

Genesee Community Charter School
at the Rochester Museum & Science Center

Family Handbook 2019-2020



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July, 2019

Dear Families,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Family Association, and staff, we would like to welcome you to the Genesee Community Charter School at the Rochester Museum & Science Center. The Genesee Community Charter School offers a different kind of educational program for our students, one that is less structured and requires children to do a great deal of independent, in-depth project work. We are delighted and honored that you have chosen our school to play a central role in educating your child during these critical elementary years.

We strongly believe that parents must make informed choices about their children's education, and we are pleased that you have decided GCCS will provide the best learning environment and instructional program for your child. We know that this is a decision you have made with great care and reflection about your child's educational strengths and needs.

GCCS believes that children learn best when schools and families work in partnership with each other. An important element of that partnership is ongoing communication. The Family Handbook will inform you of GCCS policies and procedures which contribute to the smooth operation of our school. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to speak with the School Leader, a Board of Trustees member, or your child's classroom teachers.

Once again, thank you for making the decision to share your child with us. We are committed to achieving the highest academic and character standards with our students, and we look forward to working with you to ensure each child's success.

Michele Hannagan

Michele Hannagan
President
Board of Trustees

Shannon Hillman

Shannon Hillman
School Leader

Genesee Community Charter School Mission

The Genesee Community Charter School at the Rochester Museum & Science Center provides a rich educational experience that values intellectual rigor, respect for diversity, and community responsibility. Our local history-based and globally-connected program immerses our diverse population of children in investigation and discovery, extensively using the cultural and natural resources of our community. We nurture children's natural abilities to be reflective questioners, articulate communicators, critical thinkers, and skilled problem solvers, enabling them to reach exemplary standards.

Our Philosophy

The Genesee Community Charter School provides a rich, active, and sound educational program for children in grades kindergarten through six. We set high expectations for student achievement and provide the necessary supports to enable each and every student to achieve these expectations. Children are active participants in their own learning, tackling complex content and ambitious projects that require the application of high-level skills and collaborative, quality work. GCCS is a school where children's ideas are honored, their questions are valued, and their social and emotional growth are fostered by caring adults.

GCCS recognizes community at all levels: the nurturing community of families, teachers, staff and students in the school; the larger metropolitan area; and our place in the world community. We believe our students can take an active part in investigating and contributing to solutions addressing community issues. We view intellectual growth and character development as mutually dependent and of equal importance. In addition to academic skills, we build a strong sense of social and community responsibility.

EL Education (Formerly Expeditionary Learning)

GCCS is an EL Education School. EL is a comprehensive school design in place in approximately 160 elementary, middle, and high schools around the country. The model emphasizes intellectual growth, high quality student work, and character development through active pedagogy. With its roots in Outward Bound, the EL approach pushes students to develop skills and knowledge that allow them to succeed at ambitious, collaborative real-world projects.

As an EL school, our students spend most of each day embarking on purposeful, rigorous learning expeditions. Learning expeditions are in-depth studies of a single theme or topic, generally lasting twelve weeks, and are the core of the curriculum. Each expedition revolves around curriculum-related projects and performances, which often take students outside school to conduct fieldwork.

Our emphasis on educational achievement, community building, teamwork and service, combined with our curriculum framework and content, create a context for students to acquire the knowledge and character traits they need to succeed in middle and high school. They become connected, caring and contributing members of their community.

Curriculum Framework

At GCCS, social studies, science, mathematics, literacy, and the arts are integrated through the Learning Expedition as we focus on the study of local history. A learning expedition is a focused 12-week investigation of a topic.

Our curriculum is organized around six historical time periods that are explored over a two-year course of study. The six time periods are *Prehistory*, *First Peoples of Americas/Explorers*, *Settler & Colonial Life*, *Village to City*, *City Grows*, and *Today & Tomorrow*. Each year, students at all levels study the same time period at the same time, investigating different aspects of the natural, social, political and economic history of our community. The topics of investigation within each time period increase in complexity and sophistication as children advance through the grade levels. All learning expeditions involve intensive research, reading, writing, scientific exploration and real-world application.

Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC)

Because of our emphasis on science, social studies and our community, the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC) is an ideal partner and site for our school. The resources and personnel of the RMSC, the exhibits and collections, its Planetarium and Nature Center, the RMSC campus and neighborhood cultural institutions, provide an extensive network which supports our demanding and engaging curriculum.

School Organization

GCCS consists of one class at each grade level from kindergarten through grade six. In order to build strong classroom cultures, instructional continuity, and teacher-student relationships, we “loop” with our students. Looping occurs when each teacher remains with his or her class from kindergarten to first grade, second to third grade, and fourth to fifth grade. Students spend one year with the sixth grade teachers. We have a class size of 30-32 students with two teachers and a teaching assistant. This allows for personalized learning that better addresses each student’s developmental needs.

Communication

Ongoing communication between home and school is critical to the success of your child at the Genesee Community Charter School. Because GCCS provides a different kind of educational program, you may have questions about your child’s daily classroom work and his or her progress toward the learning standards. We encourage parents to send e-mail or notes, schedule conferences, phone school staff, and attend school functions in order to fully understand your child’s educational experience and progress.

Backpack Mail

Many communications are sent home with students in their Round Trip (blue) folders. School-wide communications are generally sent home with only the oldest GCCS student in each family. Backpack mail includes a weekly classroom newsletter, a bi-monthly school newsletter, and Family Association event announcements. We are unable to distribute information about community- or church-based lessons or events. Please check your child’s folder daily.

Website – www.GCCSchool.org

The GCCS website contains information about the school’s philosophy and curriculum, breaking news and announcements, the school calendar, and staff bios, Board meeting minutes, and a host of other useful information. Each classroom also has its own page to keep parents up-to-date about expeditions, fieldwork, and student projects.

E-mail

In order to reduce paper usage, many communications are sent from the school, Family Association, or room parents via e-mail. Please note that e-mail addresses and other contact information received through the school are to be used only for official school business, and are not intended for families to use for any type of solicitations or broadcasts.

Facebook

Each classroom has a Facebook page intended to celebrate that group of students and share information. When posting, please adhere to the following:

Group Membership:

- Parents, legal guardians, teachers and other adults who have completed Chaperone Training
- Students may not be members even if they meet the Facebook age requirement of 13
- Persons leaving school before graduation may remain members of a group

Content:

- Design Principles are always in effect
- Posts are welcome that describe
 - ✓ any school or Family Association activities
 - ✓ any outside school activities that are planned to be inclusive of all class members
 - ✓ photos of school events only
 - ✓ please note that this is not a place for discussion of school policies

Facebook pages are monitored by school personnel. Parent administrators verify membership (see above) before approving a request to join a group, monitor posts, and make decisions to edit when necessary. All members are empowered as monitors – members may email the parent or staff administrators directly from the Facebook page to address any concerns they may have with written or visual content. Any request to remove information will be honored.

Facebook pages will continue after graduation as a place for alumni to connect, but it will no longer be monitored by the school or parent administrators. GCCS alumni are free to become members of their class’s page after graduation.

Communicating Concerns

Parent involvement is a very special element of our culture at GCCS, and we strive to make our relationships with parents as productive and positive as possible. However, there are times when parents have a school-related academic, behavioral, or organizational concern. We welcome parent input, and while we can’t guarantee that each suggestion will be adopted, or that every issue will be resolved in the manner that you wish, we can guarantee that parents will be heard, and that feedback will be thoughtfully considered.

There are many venues for parents to express concerns or pose questions. A yearly parent family culture and climate survey is administered to families mid-year. Teachers send home weekly newsletters which contain their contact information. The School Leader is available to communicate with parents via phone, e-mail, or in person. Every issue of *Currents* contains contact information for classroom parent volunteer coordinators, Board of Trustees representatives, and Family Association Officers.

