

# 2023-2024 School Year



## PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK



<https://aeries.gcccharters.org/parent>

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### **Empowering Possibilities International Charter EPIC**

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West Sacramento, CA 95691

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[www.epicib.org](http://www.epicib.org)

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint parents and students with the program, policies, and procedures of Empowering Possibilities International Charter School (EPIC). The contents of the handbook were developed with you and your child in mind. We sincerely hope that the information within will be valuable to you throughout the school year.

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# **Welcome to Empowering Possibilities** **International Charter School!**

We here at EPIC welcome you and your family to a community of learners in pursuit of an excellent education and lifelong learning. We are a school based on the belief that strength in education is a partnership of parents, students, staff and the community. We deeply value the commitment you have made to send your student to EPIC.

**We are the EPIC Owls:**



**\*\*Please take time to review with your student the information and policies in this Handbook\*\***

## **EPIC's Vision**

To prepare our students for the competitive global economy, EPIC will provide a safe learning environment that fosters students' risk-taking, inquiry and independent thinking skills.

## **EPIC's Mission**

All EPIC students will acquire knowledge, concepts, and skills to succeed in their choice of college and career in order to positively contribute to both their local and global communities.

## **Non-Discrimination Statement**

Gateway Community Charters and Empowering Possibilities International Charters prohibit, at any school activity, discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, intimidation, and bullying, based on actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status, ethnic group identification, ethnicity, age, religion, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or genetic information, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. This shall apply when applicable to interns, volunteers, and job applicants. For questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact Equity and Title IX Compliance Officer; Dr. Erik Crawford – Director, Special Education and Student Services – 5112 Arnold Ave. McClellan CA. 95652; 916-286-5199; [erik.crawford@gcccharters.org](mailto:erik.crawford@gcccharters.org)

## **EPIC is a Charter School**

A charter school is a public school of choice that operates with freedom from many of the guidelines that apply to traditional public schools. Charter schools must still comply with state and federal mandated laws and programs. Charter schools are unique as they dictate the way they will follow these mandated laws and programs. This is done through each school's individual charter petition. This document establishes each individual school's performance contract detailing the school's mission and vision, programs offered, goals for academic success, students served, methods of assessment, and fiscal sustainability. The length of the time for which EPIC's charter is granted permission to operate in California is 5 years (we have been renewed through 2027). Charter schools are accountable to their sponsor, which in our case is the Yolo County Office of Education, to produce positive academic results and adhere to their granted charter petition. EPIC operates under the supervision of Gateway Community Charters, a Charter Management Organization.

Empowering Possibilities International Charter was originally founded as Community Collaborative Charter School of West Sacramento in 2011, we became EPIC in 2014 when the Yolo County Board of Education accepted our new school charter. Our school was created through a collaboration between the community and Gateway Community Charters, who came together to create an internationally-focused school based on world languages that would fill an educational void in the community. EPIC was founded to provide the highest quality education possible for all students while also being sensitive to the needs and values of our community.

## Gateway Community Charters Board

Gateway Community Charters, Inc. (GCC) is an independent non-profit 501(c)3 agency that was created to support students, parents and communities through the conception, development, administration and governance of innovative, high quality, standards-based educational opportunities within charter school constructs. In cooperation with our Location Educational Agencies (LEAs), Twin Rivers Unified School District, San Juan Unified School District, Elk Grove Unified School District, Sacramento City Unified School District, and Yolo County Office of Education, the GCC reaches out to the greater Sacramento County community to create schools to serve the educational needs of the underserved, for example; the disenfranchised, culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, homeless, parenting teens, working young adults, fifth year seniors, English language learners and others.



Jason Sample  
Superintendent/CEO



Lillie Campbell  
Board President



Bruce Mangerich  
Board Vice President



Mark Anderson  
Board Treasurer



Jack Turner  
Board Secretary



Harry Block  
Board Director

**GCC VISION** Our vision is to provide all students, regardless of circumstance, a safe, caring school choice with high academic and behavioral expectations where they can reach their fullest academic and social potential.

**GCC MISSION** Gateway Community Charters, Inc. (GCC) is an independent non-profit agency that supports students, parents and the community through the conception, development, administration and governance of

innovative, high quality, standards-based educational school choice options within the greater Sacramento region.

## I. Overview of the Educational Programs at EPIC

### Academic Program

EPIC is a free public Gateway Community Charters (GCC) charter school serving students in Transitional Kindergarten through 8th grade. EPIC is a fully authorized International Baccalaureate (IB) world school for both our TK-5<sup>th</sup> grade Primary Years Program (PYP) and 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade Middle Years Program (MYP). EPIC challenges students with a rigorous, standards-based, college preparatory curriculum. Students learn 21st Century skills that are incorporated into the IB framework. EPIC is a WASC accredited school and received a 6-year WASC accreditation in the spring of 2021.

### International Baccalaureate (IB)

At EPIC, we believe that an International Baccalaureate (IB) education will enrich this culturally diverse community of West Sacramento. This will add to the menu of quality education programs that serve the students throughout the area. **"The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right."** (Source: [www.ibo.org/mission/](http://www.ibo.org/mission/))

International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme offers education that develops the intellectual, personal, emotional, and social skills necessary to be competent and work in a globalizing world. There are four components to the IB program: Primary Years Programme (PYP) which focuses on TK through 5<sup>th</sup> grade; the Middle Years Programme (MYP) which focuses on grades 6-8; the Diploma Programme (DP) and the Career-related Programme (CP) which both focus on the high school grades. The IB Programme has a presence in countries throughout the world. There are IB World Schools around the globe and universities worldwide recognize the strength of students who experienced the IB Programme. EPIC chose to be an IB school because the IB Programme has a reputation for high standards of teaching, pedagogical leadership and student achievement.

The IB has 10 Learner Profile Traits which are a key element of the EPIC culture that all students and staff strive to attain. EPIC believes that students who embody the IB mission and learner profile will be successful in a 21st century global environment.

**Knowledgeable:** Students explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In doing so, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad range of disciplines.

**Thinkers:** Students exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

**Communicators:** Students understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

**Principled:** Students act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

**Open Minded**: Students understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

**Caring**: Students show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

**Risk-takers**: Students approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

**Balanced**: Students understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

**Inquirer**: Students develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained through their lives.

**Reflective**: Students give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

### **Project Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD)**

Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) is an instructional model that supports teachers by providing differentiated strategies to integrate instruction in English and grade-level content standards in a heterogeneous, mainstream classroom. GLAD is a Kindergarten through grade twelve instructional model consisting of thirty-five strategies. The strategies are designed for teachers who have a significant number of English Language learners in their classroom. EPIC uses GLAD strategies in all of our classrooms because the strategies specifically develop both conversational skills as well as academic English. Teachers use GLAD strategies to support the development of vocabulary and linguistic structures students need to participate in context-rich discourse.

### **English Language Learners (ELL)**

EPIC ensures that ELL students have access to a full range of designated and Integrated ELD opportunities. EPIC complies with all applicable federal laws in regards to services and the education of ELL students. English Learners are reclassified when it is appropriate on an annual basis.

### **Tutoring**

Students identified as needing additional support in the core subjects (ELA and Math) will be provided with intervention services during the school day and may be offered tutoring services before/after school by a credentialed teacher or paraprofessional.

### **The Student Success Team (SST)**

SST is a problem-solving and coordinating approach that assists students, families and teachers to seek positive solutions for maximizing student potentials academically and/or behaviorally. It provides opportunities for school staff, parents, and other important people in the life of the student to present their concerns about the student through discussion and study, to plan a positive course of action, assign responsibilities, and monitor results. The team oversees the development of plans to meet students' needs, if possible, without referral to assessment for special education needs. The team will monitor students' progress and students can exit the SST process based on improvement.

