. The Academy will permit no more than five excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

### **3.4 Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation**

Great Hearts prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis prohibited by law. Great Hearts also prohibits dating violence, as defined by this Handbook. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of Great Hearts policy.

#### **3.4.1 Discrimination and Harassment (Prohibited Conduct)**

For purposes of Great Hearts policy, the term "Prohibited Conduct" means discrimination or harassment against a student involving conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender or sex, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law and that adversely affects the student, and/or that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

- Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples of Prohibited Conduct may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes; name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Great Hearts also considers gender-based harassment to be Prohibited Conduct. Gender-based harassment includes harassment based on a student's gender, expression by the student of stereotypical characteristics associated with the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical behavior related to gender. Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not be limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

"Prohibited Conduct" may also include dating violence, which occurs when one partner in a dating relationship, either past or current, intentionally uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other partner. Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

#### **3.4.2 Retaliation**

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of Prohibited Conduct is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of reported Prohibited Conduct is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a Great Hearts investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified

punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

### **3.4.3 Reporting Prohibited Conduct**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced Prohibited Conduct or retaliation, or believes that another student has experienced Prohibited Conduct or retaliation should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, the Principal, or other school employee. The report may also be made by the student's parent. Alternatively, a report may be made directly to the appropriate Compliance Coordinator identified in this Handbook.

Upon receiving a report of potential Prohibited Conduct, Great Hearts will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited discrimination, harassment, dating violence, or retaliation. If not, Great Hearts will determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying. If the alleged prohibited conduct, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct and would also be considered bullying, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** Great Hearts' process concerning formal complaints of sexual harassment is outlined in "Freedom from Sexual Harassment" below.

### **3.4.4 Investigation**

To the extent possible, Great Hearts will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of Prohibited Conduct will be promptly investigated. The investigation may be conducted by the Compliance Coordinator or designee, or by a third party designated by Great Hearts, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the Principal or the student's teacher(s) will be involved in or informed of the investigation.

If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies Great Hearts that it is investigating the matter and requests that the school delay its investigation, Great Hearts will resume the investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

During the course of an investigation and when appropriate, Great Hearts will take interim action to address the alleged Prohibited Conduct.

If the school's investigation indicates that Prohibited Conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action and, in some cases, corrective action, will be taken to address the conduct. Great Hearts may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA").

### **3.4.5 Appeal**

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the school's student and parent complaint process, beginning at Level Two.

## **3.5 Freedom from Sexual Harassment**

Great Hearts prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, by an employee, volunteer, or another student.

Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- A school employee conditioning the provision of aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;



- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to Great Hearts’ educational programs or activities;
- Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as those offenses are defined in the Clery Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f), and the Violence Against Women Act, 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)).

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; sexually-motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and school employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a school employee is always prohibited, even if consensual.

### **3.5.1 General Definitions**

A “complainant” means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

A “respondent” means an individual who is reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

A “formal complaint” means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that Great Hearts investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

“Supportive measures” means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered appropriate and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to Great Hearts’ educational program or activity without unreasonably burdening either party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or Great Hearts’ educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Examples of supportive measures include, but are not limited to, counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of class schedules, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, and other similar measures.

### **3.5.2 Reporting Sexual Harassment**

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator in the “Statement of Nondiscrimination” section of this handbook, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person’s verbal or written report. Such a report may be made at any time, including during non-business hours, by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail to the office address, listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

Great Hearts’ response to a report of sexual harassment must treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures and by following a grievance process before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent.

After a report of sexual harassment has been made, the Title IX Coordinator must promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures, consider the complainant’s wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

### **3.5.3 Notice of Allegations**

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, Great Hearts must provide the following written notice to the parties who are

known:

- Notice of Great Hearts' grievance process, including any informal resolution process.
- Notice of the allegations of sexual harassment, including, to the extent known, the identity of the parties, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident.
- Notice that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made known at the conclusion of the grievance process.
- Notice that the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney.
- Notice that the parties may inspect and review evidence related to the complaint.
- Notice that Great Hearts prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

If, during an investigation, Great Hearts decides to investigate allegations about the complaint or respondent that are not included in the initial notice of the complaint, Great Hearts must provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

### **3.5.4 Grievance Process**

At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of Great Hearts.

The following guidelines apply when Great Hearts receives a formal complaint of sexual harassment. This process is designed to incorporate due process, principles, treat all parties fairly, and to assist Great Hearts reach reliable responsibility determinations.

- Great Hearts will require an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence – including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence – and credibility determinations may not be based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
- Any individual designated by Great Hearts as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or to facilitate an informal resolution process must not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or responsible. Great Hearts will ensure that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and anyone who facilitates an informal resolution process receive appropriate training related to the requirements of Title IX and Great Hearts' sexual harassment policy.
- Great Hearts recognizes a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the complaint process.
- Great Hearts shall attempt to complete an investigation of reported sexual harassment within 60 calendar days of receiving a complaint. However, the investigation process may be delayed or extended for a limited time for good cause with written notice to the complainant and the respondent of the delay or extension. Good cause may include considerations such as absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.
- Students found to have engaged in sexual harassment are subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
- Great Hearts shall employ the preponderance of the evidence standard to determine responsibility when reviewing formal complaints.
- Great Hearts may not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions of evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure, of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such

privilege has waived the privilege.

### **3.5.5 Consolidating Formal Complaints**

Great Hearts may consolidate formal complaints as to allegations of sexual harassment against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances.

### **3.5.6 Dismissal of Formal Complaints**

Great Hearts must investigate the allegations in a formal complaint.

Great Hearts must dismiss a formal complaint if the conduct alleged in the formal complaint:

- Would not constitute sexual harassment, even if proved;
- Did not occur in Great Hearts' education program or activity; or
- Did not occur against a person in the United States.

Great Hearts may dismiss a formal complaint or any allegations therein if, at any time during the investigation:

- A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein;
- The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by Great Hearts; or
- Specific circumstances prevent Great Hearts from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

Upon a dismissal, Great Hearts must promptly send simultaneous written notice to the parties of the dismissal and the reason(s) for the dismissal. Dismissal of a formal complaint does not preclude Great Hearts from taking appropriate action under the Student Code of Conduct or any other school policy that may apply to the alleged conduct.

### **3.5.7 Investigating Formal Complaints**

The following guidelines apply during the investigation of a formal complaint and throughout the grievance process.

- Great Hearts will ensure the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on Great Hearts and not on the parties.
- Great Hearts cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional's or paraprofessional's capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless Great Hearts receives that party's voluntary, written consent to do so.
- Great Hearts will provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
- Great Hearts will not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence.
- Great Hearts will provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisory of their choice, and not limit the choice or presence of an advisor for either the complainant or respondent in any meeting or grievance proceeding. Great Hearts may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties.
- Great Hearts will provide to a party whose participation is invited or expected written notice of the date, time,

location, participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews or other meetings with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

- Great Hearts will provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which the recipient does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation.
- Prior to completing an investigative report, Great Hearts must send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least 10 calendar days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completing the investigative report.
- Great Hearts must create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and, at least 10 calendar days prior to a determination regarding responsibility, send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the investigative report in an electronic format or a hard copy, for review and written response.
- After sending the investigative report to the parties and before reaching a determination of responsibility, the decision-maker(s) must afford each party the opportunity to submit written relevant questions that a party wants asked of any witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. The decision-maker(s) must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

### **3.5.8 Determination Regarding Responsibility**

The decision-maker(s) making a determination regarding responsibility cannot be the same person(s) as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator(s). The decision-maker(s) must review the investigation report and make a written determination, based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, regarding responsibility. The written determination must include:

- Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;
- A description of the procedural steps taken from receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, or methods used to gather other evidence;
- Findings of fact supporting the determination;
- Conclusions regarding application of Great Hearts' Code of Conduct to the facts;
- A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to Great Hearts' education program or activities will be provided to the complainant; and
- Great Hearts' procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

Great Hearts must provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously. The determination becomes final either on the date Great Hearts provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies.

### **3.5.9 Appeals**

Great Hearts will offer both parties an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, and from Great Hearts' dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein, on the following bases:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and
- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

As to appeals, Great Hearts will ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, or the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator. Great Hearts will provide both parties a reasonable equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome.

The decision-maker(s) for the appeal will issue a written decision, based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result, and provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties.

A party who is dissatisfied with the appeal decision may file an appeal through the student and parent complaint process, beginning at Level Two.

### **3.5.10 Emergency Removals**

Great Hearts is able to remove a respondent from Great Hearts' education program on an emergency basis, provided that Great Hearts undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. Great Hearts' ability to do so may not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **3.5.11 Informal Resolution**

At any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, Great Hearts may facilitate an informal resolution process, such as mediation, that does not involve a full investigation and adjudication. However, Great Hearts may not require as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continued employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to an investigation and adjudication of formal complaints. Additionally, Great Hearts may not require the parties to participate in an informal process and may not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed.

Prior to facilitating an informal resolution process, Great Hearts must:

- Provide to the parties a written notice disclosing the allegations and the requirements of the informal resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations. The notice must also inform that, at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint, as well as of any consequence resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.
- Obtain the parties' voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.

Great Hearts may not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee

sexually harassed a student.

### **3.5.12 Retaliation Prohibited**

Neither Great Hearts nor any other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation or proceeding under this policy.

Examples of retaliation may include, but are not limited to, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination.

Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the grievance procedure described above.

### **3.5.13 Confidentiality**

Great Hearts must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by FERPA or as required by law, or for purposes related to the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising under the Title IX regulations.

### **3.5.14 Non-Sexual Harassment Sex Discrimination**

The formal complaint investigation and resolution process outlined above in “Freedom from Sexual Harassment” applies only to formal complaints alleging sexual harassment as defined by Title IX, but not to complaints alleging sex discrimination that do not constitute sexual harassment. Complaints of non-sexual harassment sex discrimination may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator and will be handled under the process described in the “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation” section of this Handbook.

## **3.6 Policy on Hazing**

Hazing, solicitation to engage in hazing, and aiding and abetting another person who is engaged in hazing is strictly prohibited. A person is considered a “student” who has enrolled, who has been accepted for enrollment, or intends to enroll within the next 12 calendar months. This policy applies to all students until graduation, transfer, promotion, or withdrawal from the school.

“Hazing” is defined as any intentional, knowing or reckless act committed by a student, whether individually or in concert with other persons, against another student, and in which both of the following apply:

- The act is committed in connection with an initiation into, an affiliation with or the maintenance of membership in any organization that is affiliated with an educational institution; and
- The act contributes to a substantial risk of potential physical injury, mental harm or degradation or causes physical injury, mental harm or personal degradation.

“Organization” means an athletic team, association, order, society, corps, cooperative, club or other similar group that is affiliated with an educational institution and whose membership consists primarily of students enrolled at that educational institution.

Violations of this policy do not include customary athletic events, contests or competitions that are sponsored by an educational institution or any activity or conduct that furthers the goals of a legitimate

educational curriculum or legitimate extracurricular program.

It is no defense to a violation of this policy if the victim consented or acquiesced to hazing. All students, teachers, and staff shall take reasonable measures within the scope of their individual authority to prevent violations of this policy.

### **3.6.1 Reporting Procedures**

Students and others should report hazing to the Headmaster, but may also report hazing to another professional staff member. If an individual besides the Headmaster receives the report, the individual receiving the report will submit a report of the incident to the Headmaster. The individual shall respect the confidentiality of those involved, disclosing the incident only to those with a need to know or as required by law. Any incident of hazing that includes possible violation of state or federal statutes shall be treated as required by statutory requirements and reported to law enforcement.

All violations of this policy shall be treated in accordance with the discipline procedures and penalties in effect for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

If an organization knowingly permitted, authorized, or condoned hazing activity, its permission to conduct operations at the Academy may be revoked or suspended.

### **3.6.2 Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying**

Great Hearts Online prohibits bullying as defined by this section, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process. Bullying means a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student; or
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or the School; or
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Cyberbullying means bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

The school's bullying policy applies to:

- Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school- sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
- Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately-owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
- Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school- related

activity if the cyberbullying:

- Interferes with a student's educational opportunities; or
- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

### **3.6.3 Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced any form of bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to the Headmaster or designee, a teacher, counselor, or other school employee. A report may be made orally or in writing, and may be submitted anonymously. Any school employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the Headmaster or designee. The Headmaster or designee will notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any student witnesses of available counseling options.

The Headmaster or designee shall provide notice of incident of alleged bullying to:

- A parent or guardian of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the date the incident is reported; and
- A parent or guardian of the alleged bully within a reasonable amount of time after the incident.

### **3.6.4 Investigation of Report**

The Headmaster or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited harassment and, if so, proceed under that policy instead. The Headmaster or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report, and shall take prompt interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

The Headmaster or designee shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including a determination of whether bullying occurred. If the results of an investigation indicated that bullying occurred, the school shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Great Hearts Online may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the school concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying under this policy.

Discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities shall comply with applicable requirements under federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Section 1400 *et seq.*). Great Hearts Online may not impose discipline on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying, based on that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying.

The Headmaster, or the Headmaster's designee, may make a report to the police department of the municipality in which the school is located or, if the school is not in a municipality, the sheriff of the county in which the school is located if, after an investigation is completed, the Headmaster or designee has reasonable grounds to believe that a student engaged in conduct that constitutes an offense under Section 22.01 (Assault) or 42.07(a)(7) (Harassment), Texas Penal Code.

### **3.6.5 Confidentiality**

To the greatest extent possible, Great Hearts Online shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough



investigation.

### **3.6.6 Appeal**

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the Great Hearts Online grievance procedure.

### **3.6.7 Social Media**

The Academy reserves to itself the right to investigate allegations of bullying, harassment, intimidation, and threats that occur in social media venues and which disrupt the learning environment of the school. Not everything said or done by students online is the school's business, but actions and words directed against fellow students, parents, or school staff will be considered as such. The school will also notify law enforcement when credible threats of violence are detected.

