

**Georgetown
International
Academy
Family Handbook
2023-2024**



With this handbook we aim to guide you through the 2023-2024 school year. Please carefully review it so that you are acquainted with the procedures and expectations at our school. Hopefully, the handbook will answer many questions you may have. Should you have additional questions or need to clarify information contained within, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The GIA Board, Head of School, faculty, and staff wish to thank you for your trust in us, your support of our various initiatives, and your collaborative spirit. We sincerely appreciate you and all that you do to honor our GIA learning community of excellence. We wish you a most successful school year and look forward to working with each of you to bring the best possible learning experience for each family.

INTRODUCTION

The Georgetown International Academy (GIA), formerly known as the Georgetown American School, was founded in 1971 to serve the needs of the US Embassy post in Guyana. Very quickly, GIA became the school for various posts including the Canadian, British, and Indian High Commissions. At present, we serve the expanded diplomatic community in Georgetown, including the European Union, and various NGOs. We also serve the families of Guyanese as well as expat oil workers, business people and others who desire a fully accredited American international education.

We are the only school in Guyana to be U.S. accredited outside of the Caribbean. We are accredited (June 2019) by the accrediting agency, Cognia (formerly AdvancED). Students who attend our school transition seamlessly to other overseas schools and universities.

GIA is guided by a mission and vision statement.

Vision: Georgetown International Academy is a learning community committed to academic excellence, global awareness, and empowering well-rounded individuals educated for success in life.

Mission: To provide opportunities and challenges for each student to succeed as a lifelong learner and responsible citizen in a changing world by:

- Promoting high standards of education that are grounded in research within a collaborative, student-centered learning community
- Promoting the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for lifelong development of a well-rounded individual

- Preparing students to adapt and adjust to the complexities and challenges of the increasingly interdependent and constantly changing world
- Fostering awareness of rights, duties, and responsibilities of a globally aware and socially responsible citizen with a focus on respect for other cultures and nationalities

To learn more, please visit our web site at www.giagy.org

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GENERAL INFORMATION

In-House Directory

School-Wide

Head of School	HOBBS, Shauna hobbs@giagy.org
Director of Teaching and Learning	HILLMAN, Mark hillman@giagy.org
Director of Admissions and Student Services	FORRESTER, Laurie forrester@giagy.org
Upper School Principal	RICHARDS, Trudy principal@giagy.org
Lower School Principal	ALLEN, Cathy lsprincipal@giagy.org
Student Services Coordinator	HILLMAN, Carla chillman@giagy.org
Upper School Counselor	BEN-ISRAEL, Leah ben-israel@giagy.org
Lower School Counselor	THOMAS, EdRienna ethomas@giagy.org
Educational Technology Coordinator	VELAZCO, Janeth velazco@giagy.org
IT Manager	RICHARDS, Zuri richards@giagy.org

School Board

*Secretary (voting)	VARSWYCK, Melissa board@giagy.org
Chair (voting)	ISHOOF KAHN, Scherherazade
Vice-Chair (voting)	WILLS, Paul
Treasurer (voting)	ZAMAL, Irzad
*Secretary (voting)	VARSWYK, Melissa board@giagy.org

Board Member (voting)	MCDOOM, Moen
Board Member (voting)	DICKINSON, Elena
Board Member (voting)	LALL, Teshawna
US Ambassador's Representative (nonvoting)	KENDRICK, Djenaba
Head of School (nonvoting)	HOBBS, Shauna
Faculty Representative (nonvoting)	NYD

*Please contact the Board via the Board Secretary.