### **Special Education**

California law requires school to make special programs available to all pupils with exceptional needs who are eligible for services. Parents of children who are suspected to have a disability, or who are determined to be eligible for special education services, are entitled to receive a written copy of Procedural safeguards which provides an

explanation of their rights and will be required to sign an acknowledgment that they have been advised of their rights.

### **Section 504**

Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 USC 12101 et seq.) prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. Section 504 requires school districts to identify and evaluate children with disabilities in order to provide them a free, appropriate public education. Individuals with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including seeing, hearing, walking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks, learning, eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, bending, reading, concentrating, thinking, speaking, are eligible to receive services and aids designed to meet their needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met. If a student has a disability that limits his or her ability to attend or function at school, a written accommodation plan may be documented under Section 504. Students have the right to be educated in the least restrictive environment.

### **6-6 After School Program**

EPIC offers a free before and after school program to all enrolled students. The before school component runs from 6:00 a.m. until school starts. The after school component runs from dismissal to 6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. This is not a drop-in program and students must register and attend consistently. After school activities include our music program, outside active games, technology-based activities such as E-Sports and robotics, chess, and martial arts. After school tutoring in English/Language Arts and mathematics will also occur after school for eligible students. Programming is subject to change.

### **California School Dashboard**

The California School Dashboard is a state run website that features easy to read reports on multiple measures of school success, including test scores, graduation rates, English learner progress, and attendance information. The dashboard is part of California's school accountability system. These dashboards support student learning and inform the public as to the progress of all California schools and students.

<https://www.caschooldashboard.org/reports/57105790132464/2022>

## **II. POLICIES and PROCEDURES**

**Arrivals- *Students may not be on campus before 6:00 a.m.*** There is no adult supervision prior to this time, so we cannot guarantee students safety. After 7:45 a.m., All students should report to either the multi-purpose room (for breakfast only) or to the playground. Students who arrive before 7:45 a.m. must report to the multi-purpose room.

Elementary School Regular Day Schedule (Monday-Thursday) - 8:30am-3:00 pm  
Middle School Regular Day Schedule (Monday-Thursday) - 8:30am-3:15pm  
Friday ALL School Schedule- 8:30am-12:30pm

It is important that parents do no park and leave their vehicles unattended in the drop off zones during school hours (8:00-3:45 p.m.). Parents arriving late with students must enter through the main EPIC entrance and sign in at the office. Parents who may be staying on campus with their children after the start of the school day **MUST** go to the office, sign in, and wear a Visitor's Badge.

**Dismissal-** All students must be picked up promptly at the end of each school day by 3:15 p.m. (or 12:30 p.m. on Fridays) unless they are participating in an authorized school program or activity. It is imperative that children



be picked up on time after school ends. Students who walk or bike to school are to exit campus immediately at the end of the day. Students who are still on campus after pickup time will be brought to the office and the parents will be called. If there is no response by phone from parents or emergency contacts, the school will call the local authorities.

**Closed Campus-** In an effort to keep all students safe and supervised, once a student arrives on the school grounds they must remain on campus until the end of the school day unless there is a note provided by the parent or guardian and permission has been granted by school office staff to leave. If a student leaves school grounds without this permission, a student is considered truant and is subject to disciplinary action.

## **Attendance is IMPERATIVE!**

### **Getting your child to school on time is one of the most important ways parents can advocate for their children.**

#### **Attendance/Absences: (Student Policies BP 06-08: Attendance)**

**Student Absences-** School attendance is critical for a student's success. Parents are required to send their child to school Monday - Friday. Parents are strongly encouraged to schedule medical appointments during non-school hours. Absence from school will be excused for health reasons, family emergencies, and attendance at funeral services for a family member, appearance in court or observation of a religious holiday or ceremony.

**School Attendance is Required by Law-** The State of California believes that education is essential for children and for our future. State law requires parent/guardians of children ages 6 to 18 to send their children to school, unless otherwise provided by law. Parents who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution.

**Student Truancy-** School success starts with attendance! Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education who is absent from school without valid excuse more than three days or tardy in excess of 15 minutes on each of more than three days in one school year is truant. Student with excessive absences and/or tardies will be referred to the EPIC Attendance Team for review and action.

**Tardy Arrival-** If a student arrives later than 8:45 a.m., he/she must **check in at the office** for a tardy slip before going to class. Tardiness is excused only for doctor and dental appointments, injuries, and illnesses. A note from the parent/guardian or medical office must accompany the student before returning to class. Students are responsible to collect any missed work while away from the classroom. ("LATE" students arrive between 8:31-8:44 a.m.)

**Early Dismissal-** All students are expected to have a pass when leaving the classroom during scheduled class time. Students may be asked to show passes at any time at the request of a school employee. Parent authorization is required for any student leaving school at times other than the normal dismissal time. Persons picking up a student during the school day must report to the office and sign out the student; they may not go directly to the classroom. Students are responsible to collect any missed work while away from the classroom.

If your child must leave during the school day, please do the following:

- Sign student(s) out at the office and get an early dismissal form.
- The teacher will be called to get the student(s) ready for dismissal. Student(s) will be sent to the office where parents will be waiting. *Parents may not go to the classroom to dismiss their student.*
- At no time should parents pick up students early without checking students out, even if it is a minimum day. To ensure accountability and student safety, parents are not to pick up students out on the playground/PE class, please follow the check-out procedures and wait in the office.



- Only persons who are listed on the school emergency card may pick up a student. Anyone not familiar to staff will be asked to provide identification before taking the student. The school must have an up-to-date home address, home phone number, cell phone numbers, and emergency numbers on file. Parents must keep the office informed of all changes during the school year.
- If students are arranging rides with persons other than those authorized, a phone call to the office and a note with parent permission is required to be turned in prior to pick up.

**EPIC requests that parents seek to schedule medical/dental appointments after school hours rather than remove the student from valuable class time. Also, please check the school calendar before scheduling vacations.**

**Reporting Absences-** Whenever a student is absent from school, the school must receive an explanation from the parent/guardian. Parents may send a note or email, or they may call the school office. The explanation must include the student's name, the date(s) of the absence, the reason for the absence, and the teacher's name. Notes should be signed and dated by the parent/guardian. For doctor or dentist appointments, please provide a note signed and dated by your physician or dentist. The school attendance clerk will call home if a phone call, note, or e-mail has not been received for absent students.

To assist parents in reporting absences, there are several ways to notify the office of an absence:

1: School E-Mail: [Larisa.Astapov@gcccharters.org](mailto:Larisa.Astapov@gcccharters.org)

2: Office Phone: 916-286-1960 (7:30AM - 4:00 PM)

**Unexcused Absences-** All absences without a written or telephone excuse will be considered unexcused. Students with excessive unexcused absences will be considered truant. Students must clear absences within **two days** after returning to school or the absence may be considered unexcused. Students ill for **three (3)** or more consecutive days are required to have a doctor's note before returning to school. If no doctor's note is provided, the absence will be unexcused.

### **Acceptable Reasons for Excused Absences**

- Personal illness, medical or dental appointment
- Religious observance or exercise
- Funeral service of parent, sibling, grandparent or any relative living in the immediate household of the child.

**\*\*If your student misses instructional time for any reason please contact the teacher to gather missing assignments.**

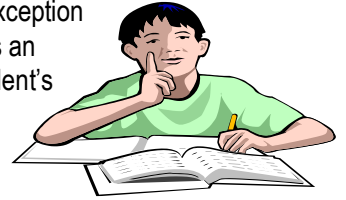
**SART (School Attendance Review Team) -** School absences are monitored carefully throughout the year. If a student has three (3) excused or unexcused absences in a year a letter will be sent home, and a phone call made to discuss scheduling a meeting regarding the excessive absences.