In communicating concerns, we expect that parents honor the same guiding principles we have developed for our staff:

- Go directly to the source – if you have a classroom-level concern, please speak directly with your child’s teachers. If you have a school-wide concern, please contact the School Leader. The School Leader will also field all concerns and questions regarding our facilities. If your concern related to the Family Association, please contact the appropriate officers or committee chairs.
- Speak only for yourself – concerns are best understood when communicated directly by the person experiencing the issue – not by others attempting to represent one another.
- Involve as few people as necessary to resolve an issue – generally, an issue can be solved with a simple message or conversation between two parties.

Many miscommunications, misunderstandings, and false assumptions can be avoided by observing these guidelines. We create a settled and trusting atmosphere when we deal with issues personally and directly.

Confidentiality

Please note that when issues do arise, out of respect for the confidentiality of all our staff, students, and families, we will not discuss personnel issues with parents, nor will we discuss students with families other than their own. We ask that our many parent volunteers also respect children’s confidentiality and refrain from discussing what they see and hear in the classroom.

Complaints

The GCCS Board of Trustees will consider complaints against the school. If parents have complaints, they should be brought to the attention of the School Leader. If not satisfactorily resolved, complaints should be submitted to the Board of Trustees in writing at least five days prior to the next Board meeting. The Board will review the issue and respond in writing with its findings and determination.

Family Involvement

GCCS Family Association

The Family Association is an organization of student families and staff that provides additional support for the school community. The Family Association participates in fund raising activities, special events, community service, and additional tasks that benefit the students of Genesee Community Charter School and its families. The organization is led cooperatively by elected representatives. Family Association meetings and events are announced in *Currents*.

Family Association Social Events & Programs

The GCCS Family Association plans several events each year to involve parents in the life of the school, e.g. the family potluck social, family game night, the skating party, the dance party, and the year-end picnic. Please note that these are family events, and students must be accompanied by at least one family adult. The use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs is not permitted at any school-sponsored or Family Association-sponsored family event.

The Family Association also plans informational and social programs for parents one or more times per year. The Family Association Auction, held in late fall, is the organization's major fundraiser. Babysitting is typically provided for students and siblings for parents-only events.

We also invite parents to our year-end Passage Ceremony, which celebrates the conclusion of our year as a school community. Announcements are sent home during the course of the school year to inform you about special events.

Community Circle

Each Wednesday, our school gathers together for song, performances, poetry, and reflection. This event takes place from 12:20-12:50 p.m. in the Eisenhart Auditorium. Parents are invited to join us and take part in this special weekly tradition.

Classroom Visitations

Family members are encouraged to participate in the daily life of their children's classrooms. We welcome family members to work with individuals or small groups, assist with lunch or class projects, and read or make presentations to the class. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule a time to visit. However, if you plan to be a regular classroom volunteer, you will need to attend our chaperone training every three years.

Family Service Opportunities & Volunteer Background Checks

We believe that families are an integral part of student learning. We have structured our program to provide the opportunity for families to participate in the daily life of our school community. All families are asked to read, sign, and participate in our Family Service Commitment of 20 volunteer hours per school year. Contact the school to speak with the classroom parent volunteer coordinators about how you can help.

All overnight chaperones and regular classroom volunteers (those who volunteer in classrooms more than five days per year) are required to undergo background checks and attend volunteer/chaperone training every three years. This policy and our volunteer guidelines are sent home each year as part of the re-enrollment packet and are part of the appendix in this manual.

Additional School Policies

Exhibitions of Student Learning

Each three-month learning expedition culminates with an exhibition of student learning. Attendance at Exhibition Night, three times per year, is mandatory for every GCCS student. Exhibitions may take the form of book talks, meet-the-author night, plays and performances, student-led tours, demonstrations, or displays. Exhibitions are a team effort in every class, and teachers evaluate student learning through students' performance on Exhibition Night. Every student is required to attend. Dates for exhibitions are announced well in advance. Please speak with your child's teachers and/or the Family Association Chairs if you will need transportation for your child.

Homework

It is our belief that homework should be meaningful and connected to the school day experience. Homework may reinforce skills or content previously taught or may help students prepare for an upcoming lesson. To that end, teachers may send home assignments such as math or handwriting practice, playing a math game, pre-reading or re-reading a text, revising and completing a writing assignment, or conducting a science experiment. Additionally, families are expected to read daily with their children and practice math fact fluency. Skill practice programs such as i-Ready may also be assigned as home learning for students. Please alert teachers if your family does not have internet or computer access at home.

Holidays & Birthdays

We understand that children and families observe a variety of holidays and family celebrations. To be sensitive to all families and to devote more time to our learning expeditions, we do not have holiday-themed parties in our classrooms or celebrate one-day commemorative events. Families wishing to observe birthdays may do so during lunch, in cooperation with classroom teachers. Please contact your child's teacher to discuss arrangements. We respectfully request that only store-bought snack items be brought in for student birthdays. Also, please check with teachers regarding classroom food allergies. Please use e-mail or the postal service to deliver invitations to birthday parties. This information is available in our School-Wide Directory that is sent out annually.

Dress Code

Students attending GCCS do not wear uniforms, but we expect that students will be dressed responsibly and appropriately. This includes weather-appropriate clothing. We expect children to refrain from wearing tank tops, low-cut tops or tops with spaghetti straps, cut-off shorts, and flip-flops. Students must also refrain from wearing clothing that shows midriffs, bra straps or underwear. We expect that t-shirts have no offensive language or graphics on them. Hats and sweatbands are also not permitted in classrooms. If your child chooses to wear something that is distracting to the classroom learning environment, staff may ask your child to change or remove the item and keep it in their cubby.

Backpacks and Umbrellas

We respectfully request that parents NOT purchase a backpack with wheels. We have found that these backpacks pose several problems. They often don't fit in cubbies and they cause safety concerns as children drag them through hallways, on staircases, on busses, and outdoors. Please

provide your child with a modestly-sized over-the-shoulders backpack for carting schoolwork and communications to and from school. Similarly, please do not allow your child to bring umbrellas into school as they can be a danger to other children. Instead provide water-proof rain jackets with hoods for your children.

Toys

Please help your child remember that toys, trading cards, electronic games, and similar devices need to be left at home. Each classroom is equipped with age-appropriate games and materials for learning. Toys and electronics from home are not permitted in school.

Caring Community Plan & Discipline Policy

The Genesee Community Charter School focuses on developing a caring, supportive school community in which students participate fully in solving problems, including problems of behavior. We believe that students' growth toward kindness, respect and critical problem solving depends on becoming active members of a caring community. We further believe that it is the experience with decision-making and problem solving that enables children to handle conflicts that arise. Each year, students and parents sign a Caring Community Commitment Agreement to ensure the understanding of the expectations and policies regarding social emotional learning and discipline at GCCS.

Social Emotional Learning Approach: Responsive Classroom

At Genesee Community Charter School, staff members use the *Responsive Classroom* approach to classroom management and actively incorporate the EL Design Principles and GCCS Character Traits as the core values into the social curriculum (see appendix). Restorative practices also go hand-in-hand with the *Responsive Classroom* approach by focusing on relationship building and repair rather than punishment and blame. GCCS uses skills and strategies such as Morning Meeting, clear and responsive language, interactive modeling, and consistent expectations to support social and emotional learning.

Problem-Solving Skills and Discipline Procedures

Our school believes in helping children develop the skills to solve problems and work collaboratively. When necessary, there are procedures in place to address misbehavior, resolve conflicts, and provide social skills training. GCCS believes the whole child can best be supported with parental involvement. When situations occur, GCCS often follow these behavior interventions to support students on a case-by-case basis (parents are involved and/or notified with most of these interventions):

- time and space away from the group within the classroom
- time and space from the classroom by visiting a buddy classroom
- social problem-solving conferences between student and teacher or between peers
- logical consequences that reflect a way to repair the "broken" relationship
- conferences between student, teacher, and parent (these may include the School Leader, as needed)
- develop a Behavior Intervention Plan
- social skills training with the school Social Worker (with parental consent)

- suspension
- expulsion

In all disciplinary matters, students and parents will be made aware of the concern and students always have an opportunity to share their perspective of the facts and circumstances leading to the potential disciplinary actions. In cases involving the health and safety of oneself or others, or continuous misbehavior which disrupts the educational program, a more serious disciplinary action may be taken after drawing conclusions based on the evidence from the student and other involved parties. Parents will be notified in writing in all cases of suspension. For a complete description of the school's discipline policy and procedures, please contact the School Leader.