Administrative and Support Personnel

Business Manager	AARON-ROSHEUVEL, Loretta rosheuvel@giagy.org
Executive Assistant	LONDON, Lizanne london@giagy.org
School Nurse	BLENMAN, Joanne nurse@giagy.org
Facilities Manager	SIMMONS, Michelle simmons@giagy.org
Assistant Facilities Manager	PARRIS, Dwight parris@giagy.org
Acting Head of Security	JACOBS, Carl jacobs@giagy.org
IT Manager	RICHARDS, Zuri richards@giagy.org
Accounts Technician	SINGH, Tineka singh@giagy.org
Accounts Receivable Specialist	SHARIEK, Veadmattie shariek@giagy.org
Procurement Assistant	MCTAIR, Jonika procurement@giagy.org
Accounts Payable Specialist	NIZAMUDDIN, Alicia nizamuddin@giagy.org

Payroll Associate	Odessa Kertzious kertzious@giagy.org
Customer service Associate	Sarah Khairudin-Simon khairudin@giagy.org
Human Resources Manager	COX, Amy cox@giagy.org
HR Expat Specialist	GARRAWAY, Alicia agarraway@giagy.org
Student Data	JOSEPH, Stephanie joseph@giagy.org
IT Assistant	WHITE, Kibwe white@giagy.org
Assistant Data Administrator & IT Support	ALLY, Sarah ally@giagy.org
Upper School Assistant	DEY, Kean dey@giagy.org
Lower School Assistant/After School Activities Coordinator	CHAVES, Christina activities@giagy.org
Front Office Assistant	
Facilities Staff Please contact Ms. Simmons with any questions. simmons@giagy.org	COSBERT, Juanita GORDON, Brian JHAMAN, Glen JARDINE, Alwyn SAMPSON, Jaqueline McDONALD, Abbegail AUSTIN, Dorette DAVID, Donna GARRAWAY, Karen KING, Tamara TANNER, Gavin
Security guards Please contact Mr Jacobs with any questions jacobs@giagy.org	STEPHENS, Stephanie GARNETT, Ashley LEITCH, Owen SINGH, Naomi PHILLIPS, Annika MARKS, Keith

Nursery through Grade 5 Faculty

Nursery	MICHAEL, Karen michael@giagy.org
Pre-Kindergarten	CLARKE, Delmae clarke@giagy.org
Pre-Kindergarten	SIMPSON, Triciana simpson@giagy.org
Kindergarten	DHANASAR, Sayeed dhanasar@giagy.org
Kindergarten	MEUSA, Nashana meusa@giagy.org
Kindergarten	KUMAGAI, Kira kumagai@giagy.org
First Grade	DOWERS, Anthea dowers@giagy.org
First Grade	BENTICK, Karen bentick@giagy.org
Second Grade	SAMPSON, Jevina jsampson@giagy.org
Second Grade	SANCHEZ, Patricia sanchez@giagy.org
Third Grade ELA	LEWIS, Lorisa Llewis@giagy.org
Third Grade Math/Sci	CORBYN-BROWN, Paul cbrown@giagy.org
Fourth Grade ELA	LINLEY, Zakiyah linley@giagy.org
Fourth Grade Math/Sci	PENDON, Jafet pendon@giagy.org
Fifth Grade ELA	DILLETT, LeShaun dillett@giagy.org
Fifth Grade Math/Sci	FRASER, Patrina fraser@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	ARCHIBALD, Roxanda archibald@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	BALDEO, Michelle baldeo@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	BASCOM-HEMRAJ, Coretta bascom@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	BRATHWAITE, Olivia braithwaite@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	DA SILVA, Tonette tdasilva@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	EMBLETON, Stephanie embleton@giagy.org

Teaching Assistant	INNISS-HOYTE, Shonette hoYTE@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	JAGDEO, Indi jagdeo@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	MANAWAR-KHAN, Timera khan@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	NEDD, Alisha nedd@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	ROSE, Natasha rose@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	SAMPSON, Lotoya lsampson@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	SIMON, Grad simon@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	SOFTLEIGH, Michelle softleigh@giagy.org
Teaching Assistant	THOMAS, Shevon thomas@giagy.org