Parents of students with five (5) absences and/or tardies will be sent a letter and the review process will be initiated, which will include a parent conference. After ten (10) absences and/or tardies,,a Notice of Truancy letter will be sent home and a second conference will be scheduled. **Students who are absent for more than 15 school days are deemed "chronically absent" and are subject to being reported to authorities as a habitual truant.**

### III. School Work/Homework

It is mandatory for students to complete all assigned school work and make-up work by the specified due dates. Students are required to make up any and all work missed during their absence. Parents are responsible for contacting the teacher to gather any missed school work.

**Assignment Planner-** Assignment planners are to be filled out daily by all students, with the exception of kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Students will receive these planners early in the school year. This is an excellent tool for parent/teacher communication. It also allows the parent to keep track of their student's assignments and in some cases their grades. Parents should review their child's planners at least once a week if not daily.



#### **Independent Study/Home Instruction: GCC policy:**

Because EPIC cares about your child and his/her educational progress, in the event that your child must be gone from school for an extended period of time (3-15 days), a Short Term Independent Study Contract may be available. Requests for independent study **MUST** be turned in to the office for the principal's signature at least one (1) week prior to the absence so that there is adequate time for the school to prepare the necessary work packets.

**Note:** Independent study is intended for students who are ill or must leave town for some type of family emergency. It is **NOT** intended to replace regular attendance for families who are on vacation.

**School Work Policy** EPIC holds high expectations for every student and all assignments are expected to be completed by the due date.

**Homework Policy** All EPIC students will receive homework to promote academic development. The amount and type of homework assigned varies by grade level and teacher.



Failure to complete homework will effect a student's grade and may result in other consequences from the teacher. If you have any questions about your teacher's homework policy please contact the teacher.

### IV. Emergency Procedures

The school has a well-developed and complete emergency response plan that is coordinated with local agencies. The emergency plan clearly identifies the specific actions for any emergency situation. Students and staff practice emergency procedures such as fire drills, earthquake drills, lockdown drills and classroom evacuations during the school year and are familiar with how to respond in emergency situations. **Emergency notifications to families will be sent out via Parent Square, so it is important that you make sure that your correct contact information is on file in our main office.** The safety of individual students is our highest priority. In the case of an emergency during the school day that requires early pick-up, students will only be released to the appropriate contacts as per our student information system.



**Safety Drills-** Fire and safety drills are held monthly to teach students proper responses to emergency situations. Evacuation maps are posted in each classroom and hallways and safety drill



instructions for teachers can be found in the red classroom emergency binders. Students are to quietly and quickly follow all directions given by EPIC staff and/or emergency personnel.

**Parking and Driveway Safety-** We need your help to keep the school and your children safe. It is imperative that families adhere to our parking safety rules. EVERY child's safety is important to us! At no time, should anyone drive fast or recklessly through the parking areas or surrounding streets. At no time, should parents park their cars in a drop off area or drop off zone. Parents must always park in a designated parking spot. The handicapped zone is reserved for those with handicap permits. Please be courteous and follow all safety guidelines at all times.

## V. Health

**Immunizations:** Students must be current on required immunizations. California School Immunization law requires that pupils entering a California School provide a written immunization record showing the date of each dose of the immunization. (Health and Safety Code Section 3380-89, chapter 7). Students who do not have required immunizations must receive the next required dose by the specified due date or they will be excluded from school until the dose is verified by GCC nurses or school staff.

At EPIC student confidentiality rights are strictly observed in accordance with law. No school employee shall release medical information, including knowledge of a blood borne pathogen infection, without written consent from the parents.

It is not always easy to know when to send your child to school and when to keep your child home. These Guidelines are based on public health science. If you have any questions about them, please call your school nurse.

**Illness:** It is not always easy to know when to send your child to school and when to keep your child home. For the safety and protection of all, we ask that you not send your student to school with any of the following symptoms:

- **Fever** - 100.5°F or more, taken orally (or 101°F taken by ear, rectally or temporal scan). Note that ear temperatures are often not accurate and temperature should be taken using another route, if the temperature is high.
- **Cough and difficulty breathing** - do not send to school if child has labored breathing (heaving of chest muscles with each breath), rapid breathing at rest, blue color to skin, or wheezing (if never previously evaluated and treated), instead, see a doctor. If your child has pertussis (whooping cough) keep her/him home until 5 days of antibiotics have been received, or tuberculosis (until treated).
- **Rash** - that is undiagnosed, especially when there is a fever and behavioral change.
- **Chickenpox** - keep home until all blisters are scabbed over and there are no signs of illness. Must have a note from the doctor to return to school.
- **Diarrhea** - keep home if there is blood or mucous in the stool (unless from medication or hard stool), if the stools are all black or very pale, or if the stools are very watery and are increasing in frequency. See a doctor immediately if diarrhea is accompanied by: no urine output for 8 hours; jaundiced skin; or child looks/acts very ill.
- **Vomiting** - more than once a day or accompanied by fever, rash or general weakness.
- **Impetigo** - keep the child home for 24 hours after starting an antibiotic treatment.
- **Ringworm** - (a contagious skin fungus infection). Keep home until treatment is started. If it is in an exposed area, upon return, cover visible area with dressing and/or clothing. Ringworm on the scalp requires an oral medication, but child may return to school if covered with appropriate cream or covered.
- **Cold sores** – these can be passed from one person to another, but only through direct contact.



If the student is at school with any of the above, the parent will be called to pick up the student. Under certain circumstances, you may be asked to consult a physician and to provide a written note from your doctor indicating that the student may return to school.

A student returning to school following a serious or prolonged illness, injury, surgery or other hospitalization, must have written permission by a health care provider to attend school, including any recommendations regarding physical activity and exertion. A student returning to school with sutures, casts, crutches, a wheelchair or orthopedic brace(s) must have a physician's written permission to attend school and must comply with any safety procedures required by the school administration.

**Antibiotics:** Children, who are placed on antibiotics for impetigo, strep throat, and several other bacterial infections, should be on them for a FULL 24 hours (longer for Pertussis/Whooping Cough) before returning to school to prevent the spread of those infections. If you are uncertain, ask your school nurse.

If at any time you are unsure if your child's illness is contagious, you may want to call your child's primary care provider. If you have further questions, please contact your school site to speak to the school nurse. Thank you for your continued support of the families in our school community.

School policy mandates that students with a contagious disease should stay home. In order to ensure the health and welfare of all students, school personnel can request a doctor's note to confirm that the student is no longer contagious, upon his/her return. School personnel will provide minor first aid treatment, but will contact a parent or guardian if a student vomits, suffers a severe injury, or is running a temperature.

### **Prescription Medication: (Student Policies BP 11-08: Administration of Medications and Emergencies)**

When it is necessary for a student to take medication, please administer the medication before or after school hours if at all possible. When this is not possible, a signed release form from the parent and the doctor must be received by the EPIC School office before any assistance can be given in the administration of the medication. An authorization form must be completed by the student's parent/guardian and doctor before the school can administer prescription medications. All prescription medications must be brought to school by the parent, in the original container with the prescription label attached. This form is available in the school office and on our website. The school does not supply any medication, including Tylenol, for students. All medication must be kept in the office in its original container. Students may not carry medication (inhaler, Epi-pen) unless a consent form signed by a parent and the physician allowing the medication to be carried is on file in the school office. Students may not provide any medication, including Tylenol, to other students.



**Over-the-Counter Medications:** The school cannot administer any over-the-counter medications. If a child needs an over-the-counter medication at school, the parent/guardian must come to the school to administer it. Children must not bring over-the-counter medication to school.

**Head Lice: (Student Policies BP 16-17: Head Lice)** Parents need to contact the school if they find head lice on their child's head. The school will contact a parent or guardian if students are found to have live head lice. Students will be checked for head lice by the principal or designee upon return to school. If no live lice are found the child will be sent to class. No school-wide surveillance will be conducted for nits or lice.