Zero-Tolerance Policy

GCCS maintains a zero-tolerance policy regarding aggressive physical contact between children. Although GCCS understands that children are learning coping strategies to handle anger and frustration as well as appropriate ways to play, the School takes every act of physical aggression seriously. Hitting, scratching, pushing, kicking, and other physically harmful behaviors are strictly forbidden and are cause for immediate school leadership involvement and potentially suspension.

Teasing, name-calling, and bullying are also grounds for removal from school or suspension at the School Leader's discretion. Our school houses a DASA (Dignity for All Students Act) Coordinator who is involved in bullying cases to investigate the situation. We understand that occasional incidents may occur, but we maintain zero tolerance for patterns of targeted misuse of power and/or extreme cases.

Every discipline situation offers opportunity for growth. Upon an incident of physical contact or bullying, students will spend time reflecting on the "broken" relationship and consider ways to repair the situation. Suspension may occur in school or outside of school depending on the severity and the student's readiness for rectifying the situation. Upon suspension, or when children are sent home early for disciplinary reasons, it is expected that parents will pick their child up as soon as possible. Please provide the school with contact information so that you, or your designee, may be reached at all times.

Suspension

Suspensions may be short term (five or fewer days) or long term (more than five days). Disciplinary infractions leading to short term suspension include: aggressive physical contact, assault on a student or staff member, teasing, name-calling, bullying, insubordination, threat of force, theft, abuse of school property or property not belonging to the student, obscene or abusive language or gestures, sexual harassment, possession of tobacco or alcohol, continuous disruption of the educational process, or any other act which school officials reasonably conclude warrants a short term suspension. These acts may also result in long-term suspension, depending upon the record of the student. Other infractions leading to long-term suspension include vandalism, possession of a weapon or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to a student at school, arson, assault on a student or staff member, continuous disruption of the educational process, or any other act which school officials reasonably conclude warrants a long-term suspension.

Immediately upon suspension, the school will take steps to provide alternate instruction. In the case of a one-day suspension, the student will be provided time with the teacher in school the following day to make up missed assignments and lessons. In the case of a suspension lasting two or more days, a certified teacher will arrange to come to the student's home or a location mutually agreed upon by the teacher and the parent to provide tutoring related to missed assignments or lessons.

Discipline Involving Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other students, and may be disciplined for the same behavioral offenses. For those students whose IEP includes specific disciplinary guidelines, they will be disciplined according to those guidelines. For those students whose IEP does not include specific disciplinary guidelines, they will be disciplined in accordance with school policy relating to each infraction.

Disciplinary Hearings & Expulsion

Children who receive a long-term suspension or who receive three or more suspensions within a school year are subject to a disciplinary hearing by the Discipline Committee of the Board of Trustees. At the hearing, parents have the right to be represented by counsel, and have the right to present evidence and to cross-examine witnesses.

Hearings are conducted in two parts. During the first part, the committee determines if the student is guilty of the charge. If the Committee does find the student guilty, during the second part the Committee reviews the student's previous record and determines the recommended consequences for his or her actions, up to and including expulsion. Consequences are recommended to the Board of Trustees, which then acts upon the Committee's recommendation.

Reporting Student Progress

As an active participant in your child's education, you want to know how your child is learning and growing both academically and socially. Many tools are used to document and share student academic and social performance, including, but not limited to, work samples, checklists, videotapes, standardized test data, and anecdotal records. Our teachers assess student progress in a variety of ways and are able to provide you with ongoing, comprehensive information.

Daily Communication

School-home dialogue is facilitated by notes home from teachers and provides parents with a snapshot of their child's activities at school. A Round Trip (blue) Folder is carried by the student and will include things such as newsletters, menus, student work, or announcements from the class or school. Families may also contact teachers through e-mail and telephone (messages will be taken during times of instruction, unless it is an emergency).

Conferences

Three formal parent-teacher-student conference days are held during the year, and provide teachers and families an opportunity to share information or concerns about their child's progress. See the school calendar for scheduled conference dates. The teacher or the parent may request additional conferences at any time. In addition, a student-led conference is held in

February. Student attendance at a student-led conference is mandatory.

Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Section 504 Accommodation Plans

IEPs and Section 504 Accommodation Plans are written documents developed for public school children who are eligible for additional services to support academic and social development. Legal guardians have the right to request meetings at any time concerning their child's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan. Requests should be made through the Special Education Coordinator.

Students with special needs should have an existing IEP, created by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) from their home district. GCCS teachers follow the IEP and additional services are provided by the child's home district during school hours. Changes to IEPs can only be made by the CSE of the home district.

A Section 504 Accommodation Plan is a school-based plan created with a multi-disciplinary team at GCCS. Students are eligible for this plan if they have a disability that is defined by federal law as "an individual with any a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment" [34 C.F.R. §104.3(j)(1)]. With the classroom teachers, parents, and the Special Education Coordinator, a plan is developed to accommodate needs and help the child be successful in the classroom. The plan is reviewed annually.

Formal Assessments

Students in Grades 3-6 participate in the New York State English Language Arts and Math exams. In addition, students in Grade 4 take the New York State Science test. Results will be shared with families at conferences.

Students in Grades K-6 take the i-Ready standardized assessment two to three times per year to monitor their progress. This assessment provides information about ongoing progress in reading and math, and helps teachers pinpoint students' strengths and needs. If teachers identify a particular skill a child needs based on these assessments, teachers will notify families in writing and in conferences to determine a targeted 6-12 week intervention plan to support student learning. Families are expected to support this plan both at home and at school to help students accelerate their learning.

Student Records

GCCS complies with the Family Education Rights Act of 1974 (FERPA) in keeping student education records. Access to student education records is restricted to GCCS employees, parents, and employees contracted by GCCS or the district of residence to provide services to the student. Parents may review their child's education records and they may seek amendment of records they believe to be inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's privacy rights. Parents may also consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records. Parents may have access to their child's school records within 24 hours upon written request to the School Leader. Student records may be viewed in the main office. If an amendment of the student's records is desired, parents may submit a written request to the School Leader. Parents may file a complaint with the United States Department of Education concerning alleged failures by GCCS to comply with FERPA.

Field Studies

Fieldwork is an integral part of the educational program at GCCS. Field studies are carefully structured to address the learning goals of the expedition, and afford students rich opportunities to “learn on location.” Students interview experts, examine artifacts, conduct research, make observations, and gather data through note-taking, sketching, and photography. Fieldwork deepens and extends students’ understanding of the content and nurtures their skills as life-long learners. In line with our Outward Bound approach, during fieldwork students are challenged to work to the limits of their stamina and academic ability while collaborating with one another. Quality work is the expectation during field study activities, just as it is during in-school activities.

Most fieldwork takes place at local museums, parks, businesses, and historic sites, and lasts from one to five hours. At times, overnight field studies to locations outside Rochester are planned when distant resources are central to our students’ understanding of the content of an expedition.

Student “retreats” occur in the older grades and are designed to focus on social-emotional growth and group dynamics. School staff and other qualified individuals, rather than parents, serve as chaperones on retreats.

Safety and learning are our top priorities on fieldwork. If a student’s behavior raises safety concerns or is potentially disruptive to the class’s learning, a one-on-one chaperone may be required or the student may be placed in another classroom for the duration of the field study.

Permission Slips

As part of the enrollment process, a permission slip covering all field studies and excursions for the school year is on file. Classroom teachers will communicate dates and destinations of these excursions through classroom newsletters or special announcements. Field studies that last beyond the school day will require trip-specific permission slips.