### **3.6.8 Alcohol-Free School Notice**

In order to provide a safe and alcohol-free environment for students and employees, all alcoholic beverages are prohibited on school property at all times, and at all school-sanctioned activities occurring on or off school property. Student violators are subject to the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **3.6.9 Tobacco-Free School Notice**

Smoking and using smokeless tobacco, including electronic cigarettes, are not permitted in school buildings, vehicles, or on or near school property, or at school-related or school-sanctioned events off school property. Students may not possess tobacco products at any of the locations or activities listed above. All violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law. Additionally, student violators are subject to the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **3.6.10 Drug-Free School Notice**

The Academy believes that student use of illicit drugs is both wrong and harmful. Consequently, the Academy prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs by students on school premises or any school activity, regardless of its location. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

## **3.7 Suspension**

### **3.7.1 Process for Suspensions Lasting up to Five Continuous Days**

In addition to the above list of Code of Conduct violations, the Headmaster has authority to suspend a student for a period of up to five continuous school days at a time for any of the following reasons:

1. The need to further investigate an incident;
2. A recommendation to expel the student; or
3. An emergency constituting endangerment to health or safety.

#### ***3.7.1.1 Prerequisites to Suspension***

Prior to suspending a student, the Headmaster or designee must attempt to hold an informal conference with the student to:

1. Notify the student of the accusations against him/her,
2. Allow the student to relate his or her version of the incident, and

3. Determine whether the student's conduct warrants suspension.

#### ***3.7.1.2 Notification to Parents/Guardians***

If the Headmaster or designee determines the student's conduct warrants suspension during the school day, the Headmaster or designee will make reasonable effort to notify the student's parent(s) that the student has been suspended before the student is sent home. The Headmaster or designee will notify a suspended student's parent(s) of the period of suspension, the grounds for the suspension, and the time and place for an opportunity to confer with the Headmaster.

#### ***3.7.1.3 Credit During Suspension***

A student shall receive credit for work missed during the period of suspension if the student makes up work missed within the same number of school days the student was absent on suspension.

#### **3.7.2 Process for Out-of-School Suspensions over Five Days and Expulsion**

When the Headmaster or designee determines that a student's conduct warrants suspension for more than five days or expulsion, but prior to taking any expulsion action, the Headmaster or designee will provide the student's parent(s) with written notice of:

1. The reasons for the proposed disciplinary action; and
2. The date and location for a hearing before the Headmaster, within five school days from the date of the disciplinary action.

The notice shall further state that, at the hearing, the student:

1. May be present;
2. Shall have an opportunity to present evidence;
3. Shall be apprised and informed of the school's evidence;
4. May be accompanied by his or her parent(s); and
5. May be represented by an attorney.

#### **3.7.3 Expulsion Hearing Before VP of Academics**

The Academy shall make a good faith effort to inform the student and the student's parent(s) of the time and place for the hearing, and the school shall hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parent(s) or another adult representing the student attends. The VP of Academics may audio record the hearing.

Immediately following the hearing, the VP of Academics will notify the student and the student's parent(s) in writing of his or her decision. The decision shall specify:

1. The length of the suspension or expulsion, if any;
2. When the expulsion is not permanent, the procedures for re-admittance at the end of the expulsion period; and
3. The right to appeal the VP of Academics' decision to the Superintendent of Great Hearts Texas.

The notice shall also state that failure to timely request such a hearing constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter.

### **3.7.4 Appeal to the Superintendent**

The student or his or her parent(s) may appeal the expulsion decision to the Superintendent by notifying the Headmaster in writing within seven calendar days of the date of receipt of the Headmaster's decision. The Superintendent will review the audio or transcribed record from the hearing before the Headmaster at a specially called meeting. The Superintendent will notify the student and his or her parent(s) of its decision, in writing, within five calendar days of the hearing. Parents will be notified of the right to appeal the Headmaster's decision to the Board of Great Hearts Texas.

### **3.7.5 Appeal to the Board of Directors**

After appealing the expulsion decision to the Superintendent, the student or his or her parent(s) may appeal the expulsion decision to the Board of Directors by notifying the Headmaster in writing within seven calendar days of the date of receipt of the Headmaster's decision. The Board will review the audio or transcribed record from the hearing before the Headmaster at a specially called meeting. The Board will notify the student and his or her parent(s) of its decision, in writing, within five calendar days of the hearing. The decision of the Board is final and may not be appealed.

Discipline consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of an appeal of an expulsion to the Board.

### **3.7.6 No Credit Earned**

Except when required by law, students will not earn academic credit during a period of expulsion.

### **3.7.7 Emergency Placement and Expulsion**

If the Headmaster or designee reasonably believes a student's behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with a teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students in a class, with the ability of a student's classmates to learn, or with the operation of the school or a school-sponsored activity, the Headmaster or designee may order immediate removal of the student. Immediate suspension may be imposed by the Headmaster or designee if he or she reasonably believes such action is necessary to protect persons or property from eminent harm. At the time of such an emergency removal, the student will be given verbal notice of the reason for the action and appropriate hearings will be scheduled within a reasonable time after the emergency removal.

*Note: Colleges routinely ask students and/or schools to report all suspensions or expulsions in the college application paperwork. The Academy honestly answers such questions and reports all suspensions at the high school level. (Colleges will take into consideration the timeframe and nature of the suspension, and students with suspensions have been accepted into top colleges.)*

### **3.7.8 Placement of Students with Disabilities**

All disciplinary actions regarding students with disabilities shall be conducted in accordance with the most current federal and state laws.

#### ***3.7.8.1 Suspension/Expulsion Requirement***

A student with a disability shall not be excluded from his or her current placement pending appeal to the Board of Directors for more than ten days without ARD Committee action to determine appropriate services in the interim. Pending appeal to a special education hearing officer, a student with a disability shall remain in the present education setting, unless the Academy and the student's parents agree otherwise.

## **3.8 Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse of Students & Other Maltreatment of Children**

### **3.8.1 What is Sexual Abuse of a Child?**

The Texas Family Code defines “sexual abuse” as any sexual conduct harmful to a child’s mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as, in certain circumstances, failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child.

### **3.8.2 What is Other Maltreatment of a Child?**

Under State law, “other maltreatment” of a child includes “abuse” or “neglect,” as defined by Texas Family Code sections 261.001 and 261.401.

### **3.8.3 Reporting Obligation**

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (“DFPS”). Reports may be made by contacting one of the following:

- Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 in non-emergency situations
- Call 911 in emergency situations.

The Academy has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children (the “Plan”).

### **3.8.4 Methods for Increasing Awareness Regarding Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment of Children**

**For Teachers:** The Academy annually trains teachers in all content areas addressed in the Plan. Training will include contents of the adopted board policy and is provided by campus staff, administrative staff, or outside agencies as determined by the Headmaster.

**For Students:** School counseling staff will address issues to increase awareness regarding sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children and anti-victimization programs with age-appropriate conversation and materials. Sexual abuse awareness will be discussed in classroom group settings, or as otherwise deemed appropriate by campus administrators.

**For Parents:** Parents must be aware of warning signs indicating that their child may have been or is being sexually abused or otherwise maltreated. A child who has experienced sexual abuse or other maltreatment should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that evidence of sexual abuse or other maltreatment may be more indirect than disclosures or signs of physical abuse. It is important to remain calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing in coming to you.

The fact that the abuser is a parent or other family member does not remove your obligation to protect the child. Parents who permit their child to remain in a situation where he or she may be injured or abused may also be subject to prosecution for child abuse. And, if you are frightened for your own safety or that of your child, you should call 911 or 1-800-252-5400.

Also remember that parents are legally responsible for the care of their children and must provide their children with safe and adequate food, clothing, shelter, protection, medical care and supervision, or arrange for someone else to provide these things. Failure to do so may be considered neglect.

The Headmaster or campus counselor will provide information regarding counseling options available in your area for you and your child if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment. The Department of Family Protective Services (“DFPS”) also provides early abuse intervention through counseling programs. Services in your county can be accessed at the following web address:

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention\\_and\\_early\\_intervention/programs\\_available\\_in\\_your\\_county/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention_and_early_intervention/programs_available_in_your_county/default.asp).

### **3.8.8 Emergency Closings**

Generally, the Academy dismisses classes for weather-related events on the same days as surrounding local independent school districts. Any closures for weather will be communicated to all families by text message via our notification service and by email.

The Academy may also need to close during certain emergency situations beyond the control of school officials. The announcement of non-weather-related school closings will be also be communicated to families through our notification service.

## **3.9 Residency Verification**

The Texas Education Code authorizes schools to obtain evidence that a person is eligible to attend public show proof of residency at the time of enrollment. Residency may be verified through observation, documentation and other means, to include but not limited to:

- A recently paid rent receipt.
- A current lease agreement.
- The most recent tax receipt indicating home ownership.
- A current utility bill indicating the address and name of the residence occupiers.
- Mailing address of the residence occupiers.
- Visual inspection of the residence.
- Interviews with persons with relevant information.
- Building permits issued to a parent on or before September 1 of the school year in which admission is sought (permits will serve as evidence of residency only for the school year in which admission is sought).

Falsification of residence on an enrollment form is a criminal offense.

## **3.10 Immunizations**

The State of Texas requires that every child in the state be immunized against preventable diseases caused by infectious agents, in accordance with an established immunization schedule.

To determine the specific number of doses that are required for your student, please read the current Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students. The current annual document and more information about school vaccine requirements are available at the Texas Department of State Health Services (“TDSHS”) Immunization Branch website: [www.ImmunizeTexas.com](http://www.ImmunizeTexas.com) (click on the “School & Childcare” link).

Immunizations can be received from the County Health Departments in which they reside; Students must take immunization records in order to determine immunizations required for school attendance. Otherwise, please take your child to the physician of your choice.

Immunization certificates must have the vaccine name, the day, month, and year administered. Acceptable documentation can be the signature stamp of physician or public health personnel, an official immunization record generated from a state or local health authority such as a registry or a record received from school official including a record from another state.

### **3.10.1 Provisional Enrollment**

Texas immunization laws require all students be fully immunized from specified diseases before they may enter school. However, a student may be enrolled provisionally for no more than 30 days if he or she transfers from one Texas school to another, and is awaiting the transfer of immunization records.

A student may be enrolled provisionally if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate vaccine required by law. To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to

the Academy. The Academy shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. If, at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received a subsequent dose of vaccine, the student is not in compliance and the Academy shall exclude him or her from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

A student who is homeless, as defined by the McKinney Act (42 U.S.C. § 11302), shall be admitted temporarily for 30 days if acceptable evidence of vaccination is not available. The Academy shall promptly refer the student to appropriate public health programs to obtain the required vaccinations.

### **3.10.2 Exclusions from Immunization Requirements**

Exclusions from immunization compliance are allowable on an individual basis for medical reasons, reasons of conscience, and active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

#### ***3.10.2.1 Medical Reasons***

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student must present a statement signed by the child's physician (M.D. or D.O.), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States who has examined the child, in which it is stated that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccine required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child or any member of the child's household. Unless it is written in the statement that a lifelong condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

#### ***3.10.2.2 Reasons of Conscience***

To claim an exclusion for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, a signed TDSHS affidavit must be presented by the student's parent, stating that the student's parent declines vaccinations for reasons of conscience, including because of the person's religious beliefs. The affidavit will be valid for a two-year period. The form affidavit may be obtained by writing the TDSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347, or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/default.aspx>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the Headmaster within 90 days of notarization. If the parent

is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student. Students, who have not received the required immunizations for reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs, may be excluded from school in times of emergency or epidemic declared by the commissioner of public health.

#### ***3.10.2.3 Military Service***

To claim an exclusion for military service, the student must prove that he or she is serving on active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

If a parent seeks an exemption for more than one student, a separate form must be provided for each student.

#### **3.10.3 Immunization Records Reporting**

The Academy's record of your student's immunization history, while private in most instances, may be inspected by the Texas Education Agency, local health departments and the TDSHS, and transferred to other schools associated with the transfer of your student to those schools.

#### **3.10.4 Fitness Testing**

According to requirements under state law, the Academy will annually assess the physical fitness of students. The Academy is not required to assess a student for whom, as a result of disability or other condition identified by rule or law, the assessment exam is inappropriate.

#### **3.10.5 Dyslexia and Related Disorders**

From time to time, students may be screened and treated for dyslexia and other related disorders in accordance with programs, rules, and standards approved by the State of Texas. Parents will be notified should the Academy determine a need to identify or assist a student diagnosed with dyslexia or related disorder.

#### **3.10.6 Vision and Hearing Screenings**

All children enrolled in Texas schools must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems in accordance with regulations issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Students in certain grade levels identified by state regulations shall be screened for vision and hearing problems annually. Screening records for individual students may be inspected by the Texas Department of State Health Services or a local health department and may be transferred to another school without parental consent.

##### ***3.10.6.1 Exemption***

A student is exempt from screening requirements if screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or a member. To qualify for the exemption, the individual or, if the individual is a minor, the minor's parent, managing conservator, or guardian, must submit to the Headmaster on or before the day of admission an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

#### **3.10.7 Spinal Screening**

All children in 6th and 9th grade must be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. The screening requirement for students entering grade six or nine may be met if the child has been screened for spinal deformities during the previous year.

A parent, managing conservator, or guardian who declines participation in the spinal screening provided by the Academy must submit to the Headmaster documentation of a professional examination, which

includes the results of a forward-bend test. This documentation must be submitted to the Academy during the year the student is scheduled for screening or, if the professional exam is obtained during the following summer, at the beginning of the following school year.

#### ***3.10.7.1 Exemption***

A student is exempt from screening if the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or member. To qualify for the exemption, the student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian must submit to the Headmaster on or before the day of the screening procedure an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

### **3.11 FERPA Notification**

#### **3.11.1 Annual Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality Notice)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") affords parents and students over 18 years of age (eligible students) certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. These rights include the following:

#### **3.11.2 The Right to Inspect and Review**

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days of the day Great Hearts Online ("the School") receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Great Hearts Online a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

If circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student's educational records, the School shall provide the parent or eligible student with a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or eligible student to inspect and review the requested records.