### **Treatment of School Related Injuries**

It is the policy of the school to treat minor injuries (scrapes, cuts, bruises, etc.) with basic first aid. Parents will be notified of minor injuries at the discretion of the school administrator/school secretary. When confronted with a more serious illness or injury, school staff will contact parents, and if required, call 911.

## **VI. PARENT AND PROGRAM INFORMATION**

**Emergency Contact Information-** Sick or injured students are released only to parents or people listed as emergency contacts on the Emergency Card/Parent Square. Please provide current names and phone numbers of people to contact in case of emergency and be sure to update our main office if there are any changes. **If there are changes, please come in person to make the changes as soon as possible. Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping current emergency contact information on file. It is extremely important to have updated information in case of emergency, in order to ensure there is no time delay that can cause a sick child unnecessary discomfort or anxiety. The school must know how to reach you in case of an emergency.**

**Custody Disputes:** Parent/Guardians are responsible for contacting the school if there is a court order stipulating that one parent may not have access to a student at the school. A parent/guardian MUST notify the office and the teacher, and provide the office with a current court order. Otherwise, both biological parents (with appropriate identification) have equal rights to participate in their child's education including the right to: come to school to see their child, obtain school records for their child, or pick the child up from school.

### **Withdrawal from School**

If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child from EPIC, please notify the school office as soon as possible. Any lost books, materials, and fees must be paid before the school will release the student's transcripts or report card.

**Parent Participation-** A significant correlation has been established between direct parent involvement and a school's overall high rate of success. EPIC was established with a provision that parents would play a significant role as volunteers. At EPIC we appreciate volunteers - if you would like to volunteer please contact the school office or your student's teacher.

**Parent Communication:** Due to the importance of parent involvement in the success of each child, parents are expected to communicate regularly with their child. Furthermore, parents and teachers need to communicate regularly in order to monitor their child's progress and build a strong partnership with their child's teacher.

There are many ways in which EPIC will communicate information and important events with families and students. It is pertinent that parents check backpacks, folders, binders, emails, etc. to ensure that they are receiving all forms of communication from teachers or administration. Some forms of communication include but are not limited to:

- **Monthly School Newsletters:**  
A school newsletter will be published monthly informing parents of important information, upcoming events, and ways to help out at the school.
- **School Website and Social Media:**  
EPIC is active in social media, please make sure to check out our website, Twitter, and Facebook pages. We update social media on a regular basis. If you do not want your student's image or work displayed publically, please contact the EPIC main office for an opt-out form. EPIC staff can be contacted through the school website at [www.epicib.org](http://www.epicib.org)
- **AERIES Parent Portal:**  
Aeries Parent Portal is where parents can access students' current grades. Please make sure to check your student's grades regularly. AERIES for parents can be accessed by visiting: [aeries.gcccharters.net/parent](http://aeries.gcccharters.net/parent). If you need assistance with your AERIES account please contact the school office.
- **Parent Square:**  
Parent Square is EPIC's communication program. Parents can access this through an internet browser or by downloading the free app. Instructions on how to access Parent Square can be found on EPIC's website. Both administration and teachers use Parent Square to send important updates, forms and other various announcements. It is critically important that all EPIC families monitor Parent Square to receive announcements.
- **E-Mail:**  
Please give your email contacts to the office staff and sign up for a AERIES account. Important updates and communications are also sent to parents by email. Parents are encouraged to use email to communicate with



all EPIC staff members. EPIC staff email addresses can be found on our website. If your email contacts change please report the change(s) to our main office as soon as possible.

**Visits to the Classroom** - EPIC welcomes parent visitors anytime; however, it is important that parents make arrangements with the classroom teacher one day in advance, out of consideration of classroom instructional time. All parent visitors are required to check in at the office to get a visitor's badge. ***If you wish to discuss your child's progress with the teacher, please arrange for a private conference with the teacher outside of instructional class time or transition times. Parent conferences should be scheduled with the teacher at least 24 hours in advance.***

**Classroom Interruptions** - If you need to leave a message for the teacher or your child, please contact the office. Office personnel will do their best to contact the teacher or student during recess or lunch. In the event of an emergency, the message will be relayed immediately. Teachers may also be reached through email from our school website.

**Parent Support Programs** - The success of a school relies on effective parent/school cooperation. The school does not assume total responsibility for education of the student; it is vital that a consistent approach be developed and agreed upon by parents, students and staff. To ensure success, we require a commitment signed by parents, students, and teachers pledging involvement and support of EPIC. This is called the **Three-Way Pledge** which can be found as an appendix to this handbook. EPIC also holds regular parent information sessions to educate and inform parents about school programs and academic improvement strategies.

**School Site Council/ELAC/DELAC-** School Site Council/ELAC/DELAC meets five times a year and is a very important part of the governance structure at Empowering Possibilities International Charter School. The SSC/ELAC/DELAC is charged with participating and providing input in the development of the Single School District plan (including the site budget) and Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). This body is also responsible for monitoring the implementation of the plans, including the expenditure of funds and the monitoring of achievement. SSC/ELAC/DELAC also monitors and advises administration on English Learner (EL) programs. SSC/ELAC/DELAC parents are elected by all parents every two years. When vacancies arise, the principal notifies parents through the EPIC school newsletter with election procedures.

**Parent Concerns:** In the case that a parent has a concern regarding the child's experience in the classroom, parents are asked to follow the steps below:

1. Discuss the issue with your child.
2. Meet with the classroom teacher(s) with your child present.
3. Meet with the classroom teacher, your child, and the Vice Principal.
4. Meet with Principal.

If the concern is not resolved after the steps above have been followed then parents have the option to proceed with the steps below:

1. Meet with the Principal and a GCC administrator.
2. File a complaint through the GCC complaint policy. (This can be found at [www.epicib.org](http://www.epicib.org) )

### **Uniform Complaint Procedures BP 01-18(A):**

EPIC is responsible for ensuring compliance with state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs and has established procedures to address allegations of unlawful discrimination and/or failure to apply with such laws. The GCC Board encourages early, informal resolution of complaints at the site level whenever possible. If parties feel further investigation and resolution are needed, concerns should be submitted in writing to:

Dr. Erik Crawford, Director, Special Education and Student Services  
Gateway Community Charters  
5112 Arnold Ave, Suite A McClellan, CA 95652 916-286-5199  
[GCC-Info@GCCCharters.org](mailto:GCC-Info@GCCCharters.org)  
[Erik.Crawford@GCCCharters.org](mailto:Erik.Crawford@GCCCharters.org)

A complete copy of the Uniform Complaint Procedures is posted in the school office and online at [www.epicib.org](http://www.epicib.org).

**School Accountability Report Card (SARC)** – CDE requires our school to publish a School Accountability Report Card (SARC) annually that describes our school's demographics, academic achievement data, and other important characteristics of our school. A copy of the SARC can be found on our school web page or at [www.sarconline.org](http://www.sarconline.org)

## VII. GRADING, REPORT CARDS, STANDARDIZED TESTING

Grades are based on multiple assessments and measures, and are completed at the end of each trimester, about every twelve weeks. Report cards will be issued at the end of each trimester. Progress reports are sent out at the mid-point of each trimester.

Parents have access to all students' grades through AERIES and can monitor academic progress. Parents should contact their student's teacher if they have questions or concerns regarding their child's progress report or report card.