Medication & Overnight Fieldwork

School personnel, at the direction of the school nurse, will administer medication when the class is on overnight fieldwork. All medications and accompanying paperwork must be submitted to the school nurse at least 72 hours in advance. This time allows school staff to prepare instructions, records, and materials for field study personnel. In addition, an RN from BOCES must come to meet with each child individually to assess self-directedness. Children whose parents do not comply with this timeline will not be permitted to attend the fieldwork.

The only exceptions will be last-minute prescriptions for newly-diagnosed conditions, for example antibiotics prescribed for bronchitis. In this case, parents should notify the school immediately upon receiving the prescription, and should be sure that a copy of the doctor’s orders are given to the school along with the medication as far in advance as possible.

Please remember that ALL medications – including over-the-counter pain relief, cough drops, topical ointments, and herbal remedies – must include doctor’s orders and be submitted to the school in advance.

If you have a child in fourth, fifth, or sixth grade, it is very likely he or she will have an overnight field study as early as September. Please make arrangements now to secure the documentation needed for your child to receive medication while on the trip.

Chaperone Policy

Critical to the success of field studies are the adults entrusted with the care and supervision of our students. For most field studies, a request is announced to solicit parent volunteers to chaperone. Parent involvement is an important part of our school's culture, and chaperoning on fieldwork is a great way to participate in your child's education.

Chaperones perform a wide range of functions. They ensure children's safety, monitor behavior, carry out teachers' instructions, and support individuals and groups in gathering information. Chaperones help interpret exhibits and presentations, and they sometimes provide instruction to small groups of students. On overnight fieldwork, chaperones are also responsible for assisting with meals and supervising children in hotels, tents, or cabins. The use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs is not permitted on day or overnight fieldwork.

GCCS takes seriously the responsibility to provide safe and productive learning experiences for students. On fieldwork, doing so requires that we make chaperone decisions that we feel are in the best interests of the class.

The following principles guide our chaperone selection process:

- The school limits the number of chaperones to suit the nature and destination of the fieldwork. Parents who are not selected as chaperones are not permitted to join the class on their own or to visit their children during the course of the field study,
- Chaperones are selected for each field study with a number of factors in mind, including individual student needs, gender balance, and previous chaperone experience.
- Chaperone selections are made based on what is best for the class, not what is best or fairest for adults.

Requirements for chaperones for day fieldwork include:

- Ability to commit to the field study for its entire duration free of other responsibilities, e.g. care of siblings, cell phone calls, or other appointments
- Ability to safely and responsibly care for a small group of students
- Ability to follow teacher directions and comply with teacher expectations for chaperones
- Ability to maintain confidentiality regarding students and other parents
- Attendance at Volunteer/Chaperone training every three years

In addition to those listed above, requirements for overnight fieldwork chaperones include:

- Previous experience chaperoning day fieldwork and/or volunteering with students in class
- Attendance at a chaperone meeting prior to the field study
- Ability to safely and responsibly care for a small group of students overnight
- Physical and mental stamina to complete the demands of the field study
- Ability to appropriately support students through rigorous physical and academic tasks
- Knowledge of the learning goals of the expedition and field study

Chaperones for day fieldwork are solicited by the classroom teachers and/or the classroom parent

volunteer coordinators via backpack mail or phone call. Parents wishing to chaperone may communicate their desire to attend up to 24 hours in advance of the field study. Every attempt is made to accommodate all parents wishing to attend. However, in some instances limits are placed on the number of chaperones if the means of transportation, destination, or nature of the fieldwork are best suited to fewer adults.

Chaperones for overnight fieldwork are solicited by the classroom teachers via backpack mail at least one month prior to the field study. The fieldwork announcement specifies the number of chaperones needed for the field study. Parents who meet the qualifications listed above are welcome to apply to be chaperones. Classroom teachers, the Curriculum Specialist, and the School Leader review applications and weigh the many factors that are unique to individual classes and fieldwork destinations. They select chaperones for the field study, with every effort made to include a combination of new overnight chaperones and veteran overnight chaperones. Parents are encouraged NOT to make plans to attend overnight fieldwork until they receive notification that they will be chaperoning. Parents wishing to chaperone will be notified of chaperone selection by classroom teachers via phone call.

Expectations of parent chaperones during fieldwork include:

- Leave siblings under the care of another adult, as siblings are not permitted on fieldwork
- Follow the same dress code as students (see p. 12), and wear clothing that is appropriate for the weather and fieldwork destination
- Ride the bus with the class
- Follow instructions of school personnel regarding schedules, behavior and academic expectations
- Maintain continuous proximity and supervision of the assigned children
- Avoid chatting with teachers and other parents during fieldwork activities
- Refrain from using cell phones
- Refrain from using alcohol, tobacco, or drugs
- Use student management strategies and language consistent with the school's approach
- Inform teachers of student management issues that require intervention
- Refrain from purchasing extra treats beyond what is being provided to the whole class
- Provide a level of support to students as directed by the teachers

Each field study has a carefully designed purpose and set of learning activities. The school strives to prepare chaperones in advance so that they may be most effective in supporting student learning.

Recess Year Round!

We believe strongly that students, just like adults, need a break from their work. Students have an outdoor recess period of approximately 20 minutes at least three days per week. We have recess outside, unless it is raining or there are extreme temperatures. Please provide your child with climate appropriate apparel, including snow pants, boots, gloves, hats, and scarves to be kept at school during the winter months, sunscreen as needed, and sweaters or jackets. Staff also encourage families to provide extra pants, socks, underwear, shirts, and shoes to keep in cubbies in a marked zip top bag for accidents or extra messy days.

Arrival & Dismissal

Arrival

The Genesee Community Charter School day begins at 8:00 a.m. All students remain on their buses or with families outside on the patio area. At 7:50 a.m., teachers greet students and prepare them to enter the building, then escort them to their classrooms.

Walkers

Because we do not offer before-school care, it is important that families make arrangements for the timely arrival of their children. Students should not be left unattended outside the school prior to 7:50 a.m. Assemble on the patio area adjacent to the Eisenhart Auditorium or near the bear statue in the RMSC garden (look for additional information from the school throughout the year for the correct meeting site).

Drop Offs

Students who are driven to school are allowed to enter the building at 7:50 a.m. Please do not drop off children prior to 7:50 a.m. We ask that you refrain from parking or discharging children from cars in front of the school, as buses begin arriving at 7:45 a.m. Instead, please enter from the Goodman Street entrance and drop them off with a staff member at the corner of the parking lot by the Regional Green Infrastructure Showcase, then exit to East Avenue.

Parents may either drop children off or walk into the school with your child and drop him or her off at the classroom door. Please park in one of the three RMSC parking lots. The school doors will open promptly at 7:50 a.m. You do not need to sign your child in unless it is after 8:15 a.m.

As teachers are busy greeting students and preparing for an eventful day, they are not available to converse with you at this time. A basket with a clipboard, paper, and pen is conveniently located just inside each classroom door. If you have a question or message for the teachers, please write a note and leave it in the basket. Teachers will respond via phone, email, or note on the same day.

Bus Students

A majority of our students arrive by bus. It is important that your child's teachers know the bus number, approximate time of pick-up and drop-off, and days (if any) that your child will not be taking the bus. Buses will stop in front of the school and students are met by teachers and then escorted to their classrooms.

Dismissal

The Genesee Community Charter School Day ends at 3:00 p.m., except on Wednesdays, when school is dismissed at 1:00 p.m. We have developed our dismissal procedures to ensure the continuous supervision and safety of your child.

Teachers only release students to friends and family members designated by the student's parent or legal guardian. Please provide a list of people authorized to pick up your child if you have not already done so. We may ask for identification from this person; please inform your designated caregiver that it is for the security of the students that these precautions are taken.