The School shall not destroy any educational records if there is an outstanding request to inspect and review the records under this section. The School may charge a reasonable fee for a copy of an education record that is made for the parent or eligible student, unless the imposition of a fee effectively prevents a parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student's education records. The School will not charge a fee to search for or to retrieve the educational records of a student.

If the educational records of a student contain information on more than one student, the parent or eligible student may inspect and review or be informed of only the specific information about that student.

#### **3.11.3 The Right to Seek Amendment of the Student's Educational Records**

Parents and/or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student. Such a request must be made to the Headmaster in writing, clearly identify the part of the record the parent or eligible student wants changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. The School will decide whether to amend the record as requested within a reasonable time after receipt of the request. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, it will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

If, as a result of the hearing, the School decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise



in violation of the privacy rights of the student, it shall amend the record accordingly and inform the parent or eligible student of the amendment in writing.

If, as a result of the hearing, the School decides that the information in the educational record is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of the student, it shall inform the parent or eligible student of the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information in the record or stating why he or she disagrees with the decision of the School, or both. If the School places an amended statement in the educational records of a student, it is obligated to maintain the amended statement with the contested part of the record for as long as the record is maintained and disclose the statement whenever it discloses the portion of the record to which the statement relates.

#### **3.11.4 The Right to Consent Prior to Disclosure**

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A "school official" is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Charter Board of Directors; a person or company with whom the School has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another open-enrollment charter school, school district, or private school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

#### **3.11.5 The Right to File a Complaint**

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. These complaints should be addressed as follows:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

#### **3.11.6 Access to Student Devices and Classes**

Parents with legal custody and/or legal Guardians of a student are entitled to access their students' login credentials, zoom class logins, and Canvas LMS login credentials. In situations of divorce or separation, Great Hearts makes every effort to respect the rights of both parents. Both parents generally maintain educational rights, rights to information and access. In some situations, a divorce decree, custody order or other court order may modify rights and relationships. Parents are requested to keep Great Hearts informed

and to provide a copy of official court orders where they may impact educational matters. Great Hearts is not the enforcer of such orders and is not responsible for overseeing compliance. Instead, those matters and disagreements or disputes must be worked out between parents, their attorneys and the court.

### **3.11.7 Access to Medical Records**

Parents are entitled to access their students' medical records.

### **3.11.8 Notice for Directory Information**

Under FERPA, the School must, with certain exceptions, obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records. However, the School may disclose personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records without obtaining prior written consent of the parent or eligible student if the School has designated the information as "directory information."

The School has designated the following categories of information as directory information for the purpose of disclosure relating to school-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes:

1. Student name;
2. Address;
3. Telephone listing;
4. Electronic mail address;
5. Photographs (including video image);
6. Date and place of birth;
7. Major field of study;
8. Degrees, honors, and awards received;
9. Dates of attendance;
10. Grade level;
11. Most recent educational institution attended;
12. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and
13. Weight and height of members of athletic teams.

School-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes are those events/activities that the School conducts and/or sponsors to support the educational mission of the School. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Extracurricular programs or events (*e.g.*, school plays, concerts, athletic events, graduation ceremony);
2. Publications (*e.g.*, campus family directory, newsletters, yearbook, etc.);
3. Honor roll and other student recognition lists;
4. Marketing materials of the School (*e.g.*, print media, website, videos, newspaper, etc.)

The School has designated the following categories of information as directory information for the purpose of disclosure to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, but only for secondary students:

1. Student's name,
2. Address, and
3. Telephone listing.

The School shall not release directory information except for the purpose indicated above, namely:

1. Disclosure relating to school-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes; and
2. Disclosure to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, but only for secondary students.

A PARENT OR ELIGIBLE STUDENT MAY OPT OUT OF THE RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION FOR EITHER OR BOTH OF THESE PURPOSES BY SUBMITTING A RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING FORM - [GHO Private Authorization & Signature Pages - Google Forms](#)

If the School does not receive an opt-out form objecting to the release of directory information by the fifth school day of the school year, the School will assume that the parent approves release of directory information for the purposes described above. However, parents may alter their decision to restrict or not to restrict release of directory information by submitting a completed “Use of Student Photos and Directory Information Opt Out Form” or otherwise notifying the School in writing at any time during the year.

The Opt Out Form has been made available as part of the School’s Student and Parent Handbook and can be requested via our Operations Manager as well.

### **3.12 Law Enforcement Agencies**

#### **3.12.1 Questioning of Students**

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school:

- ☐ The Headmaster will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- ☐ The Headmaster ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the Headmaster considers to be a valid objection.
- ☐ The Headmaster ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the Headmaster considers to be a valid objection.
- ☐ The Headmaster will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation.

When the investigation involves allegations of child abuse, special rules apply. See “Child Abuse Reporting and Programs.”

#### **3.12.2 Students Taken Into Custody**

State law requires the Academy to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- Pursuant to an order of the juvenile court;
- Pursuant to the laws of arrest;
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision;
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated the terms of probation imposed by a juvenile court;
- Pursuant to a properly issued directive to apprehend; or

- By an authorized representative of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order and under the conditions set out in Texas Family Code § 262.104 relating to the student's physical health or safety.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the Headmaster will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The Headmaster will immediately notify the Superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises that the Headmaster considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents.

### **3.12.3 Child Abuse Reporting and Programs**

The Academy provides child abuse anti-victimization programs and cooperates with official child abuse investigators as required by law. The Academy also provides training to its teachers and students in preventing and addressing incidents of sexual abuse of children, including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse. Assistance, interventions, and counseling options are also available.

The school's administration shall cooperate with law enforcement investigations of child abuse, including investigations by the Texas Department of Protective and Family Services. School officials may not refuse to permit an investigator to interview a student who is alleged to be a victim of abuse or neglect at school. School officials may not require the investigator to permit school personnel to be present during an interview conducted at school.

Investigations at school may be conducted by authorized law enforcement or state agencies without prior notification or consent of the student's parent, if necessary.

## **4.0 Admissions & Records**

---

### **4.1 Admissions Policy**

Admission and enrollment of students shall be open to persons who reside within the boundaries of the State of Texas and currently attend a public ISD or public charter. Private school and home school students are NOT eligible for public school funding. The total number of students enrolled in the Academy shall not exceed the number of students approved in the charter or subsequent amendments. Total enrollment may further be limited by the Academy based on occupancy limitations, code compliance, and staffing requirements, as deemed necessary.

In accordance with state law, the Academy does not discriminate in its admissions policy on the basis of sex; national origin; ethnicity; religion; disability; academic, artistic, or athletic ability; or the district the child would otherwise attend.

#### **4.1.1 Exception to Admission**

As authorized by the Great Hearts Texas charter and Texas Education Code § 12.111(a)(5)(A), students with a documented history of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or serious discipline problems under Texas Education Code, Subchapter A, Chapter 37 will be excluded from enrollment in the Academy.

#### **4.1.2 Submission of Applications and Admissions Lottery**

The Academy requires applicants to submit a completed application in order to be considered for admission. An admissions lottery will be conducted if the total number of applicants exceeds the number of open enrollment spots. Parents will be notified of the results of the lottery and the available seats will be offered to applicants in the order of their waitlist numbers.

Once all available seats have been filled, the remaining applicants will be placed on a waiting list. If a vacancy arises before the commencement of the school year, the individual on the waiting list with the lowest number assignment will be offered admission and then removed from the waiting list.

#### **4.1.3 Exceptions**

Federal guidelines permit the Academy to exempt from the lottery students who are already attending the Academy; siblings of students already admitted to or attending the Academy; and children of the Academy's founders, teachers and staff, so long as the number of these students constitutes only a small percentage of the school's enrollment.

### **4.2 Student Information**

Any student admitted to the Academy must provide records, such as a report card and/or transcript from the previous school attended, to verify his or her academic standing. Verification of residency and current immunization records are also required. Every student enrolling at the Academy for the first time must present documentation of immunizations as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

No later than 30 days after enrolling in the Academy, the parent and school district in which the student was previously enrolled shall furnish records that verify the identity of the student. These records may include the student's birth certificate, or a copy of the student's school records from the most recently attended school.

The Academy will forward a student's records on request to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll without the necessity of the parent's consent.

### **4.3 Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

*Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)—

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;

7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
  8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –*
    1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
    2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
    3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
  - *Inspect, upon request and before administration or use –*
    1. Protected information surveys of students;
    2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
    3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The Academy has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The Academy will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The Academy will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The Academy will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

*Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:*

Family Policy Compliance Office  
 U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue  
 SW Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

## **4.4 Child Find**

Child Find's intent is to ensure that all children from birth through 21 with delays or disabilities are identified, located and evaluated with minimal cost to parents.

Anyone who has contact with the child may refer him or her to Child Find. Contact Child Find if you have concerns about how a child plays and interacts with others, learns, communicates, moves, sees or hears.

When children are "found", they are referred to a specialist to screen their development. The screening helps "identify" any areas of concern that need to be evaluated further. In order to receive early intervention or special education services, a child must be evaluated to confirm they have a delay or disability that falls under state definitions.

If needed, the child is evaluated using state criteria for specific delays or disabilities. If eligible, Child Find or a public school system will offer early intervention or special education services according to the child's needs.

- Early intervention supports and services assist families of children who are eligible by helping children ages birth to three years develop to their full potential.
- Preschool special education services for children ages 3 to 5 provide special strategies to help children reach their developmental milestones.
- Special education services for school-aged children in kindergarten through the age of 21 provide specialized instruction and services to assist children in the educational environment.

*For older children, aged 2 years, 9 months to 5 years, you may also contact the local school district.*

## **4.5 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

**IDEA** is a federal law that protects the rights of students with disabilities. In addition to standard school records, for children with disabilities education records could include evaluation and testing materials, medical and health information, Individualized Education Programs and related notices and consents, progress reports, materials related to disciplinary actions, and mediation agreements. Such information is gathered from a number of sources, including the student's parents and staff of the school of attendance. Also, with parental permission, information may be gathered from additional pertinent sources, such as doctors and other health care providers. This information is collected to assure the child is identified, evaluated, and provided a Free Appropriate Public Education in accordance with state and federal special education laws.

Each agency participating under Part B of IDEA must assure that at all stages of gathering, storing, retaining and disclosing education records to third parties that it complies with the federal confidentiality laws. In addition, the destruction of any education records of a child with a disability must be in accordance with IDEA regulatory requirements.

For additional information or to file a complaint, you may call the federal government at (202) 260- 3887 (voice) or 1-800-877-8339 (TDD), or the Texas Education Agency (TEA) at (512) 463-9734.

Or you may contact:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW

## **5.0 Academics**

---

### **5.1 Focus on the Western Tradition**

The Academy's teachers are able to explain to students, parents, and the public why we focus principally on Western Culture during the seven years of education at the school. This focus is not intended as a statement about other cultural heritages. In brief, we focus on Western Culture at the Academy because we believe that seven years is just enough time to offer students a comprehensive introduction to the great works of the Western tradition, including literature, philosophy, history, math, science, languages, and the fine arts. The Western tradition is one of great depth and diversity (of peoples and ideas) and will serve as a superb foundation to our students as they go on to be lifelong learners. We believe that many of the values and ideas that underlie our own American society may be clearly traced to the classics we study.

### **5.2 Academic Expectations, Evaluation, and Student Promotion**

Our curriculum is rigorous, and expectations of students are high; however, we are not an exclusive school for the best and the brightest. Our goal is to provide an environment that allows every student who wants to learn the opportunity to achieve academically. A student's desire to learn using his or her curiosity, is the key to success and fulfillment at the Academy. While the school understands that some students are more talented than others in certain subjects, every student who has passed the appropriate prerequisites, is genuinely curious, and applies him or herself diligently on a daily basis will succeed at the Academy. Success is measured as a student's growth in maturity, accomplishment, and understanding over the course of his or her seven years at the Academy and will finally be demonstrated in his or her character as a typical Academy senior and graduate, a truly impressive young man or woman.

As a key philosophical assumption, the Academy holds that every student can learn. As human beings, we are equal in that we all have the capacity to learn and grow. But this equality *in* capacity cannot be confused with equality *of* capacity, and certainly not with equality of academic results. Just as individuals differ in their physical gifts and characteristics, we all have different gifts and challenges in the subjects of learning. The Academy is committed to helping each student achieve as much as he or she can. True excellence across the curriculum is a rare and worthy achievement, to be admired by all, but not to be unreasonably expected of all.

The Academy requires a rigorous course of study, and we strongly recommend that students do not work at an outside job during the school year.

### **5.3 Course of Study**



|                     | K   | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup>    | 3 <sup>rd</sup>         | 4 <sup>th</sup>      | 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 6 <sup>th</sup>              | 7 <sup>th</sup>               | 8 <sup>th</sup>                | 9 <sup>th</sup>                                 | 10 <sup>th</sup>                           | 11 <sup>th</sup>                                    | 12 <sup>th</sup>                     |
|---------------------|---|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| English             | Core Knowledge Literature                   |                 |                    |                         |                      |                  | Literature & Composition     |                               |                                | Humane Letters:<br>US History from 1877-Present | Humane Letters:<br>Modern European History | Humane Letters:<br>Great Texts of the Ancient World | Humane Letters:<br>Rome to Modernity |
|                     | Spalding Phonics                            |                 |                    | Grammar & Composition   |                      |                  |                              |                               |                                |   |  |   |                                      |
|                     | Leveled Readers                             |                 | Junior Great Books |                         |                      |                  |                              |                               |                                |   |  |   |                                      |
| History & Geography | Modified Core Knowledge History & Geography |                 |                    |                         |                      |                  | World History & Cultures     | Texas History                 | US History: Beginnings-1877    |   |  |   |                                      |
|                     | Emphasis: US History                        |                 |                    | Emphasis: Texas History | Emphasis: US History |                  |                              |                               |                                |   |  |   |                                      |
| Math                | Singapore Math                              |                 |                    |                         |                      |                  | Math Fundamentals            | Pre-Algebra                   | Algebra I                      | Geometry  | Alg II Pre-Calculus                        | Calculus I  | Calculus II                          |
| Science             | Modified Core Knowledge Science             |                 |                    |                         |                      | Physical Science | Life Science                 | Physical Science              | Earth Science                  | Biology   | Chemistry                                  | Physics I   | Physics II                           |
| Foreign Language    | Beginning Latin                             |                 |                    |                         |                      |                  | Latin & Western Humanities I | Latin & Western Humanities II | Latin & Western Humanities III | Latin III or Modern Lang I                      | Latin IV or Modern Lang II                 | Greek I or Modern Lang III                          | Greek II or Modern Lang IV           |
| Fine Arts           | Core Knowledge Fine Arts                    |                 |                    |                         |                      |                  | Studio Art*                  | Studio Art/ Music*            | Music*                         | Studio Art                                      | Music                                      | Drama   | Studio Art                           |
| Other Core          | Physical Education                          |                 |                    |                         |                      |                  | Physical Education           | Physical Education            | Physical Education             | Physical Education                              | Economics*                                 | World History/ Geography                            | Senior Project                       |
|                     | Competitive Chess                           |                 |                    |                         |                      |                  |                              |                               |                                |   |  |   |                                      |
|                     | Poetry Memorization & Recitation            |                 |                    |                         |                      |                  |                              |                               |                                |   |  |   |                                      |

\*Indicates semester or every-other-day courses; all others are full year.