**Report Cards-** The school year is divided into three grading periods (trimesters). The trimesters are long enough (approximately 12 weeks) to allow students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of specific skills. At the end of each trimester, students will receive **OVERALL** grades in each subject. The subjects that will be graded are English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, Social Studies, Art, Russian/Spanish and PE. The grading scale is as follows:

<b>A</b>	Students earning an <b>A</b> and show deep mastery of the knowledge and skills contained in grade level standards.		
	A+ 98%-100%	A 94%-97%	A- 90%-93%
<b>B</b>	Students earning a <b>B</b> score 80 – 89% and demonstrate a solid mastery of the knowledge and skills contained in grade level standards.		
	B+ 88%-89%	B 84%-87%	B- 80%-83%
<b>C</b>	Students earning a <b>C</b> score 70 – 79% and are approaching mastery of the knowledge and skills contained in grade level standards.		
	C+ 78%-79%	C 74%-77%	C- 70%-73%
<b>D &amp; F</b>	Students earning a <b>D</b> and/or <b>F</b> score below 70% and are not demonstrating the knowledge and skills contained in the grade level standards.		
	D+ 68%-69%	D 64%-67%	D- 60%-63%
	F 0%-59%		

Teachers will clearly state the grading standards and policies for their class and/or subject area at the beginning of the year.

### PE Participation

California Education Code makes it mandatory that every student be provided with physical education. If, at any time, your child is ill or has a condition that requires being excused from physical education activities for more than 5 days, an explanatory note is required from your child's health advisor.

**EPIC's AWARD PROGRAMS-** The award programs at EPIC are intended to acknowledge student academic excellence. Specifically, it acknowledges individual high achievement in grade level standards and curricula, which in turn, encourages each child to maximize their potential.





**Frequency:** Principal's List and Honor Roll students will be identified each school trimester.

**Principal's List Requirements-** This is for EPIC students who receive all A's on their report card and have no "N" or "U" citizenship marks.

**Honor Roll Requirements-** This is for EPIC students who receive all A's and B's on their report card and have no "N" or "U" citizenship marks.

**GRADE PROMOTION-** Students who do not demonstrate mastery of the grade level standards may be at risk for retention. This will be determined through the student study team (SST) process which is a collaborative effort between administration, the teacher(s), and the parent/guardian. Students who are struggling academically will be offered appropriate academic interventions.

**Parent Conferences-** EPIC prides itself on excellent home school communication. Parent-teacher conferences are held on an ongoing basis before and after school. Teachers are expected to schedule conferences with parents as needed. Translators can be made available for conferences by request. To schedule a conference, please email your student's teacher(s).

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING (CAASPP, CAST, ELPAC, and PFT)**

Each spring, students in grades 3-8 take the computer-based California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) for English/Language Arts and Mathematics. In addition to CAASPP, students in grades 5 and 8 take the California Science Test (CAST). Students in grades 5 and 7 take the California Physical Fitness Test (PFT).

**ELPAC – English Language Proficiency Assessments-** Students in Kindergarten through grade twelve, who are classified as English learners, will take the ELPAC Summative Assessment every year until they are reclassified as proficient in English. Students are tested on their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. To learn more about the ELPAC, please read the *Parent Guide to Understanding the ELPAC*, which can be found online at <https://www.elpac.org/resources/parent-resources/>. If you have any questions about your child taking the ELPAC, please contact our school's office.

## **VIII. STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

EPIC seeks to inspire, challenge and empower all students in an environment that is safe, supportive, and conducive to learning. We have high expectations for student behavior and require all students to demonstrate responsibility and appropriate behavior at school and at school sponsored events and activities. To create clarity, we have adopted and implement the following student behavioral programs and policies:

### **EPIC is a Flippen Group Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) National Showcase School.**



The primary focus of Capturing Kids' Hearts is to develop healthy relationships between members of a school's educational community and to teach effective skills that help participants:

- Develop self-managing classrooms and decrease discipline issues through innovative techniques such as a social contract

- Decrease delinquent behaviors such as disruptive outbursts, violent acts, and drug use
- Utilize the EXCEL Teaching Model™ (Engage, X-plore, Communicate, Empower, Launch) and reinforce the role of emotional intelligence in teaching
- Build classroom rapport and teamwork to create a safe, trusting learning environment
- Develop students' empathy for diverse cultures/backgrounds
- Increase classroom attendance by building students' motivation and helping them take responsibility for their actions and performance

We believe at EPIC that Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH) implementation is the foundation of our school's culture and promotes an educational environment that promotes academic growth and social development.

**EPIC is a Safe and Caring School** We believe that all students have a right to a safe, healthy and nurturing learning environment. At EPIC we are committed to providing all students with a safe and caring school environment where everyone is treated with respect. EPIC will not tolerate behaviors that infringe on the safety and emotional well-being of any student.

### Safety of Self and Others

In order to ensure that EPIC is a place where learning is a priority; the school must be safe at all times. Any student action or intention that can be deemed as violating the safety of one's self or others can result in serious consequences. Examples of violations include but not limited to –bullying, verbal abuse of others, intentionally hurting another student, defiance of playground safety rules, fighting, leaving school grounds, etc. (see attached violation form)

**Internet Safety:** GCC/EPIC school sends home a technology use policy each year as part of Annual Notifications which specifies appropriate use of technology for students. If you have questions or concerns regarding this policy please contact the school office. EPIC students receive digital citizenship instruction appropriate to their grade level in EPIC classrooms.

**Bullying-** In order to minimize bullying and encourage teamwork, our goal is to help students gain skills and knowledge in a safe and positive learning community. The faculty, staff, and students achieve this by modeling positive behavior, using common language, improving communication, and encouraging community involvement.

Bullying is . . .

- Intentional harm-doing
- Happens repeatedly over time
- Verbal: name calling, threatening and/or rumors; profanity
- Emotional: making faces, isolating others, gestures
- Unequal power (size, ability, popularity, money, clothing)
- Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, and hitting someone else to hurt someone
- On the internet/ through cyber bullying



**School Rules Against Bullying-** Students should be aware of their surroundings and should follow these steps.

1. We will not bully other students.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will make a point to include students who are easily left out.
4. When we know somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

**Bullying Incident Reporting System-** This is an online system in place that allows students and/or a member of the community to report an incident of bullying or harassment. To report incidents go to the following website:

<http://report.doc-tracking.com/222724/222716> or <http://www.epicib.org/how-to-report-a-bully/> Students may also report bullying using an EPIC Student Incident Report form which are available at our front desk.

**Sexual Harassment Affecting Students (GCC BP 25-19)** EPIC considers sexual harassment to be a major offense, which may result in disciplinary action, including expulsion of the offending student. Sexual harassment includes

any unwelcome sexual behavior that interferes with an individual's performance at school or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive education environment. Any student who believes that he or she has been harassed or witnessed harassment is encouraged to immediately report such incident to his or her teacher, counselor, or Principal. A full copy of this GCC Board Policy is posted on our school's webpage.

## Respect to Property

Building upon the need to have a safe and nurturing school, students must respect the property of the school and others at all times. Any student action or intention that can be deemed as causing damage to the property of the school or others, can result in serious consequences. Example of property violations include but are not limited to – stealing, defacing school property or the property of others, unauthorized use of equipment, inappropriate use of the internet, etc.

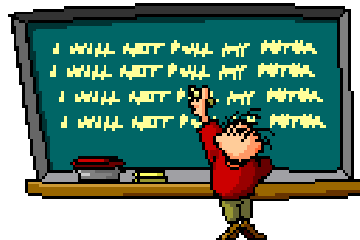
**EPIC Chromebooks/Library Books/School Textbooks** – EPIC students/families are responsible for damage to EPIC Chromebooks, library books and textbooks. Families may be held responsible financially for any damage of EPIC school property such as Chromebooks, library books, and textbooks. Students may be held out of extra-curricular activities until any library fines or property damage is paid for.