We are unable to provide adequate supervision for children after school hours. If you experience an emergency that prevents you from arriving at dismissal time, please call the school as soon as possible. Please understand that we cannot accommodate late pick-ups on a regular basis.

Walkers

Teachers escort students from their classrooms to the dismissal point. Students who walk home independently are released at that time. Crossing guards may not be available along the route your child walks home. Please review safety procedures with your child.

Pick Ups

Teachers escort students out of the building. If you are picking up a student by car, please do not park in front of the school. You may wish to park in the adjacent lot and wait for your child outside in the designated pick up area (such as the Eisenhart patio or near the bear statue in the RMSC garden). Parents are requested not to pick children up inside the school or to pull children out of line near the school entrance.

Bus Students

Teachers escort students out of the building to the busses. During inclement days, students wait inside until the busses arrive.

Wednesday Dismissal

Because the RMSC Preschool begins at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, busses pick up students behind the Strasenburgh Planetarium (see map in Appendix). If you are attending Community Circle or picking up a student by car, please do not park in front of the school. Please park in one of the RMSC lots. Children will be released to you in the designated pick up area.

Community Circle occurs each Wednesday from 12:20-12:50 p.m. in the Eisenhart Auditorium. Parents are invited to join us for this weekly event. At the conclusion of Community Circle, teachers line up their students and exit through the Eisenhart Lobby and school building. Parents use the side exit of the Eisenhart Auditorium and meet their children in the designated pick up area. For your child's safety, and our teachers' sanity, we sincerely request that you allow your child to be dismissed with his or her class, rather than keeping your child with you at the conclusion of Community Circle or following the class out through the Eisenhart Lobby.

Late Arrival & Early Dismissal

Please escort late children into school and sign them in at the office. Children are considered tardy if they arrive after 8:15 a.m.

If your child needs to be released from school early, please send a note with your child or call the school office indicating what time he or she needs to leave. You will need to fill out the early dismissal log in the school office. Your child will then be sent to meet you in the office. Please arrange for early dismissals to occur before 2:45 p.m. so as to avoid the hectic time at the end of the day.

After School Caregivers

Teachers take great care to dismiss children to the proper bus or adult caregiver. We are mindful of daily changes in families' after-school arrangements, and ask your cooperation in keeping us informed of those changes. Please inform teachers and/or the office in writing on each day that your child will deviate from his or her usual routine.

Transportation

Please be sure that our office has the most recent version of your child’s transportation plan. Families residing in suburban districts should verify their transportation arrangements with their districts.

Attendance

We have a lot to offer our students at GCCS, and want every child to benefit from continuous, prompt attendance at school.

Excused & Unexcused Absences

Some absences and incidents of tardiness are excused and some are unexcused (see list below). The number of absences and incidents of tardiness will be noted on progress reports.

Please call the school each day that a child will be absent, tardy, or picked up early. Please note that in order to record absences as “excused,” we must also receive a written note upon the child’s return to school. Absences may be deemed “excused” only if the reason falls into the category of excused absences listed below.

Excused	Unexcused
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal illness• Death in the family• Impassable roads due to inclement weather• Religious observance• Quarantine• Required court appearances• Attendance at health clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversleeping• Missed bus• Family vacation• Hunting• Babysitting• Hair cut• Shopping• Any other reason which does not fall into the categories listed under “excused”

Written Excuses

Absence, tardiness, and early departure is recorded as “excused” only if the parent submits a written excuse outlining the specific reason for the student’s absence, and if the reason falls into the category of excused absences listed above. Students who observe additional religious or cultural holidays will need to bring in a written excuse to receive a legal absence.

Tardiness

Students who arrive later than 8:15 a.m. are designated tardy. Please escort tardy students to the office and sign them in.

Withdrawal from School Roster

In the event that you decide to withdraw your child in order to enroll him or her in another school, we request that you notify us immediately. After an absence of three days without notification or explanation, we will deem your child to have withdrawn from GCCS. The School Leader will send an official letter, to be hand-delivered to the parent/guardian, explaining that three consecutive absences is considered a withdrawal of a student from GCCS. The

parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to respond. If there is no response within the designated period of time, we will notify your district of residence of your child's withdrawal so that his or her educational program can be continued without delay. The open slot on our roster will be filled with the next child on our waiting list.

Moving Within and Out-of-District

In the event that a child's residence changes mid-year or during the summer, please be aware that the school needs to be notified immediately. GCCS requires proof of the new address with a legal guardian's name included on the document as well as when possession was taken of the new home. Transportation will also need to be notified of this change as soon as possible. If the residence is in a different district, you need to immediately register with the new district for transfer of bussing, tuition, and special education services.

Intervention

It is important to maintain ongoing communication with your child's teachers about health or family situations that may negatively affect your child's consistent attendance in school. When absences occur with some regularity or frequency, intervention may be necessary to improve attendance. Intervention may take the form of a phone call, parent conference, or official letter. In cases where a student is absent more than 20 days per school year, a referral may be Child Protective Services for an investigation of educational neglect.

Health

School Nurse

We receive nursing services through the Rochester City School District from BOCES. We anticipate having a full-time school health aide who is supervised by a nurse from BOCES for the upcoming school year. The nurse evaluates children who become ill during the day and assists children who receive medication in school but are not yet self-directed.

When to Keep Your Child Home

If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, please keep your child home:

- A fever of 101 or higher
- Vomiting
- Loose bowel movements
- Pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Runny nose with thick yellow or green discharge
- Open or draining sores
- Severe coughing
- Rash or hives
- Ringworm or other contagious conditions
- Pink eye

Early Dismissal Due to Illness

The determination to send a child home is made by the school nurse or, in her absence, the School Leader or Coordinator of School Operations, using the "Keep Home" criteria. Parents or caregivers will be notified by telephone of the nature of the illness and will be asked to pick the child up. Please provide the school with emergency contact information so that you, or your designee, may be reached at all times. We expect that ill children will be picked up within one hour of notification.

If your child becomes injured at school, you will be contacted and we will administer emergency first aid and complete an accident report for you to share with your child's physician. In the event

of serious injury requiring immediate emergency care, 911 will be called. The School Leader or other staff person will accompany the child to the hospital in the event the parent or caregiver cannot be reached.

Medication

All medications, prescription and over-the-counter, should be clearly labeled with the student's name and presented with written directions for administration from a physician consistent with the labeled directions. We also require written permission from the parent or guardian to administer the medication in school. Students requiring over-the-counter medication for temporary conditions (colds, allergies, etc.) will also receive it from the school nurse if documentation is provided by the parent. Students may not transport medication via school bus, and may not keep any medication in their personal effects or in classrooms.

A licensed nurse gives medications to all children, unless your child is determined to be self-directed by the nurse. The nurse works with all children to be self-directed. Designated staff in the school setting, following assignment and in conjunction with approval by school nursing personnel, may assist self-directed students with the taking of their own oral, topical, and inhalant medication. School personnel as well as the school administration assure that the staff person receives the training and supervision needed to perform these tasks in a safe and effective manner for each specific child.

Health Records

Students' health records are maintained separately and confidentially from other school records, as required by law. Please be sure that all immunizations are up to date and be prepared to provide documentation of all immunizations.

Allergies

Please alert us to any allergies your child may have and provide medication (if necessary) to prevent a serious allergic reaction. This includes allergies to plants, animals, foods, medicines, and other substances.

Absences & Excuse Notes

If your child has missed school due to illness or other circumstances, please send in a written note that explains the nature of the illness or absence and the days he or she missed school. A physician's note is required for absences of more than three days. Please refer to the school's attendance policy above for further information.

Safety

GCCS Emergency Response Plan

The Genesee Community Charter School's Emergency Response Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the GCCS Board of Trustees, the School Leader named a School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the School Emergency Response Plan. There are three aspects of the GCCS Emergency Response Plan: Risk reduction; response; and recovery. A copy of the GCCS Emergency

Response Plan summary is available for review in the school office and information is provided on our school website <https://www.gccschool.org/about/school-safety/>.