Note: In the founding years of a Great Hearts academy, modifications to offerings (especially in math & foreign language) are made.

### 5.3.1 Physical Education

The Academy will ensure that students in kindergarten through grade 8 engage in at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week of moderate or vigorous physical activity.

### 5.3.2 Exemption

Short-term exemptions from physical education are possible for students who have physical handicaps, illnesses, or other incapacities that a physician deems severe enough to warrant exemption or severe enough to warrant modified activity in such classes. Each case is handled on an individual basis as follows:

1. Each request for exemption or for modified activity must be accompanied by a physician's certificate. Such certificates are honored but must be renewed each year.
2. When the certificate will allow modified activities in class, the student should remain in physical education class. The teachers adjust the activities of the student to the disability.
3. An exempted student may be admitted to regular physical education activities only upon presentation of a written statement from the same physician who signed the original exemption.

## 5.4 Special Programs

### **5.4.1 Bilingual/ESL Services**

The academy offers Bilingual/English as a Second Language (“ESL”) services at all appropriate grade levels for English language learners who are limited in their English proficiency. The program is designed to assist students identified as having limited English proficiency with development in language – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The goal of the ESL program is to provide additional English language assistance to students, enabling them to become academically successful in all classes. Students are assessed with state-approved Oral Language Proficiency and Norm- Referenced Tests to qualify for placement in the program. If test results indicate either limited oral or limited cognitive academic English ability, the student (with parent approval) is provided additional English language support.

### **5.4.2 Special Education Services**

The Academy has the responsibility of identifying, locating, and evaluating individuals with disabilities who are 5–21 years of age and who fall within the school’s jurisdiction. If you know or suspect that your child has a disability, please contact the Headmaster for information about available programs, assessments, and services.

Special education services are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. Each student who receives special education services has an Individual Education Plan (“IEP”), which is developed by the student’s Admission, Review, and Dismissal (“ARD”) Committee. The ARD Committee considers the student’s disability and determines appropriate accommodations, supplementary aids, and/or services that are necessary for the student to participate in the general curriculum.

All special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment, which may be special education settings, general education settings, or a combination of both. All students receiving special education services are educated to the maximum extent appropriate with their non-disabled peers as well as participating in all school activities on the same basis as students who are not disabled.

The Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities, can be obtained from the Special Education Director or at the Texas Education Agency Special Education Website: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/>. For further information, please contact the Headmaster or designee.

### **5.4.3 Section 504 Services**

The Academy provides a free appropriate public education to each qualified student with a disability, regardless of the nature or severity of the student’s disability. A “student with a disability” is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the student’s major life activities, has a record of having such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. A student with a disability is “qualified” if he or she is between the ages of three and 21, inclusive.

An appropriate education is the provision of regular or special education and related services that are designed to meet the student’s individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of students who do not have disabilities are met; and (2) based on adherence to procedures that satisfy federal requirements for educational setting, evaluation and placement, and procedural safeguards.

Qualified students with disabilities will be placed in the regular educational environment, unless the Academy demonstrates that education in the regular environment with the use of supplemental aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Should an alternate educational environment be necessary, the Academy shall comply with all legal requirements regarding least restrictive environment and comparable

facilities for students with disabilities. In providing or arranging for nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities, the Academy shall ensure that a qualified student with a disability participates with students who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

To be eligible for services and protections against discrimination on the basis of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a student must be determined, as a result of an evaluation, to have a “physical or mental impairment” that substantially limits one or more major life activities. If a student has or is suspected of having a disability, or requires special services, parents or teachers should contact the Headmaster for information concerning available programs, assessments, and services. For further information, please contact the Section 504 Coordinator.

#### ***5.4.3.1 Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services***

For those students who are having difficulty in a general classroom environment, all school districts and open enrollment charter school must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (“RtI”). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) listed below to learn about the school’s overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for specific education or Section 504 services at any time.

#### **5.4.4 Special Education Referrals**

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Note of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluation children who are suspected of having a disability and being in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school day timeline.

If the district or charter school decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student’s initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent’s written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent’s consent

for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30<sup>th</sup> due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply. Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school in a companion document entitled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

#### **5.4.5 Contact Person for Special Education Referrals**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is Mr. Jose Barrera via email ([jose.barrera@greatheartsonline.org](mailto:jose.barrera@greatheartsonline.org)) or at 210-469-3828.

#### **5.4.6 Section 504 Referrals**

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's or charter school's Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

##### ***5.4.6.1 Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals***

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is Mr. Jose Barrera via email ([jose.barrera@greatheartsonline.org](mailto:jose.barrera@greatheartsonline.org)) or at 210-469-3828.

#### **5.4.7 Additional Information**

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families:

- ❑ [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)
- ❑ [Partners Resource Network](#)
- ❑ [Special Education Information Center](#)
- ❑ [Texas Project First](#)

#### **5.4.8 Services for Title I Participants**

Information regarding the school's participation in Title I or a specific Title I program may be obtained from the Headmaster.

### **5.5 Pledges of Allegiance and Moment of Silence**

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the Headmaster or designee at the Academy office to excuse their student from reciting a pledge. State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. In addition, state law requires that the Academy provide for the observance of one minute of silence at the

beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

## **5.6 Recitation of the Declaration of Independence**

State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during “Celebrate Freedom Week.” A student will be exempted from this requirement if a parent provides a written statement requesting that the student be excused, the Academy determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or the parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity.

## **5.7 Prayer and Meditation**

Students have a right to individually, silently, and voluntarily pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other school activities. The Academy will not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

## **5.8 STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness)**

### **5.8.1 STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness) Grades 3–8**

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take in-person the state-mandated assessments, such as the STAAR, in the following subjects:

1. Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8;
2. Reading, annually in grades 3–8;
3. Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7;
4. Science in grades 5 and 8; and
5. Social studies in grade 8.

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 is required by law, unless the student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student’s current grade level, in order for the student to be promoted to the next grade level.

STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate will be available for eligible students receiving special education services, as determined by the student’s ARD committee.

### **5.8.2 TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment**

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative (“TSI”) assessment. The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may be required before a student enrolls in a dual-credit course offered through The Academy as well. Beginning in fall 2013, all Texas public colleges and universities began administering a new TSI assessment, which will assist as one of several factors in determining whether the student is considered ready to enroll in college-level courses or whether the student needs to enroll in what is termed developmental education courses prior to enrollment in college level courses.

### **5.8.3 TELPAS**

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (“TELPAS”) is a system of statewide

assessment administered to all Limited English Proficient (“LEP”) students in 3rd–12th grades. The TELPAS measures English ability based on the stage of language development of second language learners. These results will further the understanding of the educational needs of LEP students by providing a state-level measure of both their current academic English levels and their annual progress in English.

## **5.9 Summer School**

The Academy may offer summer school classes designed for students who did not complete all required work for the previous school year and for students who would like to take an additional course toward graduation.

## **5.10 Tutoring**

All Great Hearts teachers offer regularly scheduled tutoring sessions before, during, and/or after school at no cost. Tutoring is an important opportunity for students to receive academic guidance and support. Students are strongly encouraged, and may be required, to see teachers for tutoring. Tutoring services are also available for students receiving special education services.

Private tutoring is the responsibility of a student’s parents. Teachers employed by the Academy are not permitted to privately tutor their own students for pay.

## **5.11 Textbooks and Classics to Keep**

Books are at the heart of a classical, liberal arts education. At Great Hearts, it has always been the tradition for students to develop a personal library of books that they mark in, keep, and return to during their time at Great Hearts, and treasure for years to come. We call these books “Classics to Keep.” Your child’s class will utilize these classics during the upcoming school year. Parents and students are strongly encouraged to purchase these books for their own personal collections, so that they can mark them and keep them, allowing students to develop their own impressive personal library of classics over the course of their academic career with Great Hearts. We ask that all books match the ISBNs listed on our website. This ensures that students can all follow along on the same page when reading and discussing in class.

For families who do not purchase the texts, students will be given access to a copy of these books as part of their curriculum. Students should not mark these books provided by Great Hearts, and will be asked to return the books in good condition once their class has finished working with the book.

State-approved textbooks and additional curriculum materials are provided free of charge for each subject or class. Materials must be treated with care and used as directed by the teacher. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher.

Students must return all textbooks and supplemental materials to the school at the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from school. Any student failing to return issued materials in an acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and educational materials until the student and/or parent pay for the damages. However, a student will be provided resources for use at school during the school day. The Academy may reduce or waive the payment requirement if the student is from a low-income family. The release of student records, including official transcripts, will be delayed pending payment for lost or severely damaged textbooks or supplemental materials.

## **5.12 Homework/Independent work**

We believe that the majority of the synchronous class time should be spent in the *collective* pursuit of what is true, good, and beautiful about a specific subject. Independent work time (homework, then, is reserved primarily for reading and for meaningful *independent* activities that support the curricular objectives of a given course. Students should expect to do meaningful course work each day.

After completing the live synchronous classes, the general daily independent expectations for the average student at the Academy are as follows:

- Kindergarten and 1st Grade: approximately 10-20 minutes per subject
- 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3rd Grade: approximately 20-30 minutes per subject
- 4th Grade: approximately 30-40 minutes per subject
- 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>: approximately 45-60 minutes per subject
- 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>: approximately 60-75 minutes per subject

\*This does not include the 20 minutes a night that students should be free reading.

**We ask parents to help us communicate to students the importance of establishing a silent and distraction-free environment for completing all schoolwork.** If students do not work in such an environment, they should expect that:

- it will take significantly longer to complete the assignments; and
- the student's thought will be fragmented, and his or her overall comprehension of the material will be deficient.

Often, success with homework is a condition of the student's self-regulation. Skillful self-regulators have a number of strategies that enable them to achieve efficiently and effectively: help-seeking, planning, goal-setting, time-management, self-monitoring, reducing distractions, questioning, comprehension monitoring, and using feedback. Students who struggle often do not systematically employ these strategies, even though they may, in fact, spend a significant amount of time working/studying.

As students rise through the grades at the academy, they develop and strengthen their work skills. In essence, students *learn how to learn* through the rigors of school.

Teachers work carefully in measuring out a proper amount of work for their class and will coordinate with other teachers of a section of students in scheduling their major tests and projects. Thus, students will have no more than two major tests on the same day. It is the responsibility of the student to make up missed homework after any absence, planned or due to illness, in a timely manner.

**If a student is unable to attend school and seeks his or her assignments, he or she should contact the teacher for that information, *not* the school office.**

An absence on the due date of a major assignment (essay, lab report, project, etc.) or exam may not extend the due date of that assignment. The student should expect to submit the work and/or make- up the exam

on the day of his/her return. Likewise, absences during the preparation time of a major assignment may not extend the due date. Please see the faculty course syllabi for specific guidelines regarding make-up work following absences.

The school will schedule a number of “R and R” weekends. These are designated as school-wide “*no homework*” weekends. Teachers will not assign homework over these weekends and tests and quizzes will not be administered on the Mondays following. It may be the case that a long- term or multi-day project is given well before and due a few days after an “R and R” weekend; students will need to stick to a disciplined work schedule so as to enjoy the well-deserved time off.

### 5.13 Evaluation

A liberal arts education requires a special kind of written evaluation – one that offers a prose discussion of the student’s sense of wonder, depth of inquiry, specific areas of mastery and needs for improvement, and attitudes toward learning and towards others. The narrative treats student in a fundamentally human way, not by neglecting numerical scores, but by situating those numbers as one part of fuller, more nuanced picture of the student’s progress in a given course.

**Progress Reports:** Midway through each quarter, Progress Reports are emailed out to the parents of students who are currently not passing. These notices are intended to prompt students to make necessary changes and improve their academic standing before the end of the quarter.

**Grade Reports:** At the end of the first and third quarters, parents will receive a report that indicates student performance in each subject area. At other reporting periods, teachers may write a narrative report for each student. These reports provide parents with specific feedback on a student’s strengths and weaknesses within a given class. In addition to narrative commentary, these reports include student grades in various categories of assessment along with an overall letter grade for the semester.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences:** At a specific point in the year, parents meet with the team of their student’s teachers to discuss the first quarter and overall student progress in greater depth. Parents will be encouraged to read the grade reports prepared for the student prior to this conference, and to come equipped with questions for the team of teachers present.

**State Testing:** Students will also be assessed according to state requirements. Please review appendix for list of state standardized exams. All tests will be conducted during the school year and the results will be mailed directly to families.

### 5.14 Promotion

A student may be considered for retention or remediation (required to repeat a grade or particular course) if he or she has met any of the following criteria:

1. Failed one or more core subject areas;
2. Failed one or more state assessments;
3. Is below level in one or more core subject areas; or
4. Missed more than 10% of instructional days in an academic year.

Retention decisions will be made by a committee comprised of the child’s core subject area teachers and



the Headmaster or designee.

In order to be promoted to the next grade level, students in certain grade levels – with limited exceptions – will be required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (“STAAR”).