## Classroom Behavioral Interventions

School culture in the public schools of our nation continues to be a matter of great priority to educators and parents alike. Since a positive school culture is essential to student academic progress, the teachers and staff at EPIC work together to encourage positive and productive behavior in a firm, fair, and consistent manner. All EPIC teachers manage their classroom through Social Contracts that allow students to have significant input, and therefore buy-in into expected classroom behaviors. Our school's discipline plan is based on the premise that teachers are here to teach and students are here to learn. Therefore, no student will be allowed to stop the teacher from teaching or interfere with the learning of other students.

When a student makes a deliberate choice to disobey an established rule or their classroom Social Contract, some or all of the following interventions may be used at the teacher's discretion:

- Refocus/Reflection Form
- Conference with student
- Time-out or Loss of recess
- Call parents
- Parent/Student/Teacher Conference
- Written behavioral contract with positive incentives
- Classroom visitation by the parent



A time-out may be assigned in the classroom or in an alternate supervised classroom as part of the classroom management program.

Students who are frequently disruptive to learning or who commit a major disciplinary offense will be referred to Administration for further action. Consequences issued by the main office for classroom/school disruptions or major disciplinary offenses may include:

- Recess/Lunch Detention
- After School Detention
- Friday detention
- In-School Suspension
- Home Suspension



School rules apply at all school events and functions, such as field trips, after school programs, during special class activities, and traveling to/from school.

**Cheating-** Cheating is defined as any use or attempt to use the work effort of another student, with or without the consent of that student, or any previously published material to benefit their grade status. Both (or all) students involved in any incident will be held accountable for the consequences (detention, suspension, and/or a zero on the assignment).

Students involved in cheating on examinations or finals will be referred to an administrator for disciplinary action. EPIC's Academic Integrity Policy is taught to all students at an age-appropriate level and can be found on the EPIC website.

EPIC students are responsible for their actions and are expected to adhere to the classroom Social Contract and school rules and policies. If a student is in violation of a school rule or policy, a teacher or staff member will refer him/her to the appropriate administrator to determine the consequences based on the type and severity of the violation.

**Policy for Extra-Curricular Activity Participation** - Students are expected to be in good academic standing and have good citizenship in order to participate in extra-curricular activities such as athletics and activities supplemental to the CORE academic program. Students with F academic, U citizenship grades, or suspensions may be held out of extra-curricular activities. EPIC does not discriminate regarding participation in extra-curricular activities as per the Anti-Discrimination statement found earlier in this handbook and strives to create equal opportunities for all EPIC students.

## IX. DRESS CODE POLICY

EPIC believes that the development of dress and grooming attitudes and behavior patterns is part of the educational experience. Therefore, dress, hairstyle, makeup or jewelry, which are distracting or interfere with the study habits of students in the class or school, or pose a health or safety risk to the students, shall not be acceptable. Personal appearance standards for students are defined in the dress code.

### ***Students' attire must adhere to the following:***

- Clothes are to be neat, clean, in good repair, not outgrown, are not revealing and in good taste. Tights must be worn with a skirt. Shorts and skirts must be fingertip length.
- Recreational attire shall not be worn in classrooms or at most school events. Examples of unacceptable recreational attire are; short shorts or cut-offs, tank tops, spaghetti straps, halter tops, mesh or see-through sheer tops, bare midriff or bareback tops, crop tops and half-shirts.
- Inappropriate buttons, hats, and pins or jewelry will be confiscated and returned to the student's parents or guardians. Items are considered inappropriate if they contain or promote profanity, sexual conduct, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gangs or violence.
- Clothing items will be considered inappropriate if they present a clear and present danger to the student or other students. Clothing that bears profanity or advertises sex, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gangs or violence is inappropriate school attire.
- Shoes must be worn at all times. Flip flops and other strapless shoes as well as high and platform heels are considered unsafe and are not to be worn for regular school activities.
- Students are not allowed to wear hats and hoods (not including religious headwear) in class or inside the building.
- Students are prohibited from wearing any gang affiliated clothing or items. Examples of such prohibited items include, but are not limited to, certain handkerchiefs, hanging suspenders, belts, shoestrings, earrings, jackets or devices associated with group intimidation or gangs. Pants will be worn at or above the student's waist. No undergarments are to be visible. Gang attire is any clothing, accessory or manner of grooming which may be an indicator of gang involvement.
- **Any item of clothing, accessory, or personal belonging deemed to be a distraction to the learning environment will not be allowed.**

Students wearing inappropriate attire or footwear will be sent to the office and will be asked to call their parent or guardian. Students will be given the opportunity to change into appropriate clothing, if available at the site or request the parent to bring a change of clothing or footwear. Students will return to class upon meeting dress code standards. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the school office.

**X. EPIC's Prohibited Items:** In trying to create a safe and orderly learning environment at EPIC School, we have prohibited the following items from the school campus. We **DO NOT** allow these items at EPIC during class or after school:

Gum	Personal Toys	Sunflower Seeds
Hats/hood (see dress code)	Stink Bombs	Fireworks
Makeup / Nail Polish	Toy Guns	Squirt Guns
Matches/Lighters	Bandannas	Perfumes/Colognes
Trading Cards	White-Out (which is not water-based)	Golf or baseballs
IPODs	Pocket Knives	Balloons
Drugs/Paraphernalia	Poppers	Aerosol Cans
Electronic Games	Weapons/Replicas	Pets/animals
Roller Skates/Heely's		
Flyers (not related to a school sponsored activity)		

**\*\*\*ANY personal belonging deemed to be a distraction to the learning environment will not be allowed\*\*\***

- These items will be confiscated and returned only to parents.
- The school is not responsible for theft of the confiscated items.
- Repeat confiscations will result in consequences.

**Cell Phone Policy-** Cell phones must be used responsibly in a way that does not disrupt learning or school activities. **Students are not to use cell phones at any time while inside the EPIC building without permission from EPIC administration.** Students MAY use cell phones while outside of the EPIC building before school, during recess/lunch or immediately after school.

**EPIC is NOT RESPONSIBLE for lost or stolen personal electronic devices! You bring them at your own risk.**

Students who violate this policy will receive the following consequences:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense- Verbal warning from teacher/administrator and documented.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense- Phone confiscated, student must pick it up from the office, parent contacted, documented.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense- Phone confiscated, parent must pick it up from the office, student detention, documented.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Offense- Phone confiscated, parent must pick it up from the office, full day in school detention, documented.

**Bicycles, Scooters, Roller Skates (Blades), Skateboards:** Students may ride their bicycle or scooter to school and park it in a designated space on the school campus. Please note that the school will not accept responsibility for loss or damage to the bicycle/scooter. Students should not use roller skates or blades, or skateboards (or rip sticks) on the school grounds at any time. This includes shoes that have wheels built into them. Student must walk their bicycle/scooter on and around the school campus. Additionally, students are required to wear helmets as stated by California law when riding a bicycle, and obey all laws relating to bicycle/scooter use to ensure safety. Any student that wishes to bike, ride, or walk to school must have written parental consent on file in the office prior to doing so.

**Tobacco-Free Zone** EPIC believes that the use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs adversely affects a student's ability to achieve academic success, is physically and emotionally harmful and has serious social and legal consequences. Therefore, all school facilities are tobacco, alcohol and drug free sites. The use of any tobacco, alcohol or drug paraphernalia is prohibited within any school property, facility, or vehicle. This includes "vaping" and e-cigarettes. This prohibition also applies to individuals attending events on school campuses or representing the GCC at school activities that are held at locations other than GCC property.