Mandated Child Abuse Reporting

As state mandated child abuse or neglect reporters, teachers and the School Leader must initiate a report to be forwarded to New York State and Monroe County Department of Child Protective Services if they suspect the maltreatment or neglect of a student. All reports are confidential and will be maintained in confidential and secured files apart from the student's school records.

Internet Use Policy & Internet Safety

Student use of the Internet is an important component of classroom research and learning. Students and their families must sign the school's Internet use agreement before being permitted to use Internet related tools. Teachers supervise student Internet use and students abide by Internet safety protocols.

Failure to abide by the rules will result in the suspension of Internet privileges for the student. See the Appendix for a copy of the school's Internet Use Policy.

School Visitor Policy

Families and visitors are welcome at GCCS. We request that GCCS parents and visitors use the school entrance labeled with the school's name. After ringing the bell, visitors may be asked to identify themselves and state the purpose of their visit. Upon entering the building, all parents and visitors must first report to the school office and sign the visitor's log book. These precautions are necessary for the safety of our students and staff.

Parents are welcome to volunteer or observe in classrooms. Please make arrangements with the classroom teachers prior to the date on which you would like to visit.

Meals & Snacks

USDA breakfast and lunch program

Students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch are enrolled in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's school meal program. We encourage all families to apply and take advantage of this program. Students who do not qualify for the USDA program may purchase meals at school. Menus are made available at least one week prior to allow families to plan their budgets and menus. Please advise the main office of any special diet needs or food allergies.

Our Lunch Time Philosophy

As part of our caring community commitment, we serve a "family style" lunch in the classrooms. All students participate in the set up, serving, and clean up of the meal. Students who bring lunch from home are expected to participate, too. Teachers eat with the students, modeling appropriate manners and conversation. We want lunch to be an enjoyable, community-building time that provides an opportunity for sharing in small groups.

Snacks and Food from Home

All classes enjoy a snack break mid-morning if a supply of donations is available. Classroom

teachers will request a voluntary contribution of graham crackers, animal crackers, or other wholesome snacks be brought in by students to be shared with the class. There are times when families may wish to share special foods from home with the class. This may be done during lunch after consulting with the classroom teachers. Please see our policy on birthdays and holidays regarding food.

School Closings

Snow/Cold/Wind Days

In the event the school needs to be closed due to a weather-related emergency or other event, announcements will be made on WROC-TV Channel 8 and WHAM radio. If the Rochester City School District calls a snow day, please check WROC Channel 8 for GCCS's status. GCCS will be listed separately from RCSD and other charter schools. Staff members will also work to keep the school website and classroom Facebook pages up-to-date with school closings and delays.

Days School is Closed

The GCCS calendar varies from the City School District calendar. Please see the GCCS school calendar in the Appendix for our holiday and professional development schedule.

GCCS Board of Trustees

As a charter school, GCCS operates independently of the Rochester City School District and reports directly to the New York State Board of Regents through the State Education Department. The GCCS Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the school operates in a fiscally sound manner and maintains fidelity to the philosophy, program, and policies set forth in the school's charter.

The Board of Trustees has seventeen members: three parents elected by the Family Association, two museum representatives appointed by the RMSC President, and nine community representatives elected by the Board. Two teachers elected by the GCCS staff and the School Leader provide advice and consent to the Board in decision-making related to school issues and policies. Meetings are held at 5:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at the Cunningham House Studio on the campus of the Rochester Museum and Science Center. At each meeting, the Board approves the minutes from the previous meeting, hears a report from one of our teaching teams, examines financial statements, and receives an update from the School Leader. Other responsibilities include adopting the school's annual budget, approving new hires, and evaluating the School Leader. At times, the Board creates or approves policies, such as the bullying policy or the chaperone policy.

GCCS Board meetings are open to the public. Attendees may observe the meeting but do not join in the discussion. If issues related to specific staff members, parents, or students are raised, the Board will move into executive session and visitors will be excused from the room.

Parent representatives provide an important perspective on the Board. A new parent representative is elected on the day of the May Family Association meeting each year. Parents who wish to serve on the Board, and who have been with the school for at least one school year,

are invited to express their interest and describe their qualifications prior to the May Family Association meeting. Families cast ballots to elect the next parent representative on the day of the May Family Association Meeting.

Minutes from each month's meeting are available on the school's website after they are formally approved and adopted by the Board.



Genesee Community Charter School 2019-2020 Calendar

Staff only/No students	School is Closed	Half Day for Conferences
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August 2019					September 2019					October 2019				
M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2	2	3*	4	5	6		1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	9	10	11	12	13	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	20	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	26	27	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28*	29*	30*	30					28	29	30	31	

August:

Professional Development: 8/5-8/27
 First Day for 1st-6th Grades: 8/28
 1:00 Dismissal: 8/28-8/30

September:

Labor Day: 9/2
 Half Day for Kindergarten: 9/3
 First Full Day for Kindergarten: 9/4

October:

Professional Development: 10/11
 Columbus Day: 10/14

November 2019					December 2019					January 2020				
M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F
				1	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3
4	5*	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31				27	28	29	30	31

November:

Veteran's Day: 11/1
 Professional Development: 11/25-11/26
 Thanksgiving Recess: 11/27-11/29

December:

Conferences 11:30 Dismissal: 12/10
 Winter Recess: 12/23-1/1

January:

Professional Development: 1/2-1/3
 Professional Development: 1/20
 Site Seminar 1/21-22



February 2020					March 2020					April 2020				
M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F
3	4	5	6	7	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3
10	11	12	13	14	9	10	11	12	13	6	7	8	9	10
17	18	19	20	21	16	17	18	19	20	13*	14	15	16	17
24	25	26	27	28	23	24	25	26	27	20	21	22	23	24
					30	31				27	28	29	30	

February:

Student-led Conferences: 2/14
 February Recess: 2/17 - 2/18
 Professional Development: 2/19-2/21

March:

NYS ELA Testing 3/26-27
 Conferences 11:30 Dismissal: 3/19

April:

Professional Development: 4/3
 Spring Recess: 4/6-4/10
 NYS Math Testing 4/22-23

May 2020					June 2020				
M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F
				1	1	2	3	4	5
4	5	6	7	8	8	9	10	11	12
11	12	13	14	15	15	16	17	18	19
18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26
25	26	27	28	29	29	30			

May:

Professional Development: 5/22
 Memorial Day: 5/25

June:

Conferences 11:30 Dismissal: 6/4
 Last Day of School for Students: 6/17
 Professional Development: 6/18-6/19

School Hours:
 M, T, Th, F: 8:00 - 3:00
 Every Wed.: 8:00 - 1:00

***No RCSD Buses**
 (suburban residents check with district)

GCCS Closings will be announced on
 Radio 1180/WHAM, WROC TV
 Channel 8, and posted on the website.

Emergency Make-up Days:
 4/3, 5/22



Expeditionary Learning Design Principles

Expeditionary Learning is built on ten design principles that reflect the educational values and beliefs of Outward Bound. These principles also reflect the design's connection to other related thinking about teaching, learning, and the culture of schools.

1. THE PRIMACY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

Learning happens best with emotion, challenge and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher's primary task is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can.

2. THE HAVING OF WONDERFUL IDEAS

Teaching in Expeditionary Learning schools fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

3. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING

Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity. Everyone learns both individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of an Expeditionary Learning school encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

4. EMPATHY AND CARING

Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust. Learning groups are small in Expeditionary Learning schools, with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child. Older students mentor younger ones, and students feel physically and emotionally safe.

5. SUCCESS AND FAILURE

All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important

for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are hard, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

6. COLLABORATION AND COMPETITION

Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete, not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

7. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students investigate and value their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.

8. THE NATURAL WORLD

A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.

9. SOLITUDE AND REFLECTION

Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need to exchange their reflections with other students and with adults.

10. SERVICE AND COMPASSION

We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others, and one of an Expeditionary Learning school's primary functions is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service.