In order to be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 STAAR assessment in English or Spanish.

In order to be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 8 STAAR assessment in English.

If a student in grade 5 or 8 is enrolled in a course that earns high school credit and for which an end-of-course (“EOC”) assessment will be administered, the student will not be subject to the promotion requirements described above for the relevant grade 5 or 8 assessment.

If a student in grades 3–8 is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above his or her current grade level in which the student will be administered a state-mandated assessment, the student will be required to take an applicable state mandate assessment only for the course in which he or she is enrolled, unless applicable federal law requires otherwise.

Parents of a student who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year.

A student in grade 5 or 8 will have two additional opportunities to take a failed EOC. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year.

In other grades, students will have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments.

Certain students—some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing.

### **5.15 Students with Disabilities**

Upon the recommendation of the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (“ARD”) Committee, a student with disabilities who is receiving special education services may be promoted and/or permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her Individualized Education Program (“IEP”).

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school, but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremonies to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

### 5.15.1 Student Success Initiative

The Student Success Initiative (SSI) was created by the Texas Legislature to ensure that all students receive the instruction and support they need to be successful in reading and mathematics.

The SSI grade advancement requirements apply to the grade 5 mathematics and reading tests and the grade 8 mathematics and reading tests. As specified by these requirements, a student may advance to the next grade level only by passing these tests or, if the parent appeals, by unanimous decision of his or her grade placement committee (GPC) that the student is likely to perform at grade level after accelerated instruction.

Students have three opportunities to meet the passing standard on each of the tests and will receive additional instruction after each testing opportunity on which they do not meet the standard. A GPC, consisting of the Headmaster, teacher, and parent or guardian, meets when a student has not met the passing standard after two testing opportunities and is responsible for determining the accelerated instruction the student needs before the third testing opportunity. A student who does not meet the passing standard after three testing opportunities is automatically retained. However, if the parents appeal the retention, the GPC may choose to promote the student if all members agree that the student is likely to perform on grade level with additional accelerated instruction and if the student completes the required accelerated instruction.

For Special Education students, the ARD committee will serve as their Grade Placement Committee (GPC).

### 5.16 Family-Teacher Academic Partnership

**As a preparatory school, Great Hearts believes that the student should be the primary agent in his or her education.** Our first priority in this regard is to encourage student responsibility by establishing an open line of communication between students and their individual teachers. Timely and effective communication between teachers, students, and parents is essential in fostering academic growth.

#### 5.16.1 Communication Roles

Student: Students are responsible for tracking assignments, understanding stated course requirements, and meeting deadlines. We strongly encourage students to meet with their teachers regularly for tutoring if they are having difficulty understanding specific concepts or material. It is also the job of the students to communicate honestly to their parents about their day-to-day performance and academic standing.

Teacher: Teachers are responsible for clearly communicating to the student what is expected of him or her. Teachers are also responsible for notifying parents when their student is struggling considerably with the material or is not performing as expected. See **Deficiency Notices** below.

Parent: The primary means by which parents can assist their children are:

1. Encouraging their children in their development in Academy goals, namely the growth of character and wisdom.
2. Providing a distraction-free study environment.

When students are experiencing significant academic struggles, parents should generally seek to assist the student according to these guidelines:

1. First, student communicates specific difficulty directly to teacher

2. Teacher meets with student to create action plan
3. If difficulty persists, parents contact teacher or vice versa
4. Teacher, parents, and possibly student meet to discuss and address issue
5. If difficulty persists, parents and/or teacher may contact the Assistant Headmaster
6. Assistant Headmaster facilitates conference with parents and teacher

To contact the teachers by phone, please call the school office and leave a message on the individual teacher's voicemail box. Teachers may also be reached via email; individual e-mail addresses are found on the school's website. **Teachers will return phone calls and emails by the end of the next school day.**

Parents of students in all grades are encouraged to talk with the faculty as soon as they think their son or daughter might be having difficulty. The earlier a problem is recognized, the easier it is to resolve. If you wish to talk with your child's teacher by phone, or to make an appointment for a conference, please call the school office and leave a message with your name, your child's name, your phone number, and times during which you will be available. Teachers can also be reached via email using the Canvas application. The teacher will return communication by the end of the next school day. If you would like to meet during the school day, please make an appointment.

While working with teachers, parents should always conduct themselves in a civil manner. Hostility, disrespectful speech, and vulgarity that Great Hearts determines is disruptive to the educational environment will not be permitted to continue communications with the teacher(s). If parents are upset about a matter involving a teacher, we ask that they contact the Director of Operations to set up an appointment with the appropriate teacher(s), Academic Dean, Assistant Headmaster, and/or the Headmaster as the situation warrants.

## **5.17 Use of Visual/Audio Conferencing for Educational Purposes**

Great Hearts Online Academy ("Great Hearts") will be offering a remote learning option for students during academic year 2020-2021. To participate in remote learning, students will need to use online platforms such as ZOOM and Canvas for video/audio conferencing to access curriculum, to participate in classroom instruction and tutoring, and also to access recorded presentations and classroom sessions. These online conference service will be used by Great Hearts for instructional purposes only.

In order for your student to use any audio/visual conference platform, and to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and other related laws, Great Hearts requires written consent from parents/guardians for their students to use the conferencing services.

During a conference using Zoom and Canvas students may be visible/audible to other participants (students and Great Hearts staff) in the conference session. It is also possible that others in the student's households may see or hear the participants and that other persons at the staff's residence may see or hear the student participants.

### **5.17.1 Academy Policies and Code of Conduct Apply**

For the duration of any video/audio conference, participants are expected to act in a school-appropriate manner. Regular Academy rules, policies, Code of Conduct and consequences will apply. In the event of inappropriate behavior, a student may be removed from a conference.

### 5.17.2 Passwords and Meeting Security

Minors are not permitted to create an account per Zoom and other platforms' Terms of Service. Therefore, students under the age of 18 should *only* be joining visual/audio conferencing meetings as participants (not separate account holders) through the Great Hearts Academies educational account. The Great Hearts' account administrators and/or teachers will provide meeting information and meeting passwords to the student users to allow the Academy staff to maintain supervision and control over its student users' meeting experiences. Meeting invitations, information and passwords should not be shared.

### 5.17.3 Data Collection

All visual/audio conference services collect certain data from users. The information collected related to student use is more limited than for commercial users, but data is still subject to collection. As an example of the type of information collected by visual/audio conferencing services, a summary of Zoom's data collection as provided by Zoom, is attached as an Appendix C to this Notice. Please review the material carefully. If a Student User or their parent/guardian would like to request to access, review, refuse further collection of or delete a Student User's personal information, they must contact their Academy Headmaster in writing to initiate a request with Zoom or similar service provider. These services delete information associated with K-12 Accounts upon receiving a valid deletion request from a School Subscriber or automatically following the termination of the K-12 Account. K-12 Account users may access or request deletion of their personal information in the manner set forth in each services' Privacy statement which can be found online. Additional information available at <https://zoom.us/privacy>.

## 5.18 Student-Teacher Relationships: On-campus and Off-campus

The Academy highly values the working relationship between teachers (or staff) and students. This is a relationship best characterized as a *professional* friendship grounded in mutual respect. Teachers will treat each student as a unique individual and will serve the student with a heart of charity. Students, on their part, will treat each teacher with the respect properly accorded his or her role as an authority figure and leader here at the Academy. With this in mind, students should address teachers by their formal title i.e. Mrs., Ms., Mr., Dr., and their last name.

Our teachers, staff members, and coaches will maintain a proper professional boundary between him or her and the student. They will not be overly familiar with the student or get involved in the details of the student's personal life. (If a teacher senses that a student requires counseling for a social or family issue, that issue will be referred confidentially to the administration and/or parents). The faculty/staff/coaches of the Academy will insist on maintaining appropriate boundaries, and will not meet in a Zoom room alone with a student without permission of the parent. They will look for opportunities to have the parent on the call or work with multiple children at a time. It is also Academy policy that faculty/staff do not transport students in their personal vehicles. This is excepting, of course, when transporting his/her own children, or when acting in some other capacity (for example as a camp counselor or church leader) *and* parental permission for such transportation is explicitly granted.

Many of our teachers and staff live in the same neighborhoods as our students, hence it is appropriate to offer a word regarding off-campus relationships. ***The same professional rules governing on-campus relationships apply to off-campus relationships or chance meetings between students and faculty.***

It is not appropriate for students and teachers/staff to interact as anything other than students and teacher/staff, regardless of the location, time, or day of the week. Furthermore, students should not contact

or visit teachers or staff members off campus unless the teacher or staff member has spoken with the parents and explicitly invited such contact, nor should teachers or staff contact students off- campus (other than phone calls regarding academics or school-sponsored extra-curricular activities), unless such contact has been approved by the parents.

Parents, students, and GH staff are advised once a GH employee has separated from employment and no longer represents GHA in any personal, professional, or political activities or relationships.

## 5.19 Academy Parent and Student Grievance Procedure

Student and parent complaints or concerns can usually be addressed by a phone call or a conference with a teacher. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the Academy has adopted a standard complaint policy as stated in the Academy policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the Headmaster's or Superintendent's office. The Academy parent and student complaint process is also summarized below:

| Process  | Guidance Notes  |
|--|---|
| <b>1. Introduction</b> It is the school policy to ensure that students or parents with a grievance relating to the Academy, its administration, and/or other employees shall, except as otherwise set forth below, use a procedure which may resolve grievances as quickly and as fairly as possible.  |   |
| <b>2. Initial discussions</b> If you or your child has a grievance you should discuss it informally with the teacher, administrator, coach, or staff member directly involved in the matter. We hope that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this stage.   | Informal discussions should resolve the vast majority of grievances.<br><br>NOTE: Grievances or information involving an ongoing or imminent threat to a student's well-being should skip this stage and be immediately directed to the Headmaster. |
| <b>3. Stage 1</b> If you feel that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, you should put your grievance in writing to the appropriate teacher, administrator, coach, or staff member (again, the one directly involved). The school employee must offer a response within five (5) working days in an endeavor to resolve the matter.          | The first stage should allow the family and school employee to resolve the grievance without the involvement of the Headmaster or Board of Directors. The aim should be to resolve the grievance at the lowest relevant level.                      |
| <b>4. Stage 2</b> If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you may raise the matter, in writing, with the Headmaster, who must give a response within five (5) working days. This response may take the form of a letter and/or follow-up meeting with the family and any employee(s) involved in the matter. This meeting will be led by the Headmaster.         | The Headmaster is the acting supervisor over all school employees.  |
| <b>5. Stage 3</b> If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you may raise the matter, in writing, with the Superintendent, who must give a response within five (5) working days. This response may take the form of a letter and/or follow-up meeting with the family and any employee(s) involved in the matter. This meeting will be led by the Superintendent. | The Superintendent is the acting supervisor over all Great Hearts Texas employees.  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>6. Stage 4</b> If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, and you wish to pursue this matter further, you should put your grievance in writing to the President of the Board of Directors. You may be entitled to have a meeting with the grievance committee established annually by the Board of Directors and comprised of directors. This committee will formally respond by setting a meeting or taking another course of action within thirty (30) days. If the Board as a whole is convened to address the grievance, all applicable public open meeting laws will be followed, including prior notice and the right of the employee to request an open meeting or an executive session for the hearing. The board's decision is final.</p> | <p>If the Board understands that stages 1 and 2 have not been completed, these may be a requirement prior to further action or hearing from the Board.</p> <p>A response by the committee may include a dismissal of the grievance, a formal reprimand of the school employee, or headmaster, and/or a directive for staff to develop an additional policy recommendation for Board consideration.</p> |
|---|--|

## 6.0 Student Services

### 6.1 Academic/College Counseling

Students and parents are encouraged to talk with the Assistant Headmaster to learn about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in 8th–12th grade will be provided with information on course offerings for the next year and other information that will help to make the most of academic and vocational opportunities.

To plan for the future, including attendance at a college, university, or training school or pursuing some other type of advanced education, students should work closely with the Headmaster to take the courses that best prepare them for the future. The Assistant Headmaster can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

#### 6.1.1 Personal Counseling

The Headmaster is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including social, family, or emotional issues, and substance abuse. The Headmaster may also provide information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with the Headmaster should set an appointment through the Operations Manager.

**Please note:** The Academy will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent, unless required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and report.

### 6.2 Extra-Curricular Activities

We believe that students are happier and more successful at the Academy if they are involved in one or more of our extra-curricular activities. We will create clubs and extra-curriculum activities in future years. The creative outlet provided by such participation promotes a well-balanced life. Extra-curricular participation also builds teamwork and school spirit among the community of learners. Still, we recognize that students must show a special commitment in attending events/practices/games and also completing homework. Nonetheless, some of our most accomplished students at our sister schools have professed that the discipline gathered from participation (in terms of time management and personal habits) has greatly helped their academic growth. In the future, there will be a range of supervised activities to select from.

We encourage the parents to work closely with the teachers and administration in supporting superb extra-curricular offerings for our young people.

### **6.2.1 Participation**

Participation in school extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right. Students can be suspended from extracurricular activities for academic or behavioral reasons at any time by decision of the coach, the athletic director, or the school administration.

### **6.2.2 Fees**

Activities will require a fee for supplies, rented venues, and equipment and, for some time- intensive activities, to pay the coach/supervisor. All extra-curricular programs at the Academy are required to be self-supporting through income from fees and tax credits. The primary, academic budget of the school is not able to manage such costs. The Academy maintains an official extracurricular fee schedule, set annually and consistently throughout the Great Hearts network. **The fee for an extra- curricular activity must be paid prior to the student joining the team or activity, even for practice. The school is not able to carry balances for fees or manage payment plans by parents. The school, however, does take a credit card as a form of payment for fees.**

## **6.3 Student Fees**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to students. Students are expected to provide their own consumable items, such as pencils, paper, pens, erasers, and notebooks. Students may be required to pay certain fees or deposits, including:

1. A fee for materials for a class project that the student will keep, if the fee does not exceed the cost of materials.
2. Membership dues in voluntary student clubs or organizations and admission fees for extra- curricular activities.
3. A security deposit for the return of materials, supplies, or equipment.
4. A fee for personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel, although a student may provide his or her own equipment or apparel if it meets reasonable requirements and standards relating to health and safety.
5. A fee for voluntarily purchased items, such as student publications, class rings, pictures, yearbooks, and graduation announcement.
6. A fee for voluntary student health and accident benefit plan.
7. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the actual annual maintenance cost, for the use of musical instruments and uniforms owned or rented by the School.
8. A fee for items of personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that become the property of the student.
9. A fee for an identification card.
10. A fee for an optional course offered for credit that requires the use of facilities not available on campus or the employment of an educator who is not part of the School's regular staff.
11. A fee for summer school courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.