## XI. Other:

### Food and Beverages at School

Everyone must work together to keep our school looking clean and attractive. Gum, soda, and candy are not permitted at school. No food or drink is allowed in the classroom unless it is permitted by the teacher. **There is absolutely no sharing of food, candy, or beverages at school with other students; this poses a possible health or safety risk to students.**



### Sale of Items at School Prohibited

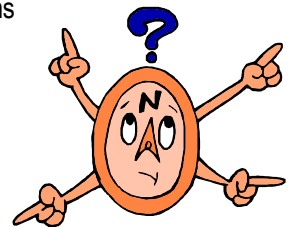
The sale of any item by students, including but not limited to toys, playing cards, candy, soda, etc. to other students or staff is prohibited. Students who sell things at school will receive consequences. EPIC is not responsible for the items, including cash, involved in transactions among students that are against the rules.

**Free/Reduced Meal Program-** Participation in our Free/Reduced Meal program is application based. The Fall application is brought back to school and the GCC will determine eligibility. Parents will be notified of acceptance in this program.

**Celebrations, Class Parties, and Food Guidelines-** Birthdays and other holiday celebrations are an important part of our culture. However, we'd like to encourage families to do most of the celebrating at home. If you choose to have a party where students from school will be invited, invitations need to be passed out before or after school in a discrete manner. Invitations are not allowed to be passed out during class or recess times, this helps ensure that students are being included and not excluded in front of peers. A small celebration with snacks or other treats may be brought to celebrate a student's birthday, but only after lunch and at the teacher's discretion. All snacks or treats must be store bought. Please make arrangements prior to the celebration with the teacher. All parties will be held outside or in the MPR to ensure a clean learning environment. Water and juice are the only drink permitted inside classrooms, other drinks will need to be consumed at lunch or during recess times.

**Lost and Found -** Mark all your personal belongings with your full name. Should you lose anything, first check with your teachers and your friends. Then check the lost and found on the playground or in the office after school. Please look for your belongings on your own time -- not during class time. All items not claimed in a timely fashion from lost and found will be donated to a local charity. An announcement will be made through the newsletter prior to the items being donated. Donations will be made on a trimester basis.

**\*\*\*The School is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. This includes items that should not be brought to school, such as cell phones or other electronic items. Please keep all valuables at home!**



Finders are not keepers. If you find something that is not yours, it is your responsibility to turn it in to your teacher or to the lost and found.

## *Empowering Possibilities International Charter School*

### **Three – Way School Pledge**

***It is important that families and schools work together to help students achieve high academic standards. Through a balanced educational approach we can ensure success. The following are agreed upon roles and responsibilities for teachers, students and parents. Your signature signifies support of these actions.***

#### **Student Pledge ~ I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:**

- Come to school on time ready to learn and work hard.
- Bring necessary materials, completed assignments and homework.
- Know and follow school and class rules.
- Ask for help when I need it.
- Communicate regularly with my parents and teachers about school experiences so that they can help me to be successful in school.
- Limit my TV watching and video games and instead study or read every day after school.
- Respect the school, classmates, staff and families.
- Follow the Social Contracts

#### **Family/Parent Pledge ~ I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:**

- Provide a quiet time and place for homework and monitor TV viewing.
- Read to my child or encourage my child to read every day.
- Communicate with the teacher or the school when I have a concern.
- Ensure that my child attends school dressed appropriately every day, gets adequate sleep, regular medical attention and proper nutrition.
- Regularly monitor my child's progress in school.
- Participate at school in activities such as school decision making, volunteering and/or attending parent-teacher conferences.
- Communicate the importance of education and learning to my child.
- Respect the school, staff, students, and families.

#### **Teacher Pledge ~ I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:**

- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction.
- Endeavor to motivate my students to learn.
- Have high expectations and help every child to develop a love of learning.
- Communicate regularly with families about student progress.
- Provide a warm, safe, and caring learning environment.
- Provide meaningful, daily homework assignments to reinforce and extend learning.
- Participate in professional development opportunities that improve teaching and learning and support the formation of partnerships with families and the community.
- Actively participate in collaborative decision making and consistently work with families and my school colleagues to make schools accessible and welcoming places for families which help each student achieve the school's high academic standards.
- Respect the school, students, staff and families.
- Follow the Social Contracts



## **Gateway Community Charters - Board Governance Policies BP 03-23**

### **Board Policy: STAFF-STUDENT BOUNDARIES POLICY**

Gateway Community Charters has an exception that all adults maintain professional, moral and ethical relationships with students that are conducive to an effective, safe learning environment. The provisions of this policy apply to all adults relative to their conduct with students in Gateway Community Charters (GCC) schools and programs. This policy addresses a range of behaviors that include not only obviously unlawful or improper interactions with students, but also boundary-blurring and grooming behaviors that undermine the professional adult/student relationship and can lead to misconduct or the appearance of impropriety.

#### **Boundaries Defined**

For the purposes of this policy, the term “boundaries” is defined as acceptable professional behavior by staff members while interacting with a student. Trespassing beyond the boundaries of a student-teacher relationship is deemed an abuse of power and a betrayal of public trust.

#### **Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviors**

Some activities may seem innocent from a staff member’s point-of-view but could be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from the perspective of students or parents. There is no single reasonable person standard. The purpose of the following lists of unacceptable and acceptable behaviors is not to restrain innocent, positive relationships between staff and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to or may be perceived as inappropriate, or sexual misconduct, or “grooming.” Grooming is defined as an act or series of acts by a sexual predator to gain physical and/or emotional control by gaining trust (of staff and/or family and a minor) and desensitizing the minor to various forms of touching and other intimate interaction.

Staff members must understand their own responsibilities for ensuring that they do not cross the boundaries as written in this policy. Violations could subject the teacher or staff member to discipline up to and including termination. Disagreeing with the wording or intent of these established boundaries will be considered irrelevant for any required disciplinary purposes. Thus, it is critical that all employees study this policy thoroughly and apply its spirit and intent in their daily activities.

#### **Unacceptable Behaviors**

These lists (and any subsequent lists) are not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather, illustrative of the types of behavior intended to be addressed by this policy.

1. Giving gifts of a personal and intimate nature (including photographs) to a student; or items such as money, food, outings, electronics, etc. without the written pre-approval of the Principal or School Leader. It is recommended that any such gifts be filtered through the Superintendent/CEO or designee along with the rationale therefore.
2. Kissing of ANY kind
3. Massage [Note: Prohibited in athletics unless provided by massage therapist or other certified professional in an open public location. Coaches may not perform massage or rub-down. Permitted in special education only as instructed under an IEP or 504 Plan.]
4. Full frontal or rear hugs and lengthy embraces
5. Sitting students on one’s lap (grades 3 and above)

6. Touching buttocks, thighs, chest or genital area
7. Wrestling with students or other staff member except in the context of a formal wrestling program
8. Tickling or piggyback rides
9. Any form of sexual contact
10. Any type of unnecessary physical contact with a student in a private situation
11. Intentionally being alone with a student away from school
12. Furnishing alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs - or failing to report knowledge of such
13. "Dating" or "going out with" a student
14. Remarks about physical attributes or physiological development of anyone. This includes comments such as "Looking fine!" or "Check out that [body part]."
15. Taking or requesting photographs or videos of students for personal use or posting online
16. Either partially or fully undressing in front of a student or asking a student to undress, with the intent to view/expose private body parts
17. Leaving campus alone with a student for lunch
18. Sharing a bed, mat, or sleeping bag with a student
19. Making, or participating in, sexually inappropriate comments
20. Sexual jokes, or jokes/comments with sexual overtones or double-entendres
21. Seeking emotional involvement (which can include intimate attachment) with a student beyond the normative care and concern required of an educator.
22. Listening to or telling stories that are sexually oriented
23. Discussing your personal troubles or intimate issues with a student
24. Becoming too involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior
25. Giving students a ride to/from school or school activities without the express, advance written permission of the Superintendent/CEO or designee and the student's parent or legal guardian
26. Being alone in a room with a student at school with the door closed and/or windows blocked from view
27. Allowing students at your home and/or in rooms within your home without signed parental permission for a pre-planned and pre-communicated educational activity which must include another educator, parent, or designated school volunteer
28. Staff mirroring the immature behavior of minors
29. Sending emails, text messages, social media responses, making phone calls, or sending notes or letters to students if the content is not about school activities. Communication via private social media accounts is not acceptable.