GCCS Character Traits

Courage *I step out of my comfort zone. I can show courage with...*

- Myself: I accept my fears yet keep trying.
- Others: I stand up for others even if it is unpopular.
- Learning: I take risks in order to learn.

Responsibility *I do what I am supposed to do. I can show responsibility with...*

- Myself: I am ready for learning.
- Others: I make choices with others in mind.
- Learning: I can complete a task with quality

Initiative *I take action when something needs to be done. I can show initiative with...*

- Myself: I speak up for myself and share my ideas.
- Others: I do my part to help our community.
- Learning: I make connections and try to learn more.

Perseverance *I keep trying. I can show perseverance with...*

- Myself: I keep going even when I'm tired or something is hard.
- Others: I have patience and do what I can to help my crew move forward.
- Learning: I strive to do good work.

Collaboration *I work with others. I can show collaboration with...*

- Myself: I contribute my ideas and listen to others.
- Others: I join with others to create work that is beyond what I could create on my own.
- Learning: I work with others to achieve a common outcome

Compassion *I am kind. I can show compassion with...*

- Myself: I am kind to myself.
- Others: I show kindness towards others.
- Learning: I can learn from points of view other than my own

Gratitude *I am thankful. I can have gratitude with...*

- Myself: I am grateful for all that I have.
- Others: I say thank you when someone does or says something nice.
- Learning: I appreciate the opportunities I have at GCCS.

Policy on Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks

Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation for self-government. Freedom of expression encompasses the right to freedom of speech and the corollary right to receive information. Such rights extend to minors as well as adults. Schools facilitate the exercise of these rights by providing access to information regardless of format or technology. In a free and democratic society, access to information is a fundamental right of citizenship.

In making decisions regarding student access to the Internet, Genesee Community Charter School considers its own stated educational mission, goals, and objectives. Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation of citizens and future employees. Access to the Internet enables students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, bulletin boards, and other resources while exchanging messages with people around the world. The District expects that faculty will blend thoughtful use of the Internet throughout the curriculum and will provide guidance and instruction to students in its use. As much as possible, access from school to Internet resources should be structured in ways that point students to those which have been evaluated prior to use. While students will be able to move beyond those resources to others that have not been previewed by staff, they shall be provided with guidelines and lists of resources particularly suited to learning objectives.

Outside of school, families bear responsibility for the same guidance of Internet use as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, radio, movies, and other possibly offensive media.

Students utilizing school-provided Internet access must first have the permission of and must be supervised by the Genesee Community Charter School's staff. Students utilizing school-provided Internet access are responsible for good behavior on-line just as they are in a classroom or other area of the school. The same general rules for behavior and communications apply.

The purpose of Internet access is to facilitate communications in support of research and education. To remain eligible as users, students' use must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of Genesee Community Charter School. Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility.

Users should not expect that files stored on school-based computers will always be private. Electronic messages and files stored on school-based computers may be treated like school lockers. Administrators and faculty may review files and messages to maintain system integrity and insure that users are acting responsibly.

The following uses of school-provided Internet access are not permitted:

- a. to access, upload, download, or distribute pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit material;
- b. to transmit obscene, abusive, sexually explicit, or threatening language;
- c. to violate any local, state, or federal statute;
- d. to vandalize, damage, or disable the property of another individual or organization;
- e. to access another individual's materials, information, or files without permission; and,
- f. to violate copyright or otherwise use the intellectual property of another individual or organization without permission.

Any violation of Genesee Community Charter School's policy and rules may result in loss of access to the Internet. Additional disciplinary action may be determined by the school in keeping with existing procedures and practices regarding inappropriate language or behavior. When and where applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

Genesee Community Charter School makes no warranties of any kind, neither expressed nor implied, for the Internet access it is providing. The school will not be responsible for any damages users suffer, including—but not limited to—loss of data resulting from delays or interruptions in service. The school will not be responsible for the accuracy, nature, or quality of information stored on school diskettes, hard drives, or servers; nor for the accuracy, nature, or quality of information gathered through school-provided Internet access. Genesee Community Charter School will not be responsible for personal property used to access school computers or networks or for school-provided Internet access. The school will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations or loss of privacy resulting from access to the Internet.

Parents of students at Genesee Community Charter School shall be provided with the following information:

Genesee Community Charter School is pleased to offer its students access to the Internet. The Internet is an electronic highway connecting hundreds of thousands of computers and millions of individual users all over the world. This computer technology will help propel our schools through the communication age by allowing students and staff to access and use resources from distant computers, communicate and collaborate with other individuals and groups around the world, and significantly expand their available information base. The Internet is a tool for life-long learning.

Families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. In addition, it is possible to purchase certain goods and services via the Internet that could result in unwanted financial obligations for which a student's parent or guardian would be liable.

While the school's intent is to make Internet access available in order to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. Even should the school institute technical methods or systems to regulate students' Internet access, those methods could not guarantee compliance with our acceptable use policy. That notwithstanding, Genesee Community Charter School believes that the benefits to students of access to the Internet exceed any disadvantages. Ultimately, however, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

NOTICE: This policy and all its provisions are subordinate to local, state, and federal statutes.

Adapted from Indiana Public School Internet Acceptable Use Policy, 2001



Genesee Community Charter School Pesticide Applications

Dear Parents, Guardians, Faculty and Staff:

Effective July 1, 2001, New York State Education Law Section 409-H requires all public and non-public elementary and secondary schools to provide written notice to all persons in parental relation, faculty and staff regarding the potential use of pesticides periodically throughout the year.

The Genesee Community Charter School is required to maintain a list of all persons in parental relation, faculty and staff who wish to receive 48-hour written identification of certain pesticide applications. The following applications are NOT subject to prior notification requirements:

- A school that remains unoccupied for a continuous 72-hour period following a pesticides application
- Anti-microbial products
- Nonvolatile rodenticides in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children
- Silica gels and other nonvolatile ready to use pastes, foams, or gels in areas inaccessible to children
- Boric acid and disodium octaborate tetrahydrate
- The application of EPA designated biopesticides
- The application of EPA designated exempt materials under 40CRF152.25
- The use of aerosol products with a directed spray in a container of 18 fluid ounces or less when used to protect individuals from imminent threat from stinging and biting insects including venomous spiders, bees, wasps, and hornets

In the event an emergency application is necessary to protect against imminent threat to human health, a good faith effort will be made to supply written notification to those on the 48-hour notification list.

If you would like to receive 48-hour prior notification of pesticide applications that are scheduled to occur, please complete the attached form and return it to Maureen Milke in the school's main office.