12. A reasonable fee, not to exceed \$50, for costs associated with an educational program offered outside of regular school hours through which a student who was absent from class receives instruction voluntarily for the purpose of making up the missed instruction and meeting the level of attendance required for class credit, so long as the fee would not create a financial hardship or discourage the student from attending the program.
13. A fee for lost, damaged, or overdue books.
14. A fee specifically permitted by any other statute.

The Academy may waive any fee or deposit if the student and parent are unable to pay. A request for such a waiver may be made using the school's Student Cost Waiver Application, which is distributed at the school office. Notification of eligibility for waived or reduced costs is determined using the same standards as those of Free and Reduced Lunch.

## **7.0 Parent Involvement**

---

### **7.1 Parent Support**

The primary way that parents are involved in the school is by supporting their child in his or her journey through the Academy. Parents will want to have an established plan for listening to and then encouraging their students when they are working hard. Likewise, parents may want to communicate frequently with their son's or daughter's teachers so the parents can develop an understanding of the Academy's expectations of how preparatory-level, liberal arts studies form habits of learning. For younger scholars, parents will likely need to support with technology set up and initiation for live classes. Parents should contact the teachers to share important information on how their child approaches the curriculum at home and if he or she is experiencing difficulty. Academy students invest a great deal in their education, and thus teachers and parents should be united in their support of the students and one another.

The teachers of the Academy are honored by the great trust that parents have placed in them. This trust between the parents and the school must be maintained by ongoing communication and mutual understanding of the "big picture": what an Academy education will offer young people in the long run. It can be difficult for both young people and adults to maintain a focus on the long-term benefits that a liberal education offers. Likewise, students, especially younger students, may not fully sense the extent of their own intellectual and moral growth over time.

When students are applying themselves on a particular part of their journey, they will look to their parents and their teachers for a reaffirmation that their investment is yielding positive gains. As such, mutual trust between parents and teachers is essential to convincing students that we have an achievable plan in place for them that is also in their best interest.

#### **7.1.1 Material Support of the Academy: Time, Treasure, and Talent**

The Academy provides an outstanding educational offering. The Academy is a state-funded public school, but the state funding formula does not provide for all of our needs in terms of providing a truly outstanding education. To meet these needs and to build a strong Community of Learners, the Academy counts on the support of its parents through stewardship of time, talent, and treasure.

#### **7.1.2 Time:**

With your student learning at home, your time and engagement is a precious resource and partnership.



Your time and partnership in your scholar's educational journey is essential for their success. Without this practical manifestation of your belief in the value and quality of our school, we could not exist. Additionally, we ask parents to consider volunteering during online community events and through membership in the Parent Service Organization.

#### **7.1.3 Talent:**

The Academy will benefit greatly from the unique talents of its community. Whether through volunteer time spent online, or by contributing your professional expertise, your talents are a vital addition to the success of our school.

#### **7.1.4 Treasure:**

The Academy welcomes and encourages financial support from families at a level their budget allows through donations and fundraising. The Academy is a non-profit, 501(c) 3 corporation; as such, donations may be tax-deductible.

### **7.2 Parent Service Organization**

The Parent Service Organization is a service organization within the Academy. Upon successful enrollment, all parents/guardians of students at the Academy are members of the Parent Service Organization. The purpose of the Parent Service Organization is to serve the school's students and teachers through coordinating and assisting programs and activities that are critical to their success. Involvement in the Parent Service Organization is structured according to service committees, with each committee devoted to a specific area of school life. At the beginning of each school year, Great Hearts will host a meeting for the PSO. At that meeting, individuals who are interested can sign up for different volunteer opportunities.

#### **7.2.1 Fingerprinting**

Great Hearts Online has a policy that school volunteers who work alone with students shall be fingerprinted and have a criminal background check conducted by the Texas Department of Public Safety and the FBI. Great Hearts will contact all volunteers that are selected to assist with duties that require fingerprinting. Volunteers assisting in the presence of school employees may not be required to be fingerprinted if they are not working directly with children. In special cases, volunteers may be asked to sign a FERPA confidentiality agreement in order to assist with student files.

#### **7.2.2 Surveys and Activities**

Students will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation – funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education – that concerns:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent(s).
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family.
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes.
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior.
5. Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
6. Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.

8. Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

Parents will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis or evaluation.

### 7.2.3 “Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

Parents have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for their child's participation in:

1. Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding. School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the Academy in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law.

## 8.0 Administration

---

### 8.1 Basic School Information

The school office is open from 7:30am – 4:00 pm CST, every day that school is in session. The school office will be closed during the month of July. The school phone number is 210-469-3828. Messages may be left on voicemail any time the phone is busy or we are out of the office. Messages left after hours will be returned the next working day. Also, families may contact the administration via e-mail (please see the Directory or our website).

The administration asks that non-urgent calls to the school office be made between 9 and 11 and between 1 and 3. Messages for faculty can be left or sent via e-mail.

School starts daily at 8:00 am and ends at 3:30 pm.

### 8.2 Administrative Responsibilities

The **Headmaster** for the school is Mrs. Heidi Vasiloff. The Headmaster works with the Academy Board of Directors under the authority of Great Hearts Academies and is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the school. The Headmaster directly oversees the implementation of the Academy's curriculum and has sole authority to manage all teachers and staff at the Academy.

The **Assistant Headmaster** is Ms. Emilia Sullivan. She assists the Headmaster with various administrative duties, including but not limited to, curriculum implementation & support, is primarily responsible for the scheduling of teacher and assistant teacher responsibilities, assists with discipline, and assists the headmaster in instructional coaching. Also, she is the coordinator of the state mandated Texas STAAR testing.

The **Academic Deans** - The Academic Dean monitors student performance and communicates with parents of struggling students in any aspect of academic performance. Additionally, the work with grade level teams, ensuring alignment and serves as the instructional coach for out teachers. They also work with faculty and parents to improve student performance, including design and implementation of targeted

instructional plans, coordinating tutoring and overseeing meetings.

- Karen Hybner, focused on Art Music, Latin and Spanish and serves as the leader of our Assistant Teachers.
- [Myha Nguyen](#) - serves as our Academic Dean of Kindergarten - 2nd Grade.
- Charlotte Hervas - serves as our Academic Dean of 3rd - 5th Grade
- Heather Stone - serves as our Academic Dean of 6th - 8th Grade

The **Academy Operations Manager** is Mrs. Martha Bernal. She manages the operations of the academy, works closely with the Headmaster in communicating information to the families, and assists families with records and school business unrelated to student discipline, curriculum, or the classroom.

Questions or concerns about curricular matters should be directed to the appropriate teacher, lead teacher, or the Headmaster. Questions or concerns about student conduct or discipline should be directed to the Headmaster or Assistant Headmaster. General questions regarding the school may be directed to office staff, Assistant Headmaster or to the Headmaster. If you are uncertain whom to contact about a particular issue, please contact the office, and we will direct you to the appropriate employee.

The Great Hearts CEO and management team work with the headmasters and schools, and offer essential support. For more information about Great Hearts, please visit the website, [greateartsamerica.org](http://greateartsamerica.org). The Great Hearts management team includes:

- Mr. Jay Helier, CEO
- Ms. Heidi Vasiloff, Executive Director, Great Hearts Online
- Dr. Dan Scoggin, CoFounder and Superintendent, Great Hearts Texas
- Ms. Diane Jones, Regional Director of Special Student Services

*Note to Parents: Copies of resumes and fingerprint clearance cards for all Academy faculty, Great Hearts leadership and Academy board members are available upon request. Please direct your request to the Assistant Headmaster for assistance.*

### **8.3 Official School Calendar and Website**

The official school calendar for each academic year is posted on the school website ([www.greateartsonline.org](http://www.greateartsonline.org)) and distributed to each family prior to the start of school, usually in June. Any updates and revisions will also be found on the web version of the calendar, which is updated as needed. This calendar should be carefully coordinated with each family's own calendar and should be consulted on a regular basis throughout the year. The calendar identifies school holidays, half-days, special events, mandatory student fine arts performances, year- end ceremonies, etc.

We encourage families to visit our website regularly to view communiqués, faculty contact information, updates on athletic and extracurricular schedules and locations, and other school related events and information.

### **8.4 Statement of Nondiscrimination**

Great Hearts does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex or gender, disability, or age in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational and career technology programs. Great Hearts complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as

amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”); Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and any other legally-protected classification or status protected by applicable law.

As required by Title IX, Great Hearts does not (and is required not to) discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. This non-discrimination requirement applies to admission to and employment with Great Hearts. Inquiries into issues related to Title IX may be referred to Great Hearts’ Title IX Coordinator (identified below), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

Any questions or concerns about Great Hearts’ compliance with these federal programs should be brought to the attention of the following persons designated as being responsible for coordinating compliance with these requirements:

The Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex/gender (including sexual harassment), is Dr. Dan Scoggin, 12500 San Pedro, Ste 500, San Antonio, TX, 78216, 210-888-9475, [dsoggin@greatheartsamerica.org](mailto:dsoggin@greatheartsamerica.org)

The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, is Diane Jones, 3350 Story Rd W, Irving, TX, 75038, 469-759-3030, [Diane.Jones@greatheartstx.org](mailto:Diane.Jones@greatheartstx.org)

The Age Discrimination Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of age, is Great Hearts Texas HR, 12500 San Pedro Ste 500, San Antonio, TX, 78216, 210-888-9475, [HR@GreatHeartsTX.org](mailto:HR@GreatHeartsTX.org)

All other concerns regarding discrimination may be directed to Great Hearts Texas HR, 12500 San Pedro Ste 500, San Antonio, TX, 78216, 210-888-9475, [HR@GreatHeartsTX.org](mailto:HR@GreatHeartsTX.org)

## **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT**

### **Use of Student Photos and Directory Information opt Out Form**

You have the right to choose whether your student’s information is released or not. Please check a box in the appropriate column below and return this form to your student’s school no later than the end of the first week of instruction after the student is enrolled. **Parents, guardians, or eligible students who do not check a box, or who do not return this form, give their implied consent for release of directory information, consent to student photographs, and consent to release directory information to the military (grades 9–12 only).** If you do not wish to allow disclosure of this information, please return this form directly to Great Hearts Online either in person or by U.S. mail. If you have more than one student enrolled, you must complete a separate form for each student.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Offenses and Consequences**

**Level I Offenses:** The following behaviors are prohibited at all school and school-related activities:

1. Violating dress and grooming standards as communicated in the Handbook. See “Dress and Grooming,” pages 46-54
2. Littering
3. Chewing gum on campus
4. Insubordination
5. Cheating or copying the work of another
6. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by others
7. Defacing or damaging school property, including textbooks, lockers, furniture, and other equipment, with graffiti or by other means
8. Failing to comply with directives given by school personnel
9. Falsifying records, passes, or other school-related documents
10. Fighting or scuffling
11. Forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force
12. Gambling
13. Hazing. See “Freedom from Hazing,” page 65
14. Improperly discharging a fire extinguisher
15. Engaging in any misbehavior that gives school officials reasonable cause to believe that such conduct will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence
16. Engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors directed toward another student or a District employee. See “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation,” page 61
17. Engaging in disruptive actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities
18. Engaging in harassment motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age and directed toward another student or school employee. See “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation,” page 61
19. Engaging in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual contact directed toward another student or a school employee
20. Engaging in threatening behavior toward another student or school employee on or off school property
21. Engaging in verbal or written exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property
22. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of a student’s private body parts
23. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission
24. Making false accusations or hoaxes regarding school safety
25. Possessing a cellular telephone or other telecommunications device at school during the school day
26. Abusing a prescription drug, giving a prescription drug to another student, or possessing or being under the influence of another person’s prescription drug on school property or at a school-related event
27. Possessing a stun gun

28. Possessing ammunition
29. Possessing an air gun or BB gun
30. Possessing fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device
31. Possessing mace or pepper spray
32. Possessing pornographic material
33. Possessing or selling a “look-alike” weapon
34. Possessing or selling look-alike drugs or items attempted to be passed off as drugs or contraband
35. Possessing or selling seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount
36. Possessing or using a laser pointer for other than an approved use
37. Possessing or using any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the Headmaster or designee determines that a danger exists
38. Possessing or using matches or a lighter
39. Possessing published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety; using e-mail or Web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior; or threatening school safety
40. Possessing, smoking, or using tobacco products
41. Possessing, using, giving, or selling paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance
42. Refusing to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or Headmaster
43. Repeatedly violating campus or classroom standards of behavior
44. Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another’s reputation, or illegal
45. Stealing from students, staff, or the school
46. Repeated tardiness
47. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage
48. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the educational program
49. Violating computer use policies, rules, or agreements signed by the student, and/or agreements signed by the student’s parent. See “Student Acceptable Use Policy,” page 86
50. Being a member of, pledging to become a member of, joining, or soliciting another person to join, or pledge to become a member of a public school fraternity, sorority, or gang, as defined by Texas Education Code § 37.121
51. False accusation of conduct that would constitute a misdemeanor or felony
52. Forgery of school documents at school or otherwise
53. Hit list under Texas Educational Code 37.001(b)(2)
54. Knife possession – not an illegal knife
55. Non-Title five felony; school is notified by police
56. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by others
57. Possession of stolen property
58. Threats – student on personnel/facility
59. Threats – student on student
60. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the school program
61. Violating the School’s medication policy, See “Administration of Medication,” page 71
62. Simple assault
63. Bullying and/or cyberbullying, including intimidation by name-calling, using ethnic or racial slurs, or making derogatory statements that could disrupt the school program or incite violence. See

“Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying,” page 64

64. Burglary of a motor vehicle on campus
65. Deliberate destruction or tampering with school computer data or networks
66. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward another student or school employee
67. Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony under Title 5, Texas Penal Code, when the conduct occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and (1) the student receives deferred prosecution; (2) a court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct; or (3) the Superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that the student engaged in the conduct
68. False alarm or report
69. Inappropriate sexual conduct
70. Issuing a false fire alarm
71. Repeated failure to comply with directives given by school personnel
72. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marihuana, controlled substance, dangerous drug, or alcoholic beverage

**Disciplinary Consequences** (may not necessarily be followed in order, and progressive disciplinary measures are not required)

1. After school detention
2. Application of one or more Discipline Management Techniques listed on page 27
3. Confiscation of cell phones or other electronic devices
4. Grade reductions for academic dishonesty
5. In-school suspension
6. Removal from the classroom and/or placement in another classroom
7. Restitution/restoration, if applicable
8. Saturday Detention
9. Out-of-school suspension for up to three days
10. School-assessed and school-administered probation
11. Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process
12. Verbal correction
13. Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities and eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, and/or membership in school-sponsored clubs or organizations

**Level II Offenses:** The following behaviors are prohibited at all school and school-related activities:

1. Engaging in verbal or written exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property
2. Failing to comply with directives given by school personnel
3. Repeated tardiness
4. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage
5. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the educational program
6. Falsifying records, passes, or other school-related documents
7. Possessing, smoking, or using tobacco products
8. Possessing, using, giving, or selling paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance

9. Refusing to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or Headmaster
10. Repeatedly violating campus or classroom standards of behavior
11. Forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force
12. Possessing or selling look-alike drugs or items attempted to be passed off as drugs or contraband
13. Possessing or selling seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount
14. Possessing or using any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the Headmaster or designee determines that a danger exists
15. Possessing or using matches or a lighter
16. Being a member of, pledging to become a member of, joining, or soliciting another person to join, or pledge to become a member of a public school fraternity, sorority, or gang, as defined by Texas Education Code § 37.121
17. False accusation of conduct that would constitute a misdemeanor or felony
18. Fighting
19. Assault (Class C misdemeanor) – student on student or student on staff member
20. Bullying and/or cyberbullying, including intimidation by name-calling, using ethnic or racial slurs, or making derogatory statements that could disrupt the school program or incite violence. See “Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying,” page 64
21. Engaging in any misbehavior that gives school officials reasonable cause to believe that such conduct will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence
22. Forgery of school documents at school or otherwise
23. Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another’s reputation, or illegal
24. Stealing from students, staff, or the school
25. Gang activity
26. Harassment under Texas Education Code § 37.001(b)(1)
27. Hazing under Texas Education Code § 37.151(6)
28. Engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors directed toward another student or a school employee. See “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation,” page 61
29. Hit list under Texas Educational Code 37.001(b)(2)
30. Knife possession – not an illegal knife
31. Non-Title 5 felony; school is notified by police
32. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by others
33. Possession of stolen property
34. Threats – student on personnel/facility
35. Threats – student on student
36. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the school program
37. Violating the School’s medication policy. See “Administration of Medication,” page 71
38. Engaging in harassment motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age and directed toward another student or school employee. See “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation,” page 61
39. Engaging in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual contact directed toward another student or a school employee
40. Engaging in threatening behavior toward another student or school employee on or off school



property

41. Abusing a prescription drug, giving a prescription drug to another student, or possessing or being under the influence of another person's prescription drug on school property or at a school-related event
42. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of a student's private body parts
43. Improperly discharging a fire extinguisher
44. Possessing a razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person.
45. Any discretionary or mandatory expulsion violation under Texas Education Code, Chapter 37
46. Any offense listed in Sections 37.006(a) or 37.007 (a), (b), and (d) of the Texas Education Code, no matter when or where the offense takes place
47. Arson
48. Burglary of a motor vehicle on campus
49. Commission of a felony offense listed under Title 5, Texas Penal Code
50. Conduct endangering the health and safety of others
51. Deliberate destruction or tampering with school computer data or networks
52. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward another student or school employee
53. Committing or assisting in a robbery or theft even if it does not constitute a felony
54. Defacing or damaging school property, including textbooks, lockers, furniture, and other equipment, with graffiti or by other means
55. Possessing a stun gun
56. Possessing ammunition
57. Possessing an air gun or BB gun
58. Possessing fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device
59. Possessing mace or pepper spray
60. Possessing pornographic material
61. Possessing or selling a "look-alike" weapon
62. Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony under Title 5, Texas Penal Code, when the conduct occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and (1) the student receives deferred prosecution; (2) a court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct; or (3) the Superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that the student engaged in the conduct
63. False alarm or report
64. Felony criminal mischief against school property, another student, or school staff
65. Gang activity (violent)
66. Making false accusations or hoaxes regarding school safety
67. Possessing published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety; using e-mail or Web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior; or threatening school safety
68. Inappropriate sexual conduct
69. Engaging in disruptive actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities
70. Indecency with a child
71. Indecent exposure
72. Issuing a false fire alarm

73. Manslaughter
74. Murder
75. Persistent Level I offenses (two or more Level I offense committed in any one school year)
76. Persistent Level II offenses (two or more Level II offenses committed in any one school year)
77. Possessing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of inhalants
78. Possessing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of a simulated controlled substance
79. Public lewdness
80. Repeated failure to comply with directives given by school personnel
81. Required registration as a sex offender
82. Retaliation against any school employee or volunteer at any time or place
83. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, controlled substance, dangerous drug, or alcoholic beverage
84. Setting or attempting to set fire on school property (not arson)
85. Sexual abuse of a young child or children
86. Sexual assault
87. Targeting another individual for bodily harm
88. Use, exhibition, or possession of a firearm, illegal knife, club, or prohibited weapon
89. Conduct punishable as a felony
90. Criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder
91. Criminally negligent homicide
92. Vandalism of or conduct constituting criminal mischief with respect to school facilities or property
93. Aggravated assault
94. Aggravated kidnapping
95. Aggravated robbery
96. Aggravated sexual assault
97. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail (obtaining money or another object of value from an unwilling person)
98. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of a student's private body parts
99. Capital murder
100. Engaging in bullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide.
101. Inciting violence against a student through group bullying.
102. Releasing or threatening to release intimate visual material of a minor or a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.

**Disciplinary Consequences** (may not necessarily be followed in order, and progressive disciplinary measures are not required)

1. Any applicable Level I Disciplinary Consequence
2. Out of school suspension for five–ten days
3. Expulsion

Disciplinary actions may be used individually or in combination for any offense.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Bullying and Cyberbullying**

#### **Sec. 3.01.1. BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING PROHIBITED**

Great Hearts Online prohibits bullying, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process.

Bullying means a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that satisfies the applicability requirements provided by Section 3.10.2 below, and that;

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
3. Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or Great Hearts Online; or
4. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying also includes cyberbullying, which means bullying done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

#### **Sec. 3.10.2. APPLICABILITY OF POLICY**

This Policy applies to:

1. Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school- sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately-owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
3. Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school- related activity if the cyberbullying (i) interferes with a student's educational opportunities or  
  
(ii) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, Great Hearts Online, or a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

#### **Sec. 3.10.3 RETALIATION**

Great Hearts Online prohibits retaliation against any person, including a victim, witness, or another person who, in good faith, provides information concerning an incident of bullying.

#### **Sec.10.4 REPORTING PROCEDURES**

Reports of bullying and/or cyberbullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. Reports should generally be made to the Headmaster or to a student's teacher. Failure to immediately report may impair Great Hearts Online's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

Any Great Hearts Online employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying and/or cyberbullying shall immediately notify the Headmaster or designee.

A report may be made orally or in writing. The Headmaster or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form. The Superintendent or designee shall develop a written form on which incidents of suspected bullying may be reported. The form shall allow for the anonymous submission of reports of suspected bullying.

#### **Sec. 3.10.4.1 False Claim**

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a Great Hearts Online investigation regarding bullying and/or cyberbullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

#### **Sec. 3.10.4.2 Notice to Parent or Guardian**

The Headmaster or designee shall provide notice of an incident of bullying to:

1. A parent or a guardian of the alleged victim on or before the third school day after the date the incident is reported; and
2. A parent or guardian of the alleged bully, within a reasonable amount of time after the incident.

#### **Sec. 3.10.5. INVESTIGATION OF REPORT**

The Headmaster shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited discrimination and/or harassment, and if so proceed under Board Policies (Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation) instead.

The Headmaster or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report, and shall take prompt interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of the investigation, if appropriate.

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten Great Hearts Online business days from the date of the initial report. However, the Headmaster or designee shall take additional time if necessary, to complete a thorough investigation.

Following completion of the investigation, the Headmaster or designee will prepare a written decision regarding the complaint. If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying and/or cyberbullying occurred, Great Hearts Online shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Great Hearts Online may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if Great Hearts Online concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying and/or cyberbullying as defined in this policy.

Great Hearts Online may not impose disciplinary measures on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying on the basis of that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying.

Discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities must comply with applicable requirements under federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

#### **Sec. 3.10.5.1 Confidentiality**

To the greatest extent possible, Great Hearts Online shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

#### **Sec. 3.10.5.2 Appeal**

A parent or student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal under Board Policies (Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances).

#### **Sec 3.10.6. ASSISTANCE FROM HEADMASTER**

Any student who feels that he or she may be the victim of bullying should contact the Headmaster to obtain assistance and intervention in response to the potential bullying.

The Headmaster or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any student(s) who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.

#### **Sec. 3.10.7 ACCESS TO POLICY**

Information regarding this policy shall be distributed annually to Great Hearts Online employees and included in the Student Handbook. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the Great Hearts Online administrative offices.

#### **Sec. 3.10.8. REPORT TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT**

A Headmaster or the Headmaster's designee may make a report to local law enforcement officials if, after an investigation is completed, the Headmaster has reasonable grounds to believe that a student engaged in conduct that constitutes an offense under Section 22.01 (Assault) or 42.07(a)(7) (Harassment) of the Texas Penal Code.

A Headmaster's designee may include any employee under the supervision of the Headmaster, other than a school counselor.

A report to local law enforcement officials may include may include the name and address of each student the Headmaster or designee believes may have participated in the conduct.

**Bullying** is defined as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that (1) has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment

for a student; (3) materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or the School; or infringes on the rights of the victim at school. Bullying also includes “cyberbullying,” which means bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device including a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool. Bullying conduct includes conduct (1) that occurs on or is delivered to School property or to the site of a school- sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property; (2) that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and (3) cyberbullying that occurs off School property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying (i) interferes with a student’s educational opportunities or (ii) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, the School, or a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

**Intimate Visual Material** means visual material that depicts a person (a) with the person’s intimate parts exposed; or (b) engaged in sexual conduct.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **FERPA, Parental Rights, and Student Privacy**

#### **Sec. 3.10.1. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM**

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and maintain a comprehensive system of student records and reports dealing with all facets of the school program and shall ensure through reasonable procedures that records are accessed by authorized persons only, as allowed by this policy. These data and records shall be stored in a safe and secure manner and shall be conveniently retrievable for use by authorized school officials.

#### **Sec. 3.10.2. CUMULATIVE RECORD**

A cumulative record shall be maintained for each student from entrance into Great Hearts Online (“the Academy”) until withdrawal or graduation from the School.

This record shall move with the student from school to school and be maintained at the school where currently enrolled until graduation or withdrawal. Records for non-enrolled students shall be retained for the period of time required by law. No permanent records may be destroyed without explicit permission from the Superintendent.

#### **Sec. 3.10.3. CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS**

The Academy Student Information Specialist is the custodian of all records for currently enrolled students, and for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

#### **Sec. 3.10.4. TYPES OF EDUCATION RECORDS**

For the purposes of this policy, the term “education records” means those records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by the School or by a person acting for Great Hearts Online, including:

1. Admissions data, personal and family data, including certification of date of birth.
2. Standardized test data, including intelligence, aptitude, interest, personality, and social adjustment ratings.
3. All achievement records, as determined by tests, recorded grades, and teacher evaluations.
4. All documentation regarding a student’s testing history and any accelerated instruction he or she has received, including any documentation of discussion or action by a grade placement committee convened for the student.
5. Health services record, including:
  - a. The results of any tuberculin tests required by the School.
  - b. The findings of screening or health appraisal programs conducted or provided by the School
  - c. Immunization records.
6. Attendance records.

7. Student questionnaires.
8. Records of teacher, counselor, or administrative conferences with the student or pertaining to the student.
9. Verified reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns.
10. Copies of correspondence with parents and others concerned with the student.
11. Records transferred from other districts in which the student was enrolled.
12. Records pertaining to participation in extracurricular activities.
13. Information relating to student participation in special programs.
14. Records of fees assessed and paid.
15. Records pertaining to student and parent complaints.
16. Other records that may contribute to an understanding of the student.

The term “education records” does not include:

1. Records that are created or received by the School after an individual is no longer a student in attendance, and that are not directly related to the individual’s attendance as a student.
2. Records made by school personnel that are kept in the sole possession of the maker, are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible or revealed to anyone other than a temporary substitute for the maker of the record.
3. Records maintained by a law enforcement unit of the school that were created by that law enforcement unit for the purpose of law enforcement.
4. Records on a student who is eighteen years of age or older, or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education, that are:
  - a. Made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in his or her professional capacity or assisting in a paraprofessional capacity;
  - b. Made, maintained, or used only in connection with treatment of the student; and
  - c. Disclosed only to individuals providing the treatment. For the purpose of this definition, “treatment” does not include remedial educational activities or activities that are part of the program of instruction at the agency or institution.
5. Grades on peer-graded papers before they are collected and recorded by a teacher.

#### **Sec. 3.10.5. ACCESS BY PARENTS AND ELIGIBLE STUDENTS**

Great Hearts Online shall make a student’s records available to the student’s parent(s) and the eligible student, as permitted by law. The records custodian or designee shall use reasonable procedures to verify the requestor’s identity before disclosing student records containing personally identifiable information.

Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours without charge upon written request to the records custodian. For in-person viewing, the records custodian or designee shall be available to explain the record and to answer questions. The confidential nature of the student’s records shall be maintained at



all times, and records to be viewed shall be restricted to use only in the Superintendent's, Headmaster's, or counselor's office, or other restricted area designated by the records custodian. The original copy of the record or any document contained in the cumulative record shall not be removed from the school.

If circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student's educational records, the school shall provide the parent or eligible student with a copy of the records requested.

The School may not destroy any educational records if there is an outstanding request to inspect and review the records. The School may charge a fee for a copy of an education record that is made for the parent or eligible student, unless the imposition of a fee effectively prevents a parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student's education records. The School will not charge a fee to retrieve the educational records of a student.

If the educational records of a student contain information on more than one student, the parent or eligible student may inspect and review or be informed of only the specific information about that student.

A parent may continue to have access to his or her child's records under specific circumstances after the student has attained 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

#### **Sec. 3.10.6. ACCESS BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS**

A school official shall be allowed access to student records if he or she has a legitimate educational interest in the records.

For the purposes of this policy, "school officials" shall include:

1. An employee, director, trustee, or agent of Great Hearts Online, including an attorney, a consultant, a contractor, a volunteer, and any outside service provider used by the School to perform institutional services.
2. An employee of a cooperative of which Great Hearts Online is a member or of a facility with which the School contracts for placement of students with disabilities.
3. A contractor retained by a cooperative of which Great Hearts Online is a member or by a facility with which the School contracts for placement of students with disabilities.
4. A parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

All contractors provided with student records shall follow the same rules as employees concerning privacy of the records and shall return the records upon completion of the assignment.

A school official has a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records when he or she is:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities;

3. Compiling statistical data;
4. Reviewing an education record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or
5. Investigating or evaluating programs.

#### **Sec. 3.10.7. TRANSCRIPTS AND TRANSFERS OF RECORDS**

The School may request transcripts from previously attended schools for students transferring into Great Hearts Online; however, the ultimate responsibility for obtaining transcripts from sending schools rests with the parent or student, if 18 or older.

For purposes of a student's enrollment or transfer, the School shall promptly forward in accordance with the timeline provided in law education records upon request to officials of other schools or school systems in which the student intends to enroll or enrolls. The School may return an education record to the school identified as the source of the record.

#### **Sec. 3.10.8. RECORDS RESPONSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The Headmaster shall be responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information in records of students in special education.

A current listing of names and positions of persons who have access to records of students in special education is maintained at the Great Hearts Online Administrative Office.

#### **Sec. 3.10.9. PROCEDURE TO AMEND RECORDS**

Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the Headmaster, clearly identify the part of the record sought to be changed, and specify why the record is inaccurate or misleading. The School will decide whether to amend the record as requested within a reasonable time after receipt of the request. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the Headmaster or designee will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing to challenge the decision.

#### **Sec. 3.10.10. CONSENT TO DISCLOSE PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION**

A parent or eligible student has the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information, except to the extent that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") authorizes disclosure without consent.

"Personally identifiable information" includes, but is not limited to:

1. The student's name;
2. The name of the student's parent or other family members;
3. The address of the student or student's family;
4. A personal identifier, such as the student's biometric record, as defined by 34 CFR 99.3, social security number, or student number;
5. Other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name;

6. Other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the Great Hearts Online community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or
7. Information requested by a person who the School reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. Upon request, the School will disclose educational records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

### **Sec. 3.10.11. NOTICE OF FERPA RIGHTS**

The Superintendent or designee shall see that Great Hearts Online provides parents and eligible students annual notification of their rights under FERPA.

The notice must inform parents or eligible students that they have the right to:

1. Inspect and review the student's education record;
2. Seek amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights;
3. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and 34 CFR 99.31 authorize disclosure without consent; and
4. File with the United States Department of Education a complaint under 34 CFR 99.63 and 99.64 concerning alleged failures by Great Hearts Online to comply with the requirements of the Act and 34 CFR Part 99.

The notice must include all of the following:

1. The procedures for exercising the right to inspect and review education records;
2. The procedure for requesting amendment of records under 34 CFR 99.20; and
3. A specification of criteria for determining who constitutes a school official, and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest.

The Superintendent or designee may provide this notice by any means that is reasonably likely to inform the parents or eligible students of their rights. The notice shall also be effectively communicated to parents of students who are disabled and parents of students who have a primary or home language other than English.

### **Sec. 3.10.12. RELEASE TO MILITARY RECRUITERS AND INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Great Hearts Online will comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for students' names, addresses, and telephone listings, unless a parent or eligible student has advised the School not to release the student's information without prior written consent.

### **Sec. 3.10.13. INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES AND SURVEYS**

All instructional materials, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material that will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any program funded in whole or in part by the U. S. Department of Education shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of students.

No student shall be required, as part of any program funded in whole or in part by the U. S. Department of Education, to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning the following topics without the prior consent of the student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor), or, in the case of an unemancipated minor, without the prior written consent of the parent. Topics covered by this include:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent(s);
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

### **Sec. 3.10.14. OPT-OUT NOTICE**

The Superintendent shall ensure that parents are provided reasonable notice of the contents of this policy. Such notice shall be provided directly to the parents of the students in attendance at Great Hearts Online. At a minimum, the Superintendent shall:

1. Provide notice at least annually, at the beginning of the school year and within a reasonable time after any substantive change in policy; and
2. Offer an opportunity for the parent to opt the student out of participation in an activity described above.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Zoom Information Regarding K-12 Schools Privacy Information**

**The full ZOOM Statement is available at <https://zoom.us/privacy>.**

Last updated: July 2020

#### **Zoom**

**Zoom provides a video communications platform to K-12 Account Users on behalf of and at the direction of the School Subscriber.** For purposes of FERPA, Zoom is considered a “school official” and may receive Student User personal information through its contractual agreements because Zoom is performing a service that furthers a “legitimate educational interest” (*i.e.*, the provision of educational services in a remote setting). Zoom maintains Student User personal information on behalf of, and at the direction of, the School Subscriber and does not use the Student User personal information for other purposes except as permitted by applicable law, including FERPA and applicable agreements with School Subscribers.

Zoom is responsible for following the directions of the School Subscriber. For example, on a School Subscriber’s instructions, Zoom may provide reports containing personal information relating to the K-12 Account and its users (including Student Users) to that School Subscriber. Please visit our [Zoom and FERPA Compliance](#) webpage for additional information.

Residents of the European Economic Area (EEA) and the UK should review our [Privacy Statement](#) for additional information regarding how Zoom addresses European privacy rights.

#### **Information ZOOM Data Collection From the K-12 Account User**

When creating a K-12 Account under the direction of a School Subscriber, the K-12 Account User must provide certain information, such as:

- K-12 Account User’s first and last name;
- school or district name;
- job title;
- password;
- school-issued e-mail address; and
- information about the school’s location.

#### **From Student Users**

Zoom may receive personal information contained in “Customer Content.” Customer Content is any data a K-12 Account User uploads to the Zoom communication platform connected with use of the Service. For example, features that allow meeting hosts or co-hosts to record meetings locally or to Zoom’s cloud, allow K-12 Account Users to display or upload information that may be seen by other users of that K-12 Account, allow meeting participants to share files, allow hosts or co-hosts to create meeting transcripts, or allow meeting participants (including Student Users) to communicate in-meeting via chat and create chat logs. *Such Customer Content may include personal information that is part of an “educational record” as defined by FERPA. Zoom accesses Customer Content only upon the documented request of a School Subscriber, or if required by law.*

#### **Automatically Collected Information**

Zoom collects certain personal information automatically through the use of a K-12 Account including:

- Information about the use of the Zoom platform, including type and frequency of actions taken, number of logs-in or meeting entries, date and time, duration, quantity, quality, network connectivity, other platform performance metrics, and feature usage information, including use of video and screen sharing; and
- Information about a user's device, network, and internet connection, such as IP address(es), MAC address, other device ID, device type, operating system type and version, type of camera, microphone and speaker, and client version.

### **Use of Personal Information**

Zoom uses personal information collected from and about Student Users only as needed to deliver the functionality of the Zoom platform, operate the business (including to enhance or improve the Zoom Services), and as directed by School Subscribers. For Student Users, this means that:

- Zoom never sells Student User personal information
- Zoom does not use Student User personal information to deliver behavioral advertising.
- There are no third-party advertising or analytics cookies on Zoom's product pages.

Regarding cookies, Zoom publishes two types of webpages: product and marketing. A product webpage enables a Student User to click on a hyperlink and join a Zoom meeting. Zoom's product webpages serve only third-party cookies that are necessary for technical support and to deliver the service. There are no advertising or analytics cookies on our product webpages.

Marketing webpages, such as [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us), are designed to encourage sales of Zoom subscriptions. They are directed at a general audience over the age of 16. We designed the Student User experience so that a Student User never needs to visit our marketing webpages to use our Services under a K-12 Account. Zoom provides further information on its use of third-party cookies on its marketing webpages in its [cookie policy](#).

### **Sharing Personal Information**

*We do not share personal information with companies, organizations, or individuals outside of Zoom unless one of the following circumstances applies:*

- With Consent.
- We will share personal information with companies, organizations, or individuals outside of Zoom when we have K-12 Account User consent (as applicable) and in compliance with applicable laws (including FERPA as applicable).
- With or As Directed by School Subscribers.

School Subscribers have access to personal information (including Student User information) connected with their K-12 Account(s). School Subscribers may also direct us to share personal information with others.

### **To Provide ZOOM Services**

*ZOOM provides personal information to third-party service providers to help us provide the Service. Such service providers are prohibited from using personal information for any reason other than to provide the contracted-for services, and in compliance with appropriate privacy and security obligations.*

### **With Other Meeting Participants**

ZOOM may share personal information collected during a Zoom meeting with other participants of the

same meeting during the use of the Service. *For example, video and audio recordings, chat messages and other content shared by a Student User during a meeting, which may contain personal information of Student Users, may be available to all other participants in that meeting, as well as to any K-12 Account Users who host or co-host that meeting and the K-12 Account Administrator.*

### **For Certain Corporate Transactions**

*ZOOM may share personal information where, whether for strategic or other business reasons, Zoom decides to sell, buy, merge, or otherwise reorganize its businesses. In such transactions, ZOOM may disclose or transfer personal information to actual purchasers or receive personal information from sellers. Student User personal information will remain subject to this K-12 Privacy Statement unless it is changed by a successor entity.*

### **For Legal Reasons**

ZOOM shares personal information outside of Zoom if ZOOM believes that access, use, preservation or disclosure of the information is reasonably necessary to:

- comply with any applicable law, regulation, legal process or enforceable governmental request.
- enforce applicable provisions of the [Terms of Service](#) and [Acceptable Use Policy](#), including investigation of potential violations.
- detect, prevent, or otherwise address fraud, security or technical issues.
- protect against harm to the rights, property or safety of Zoom, our users or the public as required or permitted by law, including to help prevent the loss of life or serious injury of anyone.

For more information about data ZOOM discloses in response to requests from law enforcement and other government agencies, please see our [Guidelines for Government Requests](#).

### **Third Parties**

Zoom does not share personal information with third parties other than as described herein, or as required by law, except at the direction and on behalf of a School Subscriber.

### **Security**

Maintaining the confidentiality, security, and integrity of students' personal information is a top priority. ZOOM uses appropriate technical and organizational measures designed to help protect personal information from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. Customer Content is encrypted in transit between any devices running a Zoom client and at rest when in permanent storage in the Zoom Cloud. ZOOM has also taken steps to minimize the risk that meetings that include Student Users are not disrupted by uninvited participants. Examples include enabling meeting passwords and virtual waiting rooms by default for K-12 Accounts and configuring default screen-share settings to limit in-meeting content sharing. For guidance on how to secure virtual classrooms, please review "[Best Practices for Securing Your Classroom](#)" and "[How to Keep Uninvited Guests Out of Your Zoom Event](#)."

### **Report a User**

All K-12 Accounts have the "Report a User" feature enabled by default. The "Report a User" feature is available to the meeting host or co-host via the Security icon on the meeting taskbar. If an unwelcome participant joins the meeting, the host or co-host can select "Report a User," which automatically takes a screenshot of the reported user(s) and their shared content (if any) and creates a report. The feature then sends the report to Zoom's Trust & Safety Team. A member of the Trust & Safety Team will review the report and investigate the reported user(s) for violation of our Terms of Service. Confirmed offending

users will have their accounts terminated, and, where appropriate, we will notify relevant law enforcement authorities.

### **Data Retention**

Zoom retains K-12 Account Users' and Student Users' personal information for as long as necessary to fulfill the purposes for which it was collected, including for the purposes of satisfying any legal, accounting, or reporting requirements, to establish or defend legal claims, or for fraud prevention purposes.

### **Access and deletion of information**

If a Student User or their parent would like to request to access, review, refuse further collection of or delete a Student User's personal information, they must contact their school subscriber with his or her request. **Because Zoom is required to comply with contractual confidentiality obligations related to Student Users' data, we are not able to respond to parental or student requests directly.**

**School Subscribers** may direct requests to access, delete or restrict further collection or use of a Student User's personal information to [privacy@zoom.us](mailto:privacy@zoom.us). Zoom also deletes information associated with K-12 Accounts upon receiving a valid deletion request from a School Subscriber or automatically following the termination of the K-12 Account. K-12 Account Users can delete their content

K-12 Account Users may access or request deletion of their personal information in the same manner as set forth in our [Privacy Statement](#).

### **Additional Rights of California and European Users**

If you are a resident of the State of California or the European Users, please refer to our [Privacy Statement](#) and our California Privacy Rights Statement for additional information on the rights that you may have and how you can exercise those rights.

### **How to Contact ZOOM**

Zoom Video Communications, Inc.  
55 Almaden Blvd, Suite 600.  
San Jose, CA 95113  
1.888.799.9666  
[privacy@zoom.us](mailto:privacy@zoom.us)