**This policy does not prevent:** 1) touching a student for the purpose of guiding them along a physical path; 2) helping them up after a fall; or 3) engaging in a rescue or the application of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) or other emergency first-aid. Nor does it prohibit the use of reasonable force and touching in self-defense or in the defense of another. Restraining a child who is trying to engage in violent or inappropriate behavior is also allowed. Only such force as necessary to

defend one's self, another person, or the child or to protect property is legally permitted. Excessive force is prohibited.

#### Acceptable Behaviors

1. Pats on the shoulder or back
2. Handshakes
3. "High-fives" and hand slapping
4. Touching face to check temperature, wipe away a tear, remove hair from face, or other similar types of contact
5. Placing TK through second grade students on one's lap for purposes of comforting the child for a short duration only
6. Holding hands while walking with small children or children with significant disabilities
7. Assisting with toileting of small or disabled children in view of another staff member
8. Touch required under an IEP or 504 Plan
9. Reasonable restraint of a violent person to protect self, others, or property
10. Obtaining formal written pre-approval from Superintendent/CEO or designee to take students off school property for activities such as field trips or competitions, including parent's written permission and waiver form for any sponsored after-school activity whether on or off-campus
11. Emails, text-messages, phone conversations, and other communications to and with students, if permitted, must be professional and pertain to school activities or classes (communication should be initiated via transparent [non-private] school-based technology and equipment)
12. Keeping the door wide open when alone with a student
13. Keeping reasonable and appropriate space between you and the student
14. Stopping and correcting students if they cross your own personal boundaries, including touching legs, or buttocks, frontal hugs, kissing, or caressing
15. Keeping parents informed when a significant issue develops about a student, such as a change in demeanor or uncharacteristic behavior
16. Keeping after-class discussions with a student professional and brief
17. Immediately asking for advice from senior staff or administration if you find yourself in a difficult situation related to boundaries
18. Involving your direct supervisor in discussion about boundaries situations that have the potential to become more severe (including but not limited to grooming or other red flag behaviors observed in colleagues, written material that is disturbing, or a student's fixation on an adult)
19. Making detailed notes about an incident that in your best judgment could evolve into a more serious situation later
20. Recognizing the responsibility to stop "Unacceptable Behaviors" of students and/or co-workers
21. Asking another staff member to be present, or within close supervisory distance, when you must be alone with a student after regular school hours
22. Prioritizing professional behavior during all moments of student contact
23. Asking yourself if any of your actions, which could be contrary to these provisions, are worth sacrificing your job and career.

**This policy does not prevent:** 1) touching a student for the purpose of guiding them along a physical path; 2) helping them up after a fall; or 3) engaging in a rescue or the application of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) or other emergency first-aid. Nor does it prohibit the use of reasonable force and touching in self-defense or in the defense of another. Restraining a child who is trying to engage in violent or inappropriate behavior is also allowed. Only such force as necessary to defend one's self, another person, or the child or to protect property is legally permitted. Excessive force is prohibited.

### **Boundaries Reporting**

When any staff member, parent, or student becomes aware of a staff member (or volunteer, guest, vendor) having crossed the boundaries specified in this policy, or has a strong suspicion of "grooming behavior," he or she must report the suspicion to the Superintendent/CEO or designee promptly. "Grooming behavior" is an attempt to build an emotional and/or physical connection with a minor to gain their trust for the purpose of sexual abuse. "Suspicion" means something perceived in spite of inconclusive or slight evidence. It is based on facts that would lead a reasonable person to believe that a violation of the boundaries policy occurred. Prompt reporting of "unacceptable behaviors" observed in adult interactions with minors is essential to protect students, staff, any witnesses, and the school as a whole. When observant staff members call attention to a boundary violation(s), the likelihood of harm is greatly reduced.

### **Child Abuse / Sexual Abuse Reporting (Mandatory Reporting)**

If, within your professional capacity or within the scope of your employment, you observe or gain possession of knowledge that a child has been a victim of child abuse or sexual abuse (or you reasonably suspect it), **California Penal Code Section 11166 requires YOU to immediately report this information or suspicion directly to your county child protective agency (CPS) or local police/sheriff.** The report shall be made by phone immediately, and a subsequent written report must be sent within 36 hours of your knowledge or suspicion of the abuse.

You do not need permission to report. No supervisor or administrator can impede or inhibit a report or sanction you for making the report. Your report is confidential, and you are protected from liability as long as you do not discuss the matter with anyone other than law enforcement, CPS and your school's designated responsible administrative person. Failure to meet your reporting obligation can result in a monetary fine and/or jail.

Internal reporting to the Superintendent/CEO or designee occurs after the phone-in report is made to the police/sheriff or CPS.

### **Internal Investigations**

The Superintendent/CEO or designee will promptly communicate with the investigating enforcement agency to determine whether an investigation will be conducted by that agency. The administrator will confirm with law enforcement as to whether the initiation of an internal school investigation would interfere with any criminal investigation. Only law enforcement has the authority to grant clearance to investigate the matter administratively.

Upon receiving information from the mandated reporter, the designated responsible administrator must take immediate action to stop the alleged inappropriate conduct by removing the employee (or volunteer/vendor/guest) from the classroom or worksite when there is a potential risk to student or school safety. The Superintendent/CEO or designee shall consult with legal counsel as appropriate, prior to, during, and after conducting any investigation.

## **Consequences**

Staff members who have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, and where appropriate, will be reported to authorities for potential legal action.

## **DISCIPLINARY PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS**

It is the policy of Gateway Community Charters (GCC) that no teacher or other staff member will use corporal punishment against a student. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, tying, taping, or the use of any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior.

## **STAFF-STUDENT INTERACTIONS**

While the use of appropriate touching is part of daily life and is important for student development, teachers and other staff members must ensure that they do not exceed appropriate behavior. If a child or other staff member specifically requests that he or she not be touched, then that request must be honored without question.

# Gateway Community Charters 2023-24 School Calendar

**JUL '23** 0

M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				



**JAN '24** 16

M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

**AUG '23** 17

M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

Key Calendar Dates	
Aug. 9	First Day of School
May 31	Last Day of School
Non Student Days	
Aug. 7-8	Teacher in Service
Oct. 9	Teacher in Service
Jan. 8	Teacher in Service
Apr. 1	Teacher in Service

**FEB '24** 16

M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	

**SEP '23** 20

M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

Holidays/Recess	
Jul 4	Independence Day
Sep. 4	Labor Day
Oct 9	School Recess
Nov. 10	Veterans Day
Nov.20-24	Thanksgiving Break
Dec.22-Jan.3	Winter Break
Jan.13	MLK Jr. Holiday
Feb.19-23	Presidents' Week
Mar. 25-29	Spring Break
May 27	Memorial Day
Jun 19	Juneteenth

**MAR '24** 16

M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

**OCT '23** 21

M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

**APR '24** 21

M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

**NOV '23** 16

M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

End of Grading Periods	
Trimester 1 - Nov 2	(60 Days)
Trimester 2 - Feb 28	(60 Days)
Trimester 3 - May 31	(60 Days)
Semester 1- Dec 21	(89 Days)
Semester 2- May 31	(91 Days)

**MAY '24** 22

M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

**DEC '23** 15

M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

**JUN '24** 0

M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

\*All Fridays and days marked in yellow are minimum days. Pick up time at 12:30 p.m.

Total Service Days: 180

BOARD ADOPTED: 2/7/2023