Request For Prior Notification Of Pesticide Applications

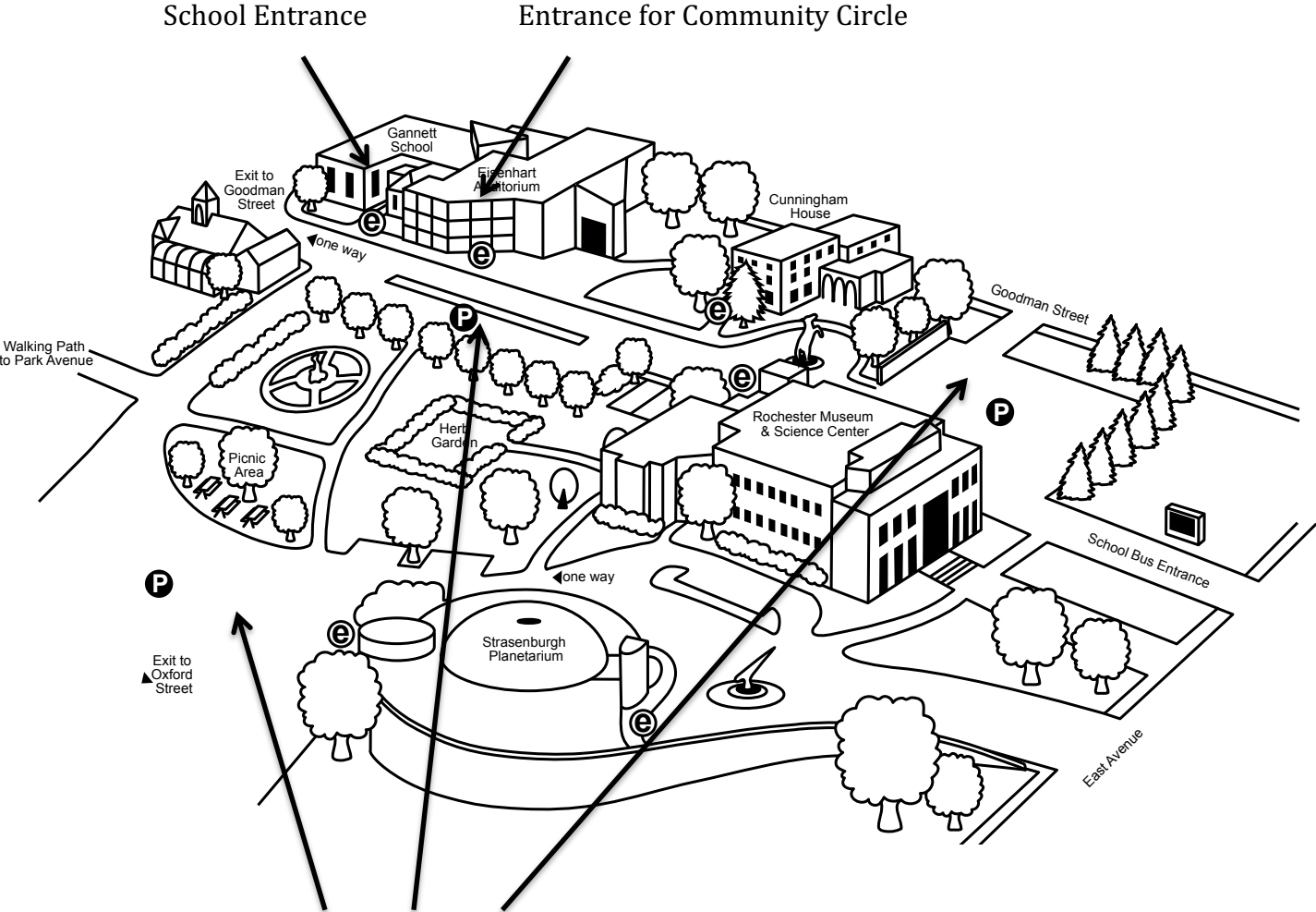
Parent/Guardian: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Email: _____

Rochester Museum & Science Center Campus Map



Available Parking

Please DO NOT park along the sidewalk in front of the school or auditorium

Volunteer Guidelines

We believe that families are an integral part of student learning and we have structured our program to provide the opportunity for families to participate in the daily life of our school community. We have a variety of needs for volunteer services and are happy to have you as a part of our “team.”

Who May Volunteer?

We welcome family members of current GCCS students who are 18 years of age or older to volunteer within the school and/or chaperone field studies. Volunteers are expected to schedule their time in advance with the classroom teachers. GCCS alumni are not permitted to visit or volunteer without the express prior permission of a classroom teacher or the School Leader.

What Types of Volunteer Opportunities are Available?

There are many needs for volunteers both within and outside of the classroom. Some volunteer opportunities will require that family members be in school during school hours, while others will allow families to participate in the evening or on weekends, depending on the specific task. Volunteers at GCCS can be classified into six groups:

Occasional Volunteers or Visitors

- in classrooms on an infrequent basis – less than five days per school year
- typically visit for lunch or to work with small groups of children on one-time projects
- work in classrooms under the direct supervision of a teacher or another staff member

Regular Volunteers

- in classrooms on a frequent basis – more than five days per school year
- work with small groups of children on reading, writing, or expedition projects
- work in classrooms or in hallways under the direct supervision of a teacher or another staff member

Day Chaperones

- supervise a small group of students on fieldwork
- sit with their groups on the bus and remain with their groups during all activities
- teachers and other staff members are responsible for supervising the whole group and for guiding chaperones during activities

Overnight Chaperones

- are selected by school staff through an application process (see Family Handbook)
- supervise 3-5 students on fieldwork out of the Rochester area
- sit with their groups on the bus and remain with their groups during all activities
- stay with groups in hotel rooms or tents, depending on the fieldwork destination
- teachers and other staff members are responsible for supervising the whole group and for guiding chaperones during activities

Drivers

- drive 3-8 students in personal or rented vehicles on fieldwork in or out of the Rochester area
- fulfill responsibilities of day or overnight chaperones, depending on the nature of the fieldwork

After-hours Volunteers

- complete clerical, maintenance, craft, or construction tasks outside of school hours
- have no responsibility for supervising children other than their own
- complete tasks as requested by the teachers or other school staff

How Will You Know What to Do as a Volunteer?

When coming in to school for a volunteer assignment or to chaperone, please sign the volunteer book in the office. Instructions for your volunteer assignment will come from the person requesting assistance. However, we have established some “ground rules” both to assist the volunteer in his/her efforts and to maintain continuity for the students.

What are the Ground Rules for Volunteers?

Expectations of parent volunteers include:

- Keep your commitment and be punctual; if unforeseen circumstances prevent you from keeping your commitment, please call the school office as soon as possible.
- Leave siblings under the care of another adult, as siblings are not permitted in classrooms or on fieldwork.
- Follow the same dress code as students (see Family Handbook), and wear clothing that is appropriate for the school, weather, and/or fieldwork destination.
- Follow instructions of school personnel regarding schedules, behavior and academic expectations.
- Maintain continuous proximity and supervision of the assigned children.
- Refrain from chatting with teachers and other parents or using cell phones.
- Use student management strategies and language consistent with the school’s approach.
- Inform teachers of student management issues that require intervention.
- Provide a level of support to students as directed by the teachers.
- Maintain an enthusiastic and positive attitude toward children and staff.
- Do not meet privately with one student at a time, or escort individual children to the restroom. Other students or staff must be present.

In addition to those listed above, expectations of chaperones include:

- Attend a chaperone certification training session (offered three times per year) every three years.
- Stay for the duration of the field study.
- Follow teacher directions at all times.
- Ride the bus with the class.

Volunteer Guidelines *(continued)*

- Refrain from purchasing extra treats beyond what is being provided to the whole class.
- Wear clothing that is appropriate for the weather and fieldwork destination.

More information about GCCS’s Chaperone Policy is available in the Family Handbook.

How Do Volunteers Handle Confidential Information that They May Encounter?

When working with students and families, it is inevitable that volunteers will encounter confidential information protected by federal law. This could occur by overhearing students' conversations, witnessing conflicts between students and teachers, or observing a student with a medical, social, financial or educational problem. Volunteers must adhere to the same standards of confidentiality as professional staff. Volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality by refraining from speaking about other people's children in front of their own children or in front of others. All comments and questions about children and families should be directed to the teachers or the School Leader.

Which Volunteers Must Undergo Background Checks?

The New York State Education Department has issued a directive requiring charter schools to conduct background checks and receive clearance for all regular volunteers. To comply, GCCS has included in its revised charter the provision "Regular volunteers, defined as those who volunteer with children more than five days per school year, will undergo background checks and receive clearance."

Background checks and other information will be required according to the following:

Overnight Chaperones and Regular Volunteers

- chaperone certification training completed every three years
- background check completed once; background check will be updated if there is any reason to suspect that the information may have changed
- signed volunteer guidelines acknowledgment on file

Day Chaperones

- chaperone certification training completed every three years
- signed volunteer guidelines acknowledgment on file

Occasional Volunteers or Visitors and After-hours Volunteers

- signed volunteer guidelines acknowledgment on file

Drivers

- DMV records check completed annually
- chaperone certification training completed every three years
- signed volunteer guidelines acknowledgment on file