Grade 6-12 Faculty

Grade 6H homeroom	HILL, Michelle hill@giagy.org
Grade 6S homeroom	SOOKRAM, Dollisa sookram@giagy.org
Grade 7 homeroom	HAUSE, Gregory hause@giagy.org
Grade 8 homeroom	LEWIS, Althea alewis@giagy.org
Math Department	GONSALVES, Nicola gonsalves@giagy.org HILL, Michelle hill@giagy.org RAMKISSOON, Rondel ramkissoon@giagy.org
English Department	CUPIDORE, Liscell cupidore@giagy.org HAUSE, Gregory hause@giagy.org LEWIS, Althea alewis@giagy.org
Science Department	GONZALEZ, Natalia gonzalez@giagy.org HILL, Michelle hill@giagy.org MILLS, Stan mills@giagy.org
Social Studies Department	ALLEN, Britton allen@giagy.org COOK, Mary mcook@giagy.org SOOKRAM, Dollisa sookram@giagy.org

Special Subjects

Early Years (Preschool) Specials	ALLICOCK, Narefa allicock@giagy.org BRYANT, J'Trenee bryant@giagy.org
Art	DARRELL, Rayann darrell@giagy.org MILLER, Laura miller@giagy.org
Music	ECKERT, Jeffrey eckert@giagy.org SOBERS, Christian sobers@giagy.org
Library	CHUNG, Yvonne chung@giagy.org
Physical Education, Health	CAMBRIDGE, Cherrylyn cambridge@giagy.org COOK, Ben cook@giagy.org
French	LEE, Janelle lee@giagy.org ARCHER, Nikita archer@giagy.org
Spanish	BALASAR, Sharon balasar@giagy.org VINCENTI, Luisa vincenti@giagy.org
Learning Support	BALKARAN, Savita balkaran@giagy.org MEDES, Melvin medes@giagy.org
Full-time Substitute	JEUNE-SKEETE, Susanne skeete@giagy.org

BOARD AND ASSOCIATION

The GIA school community is led by a Head of School and a democratically elected school Board comprising seven parents and two non-voting members. The non-voting members are a teacher's representative and a representative of the US ambassador. The GIA Association consists of all parents or guardians of GIA students. The school board meets monthly and produces annual reports on activities and the financial standing of the GIA association. GIA's association is governed by "Articles and By-Laws," copies of which are available to association members upon request. The teacher's representative to the Board is elected at a faculty meeting.

The function of the Board of the Georgetown International Academy is the overall control and direction of the business affairs of the Association and school. All parents or guardians of students at the school are eligible to stand for election to the Board, provided they are not GIA employees or spouses of GIA employees. The school Board typically meets on the second Tuesday of the month, but may hold extra meetings when warranted. Regular statutory Board meetings are open to parents and personnel. The dates of Board meetings may be viewed via the parent portal.

PTO

The GIA Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) provides support to our educational program. The PTO's mission is to serve as a voice for children, a

relevant resource for families and communities, and an advocate for the education and well-being of every child. We encourage every parent to become actively involved in the PTO (see the PTO calendar linked). Teachers and auxiliary staff are strongly encouraged to support the GIA PTO. The PTO email address is pto@giagy.org.

STUDENT COUNCIL

GIA's Student Council consists of elected representatives of the student community, led by four student officers. The Student Council provides students with the opportunity to be involved in the democratic process by initiating, promoting, and implementing programs and activities for student and school development. Families are strongly encouraged to support the GIA Student Council by supporting their various activities.

KEY CLUB

In June 2014, GIA became a member of the Kiwanis Key Club program. Key Club is a world-wide community service organization. Students of Grades 7-12 are encouraged to join the Key Club and actively participate in its initiatives. Key Club meets once a week during the after school activities block.

COUNSELING

All students have access to a variety of services provided by appropriately licensed personnel, including orientation to programs, schedules and facilities; information concerning school and community resources; interpretation of personal, academic, and assessment results; individual and group counseling; and educational and career planning. Personnel providing these services adhere to principles of ethical behavior by informing students of limitations to confidentiality based on legal requirements, including, but not limited to: 1) the implementation of weapons and alcohol and other drugs policies; and 2) the maintenance of the health, safety, and welfare of counselee or others.

SCHOOL AFFILIATIONS

GIA is an American Overseas School (A/OS) and thereby receives aid grants and similar benefits from the US Department of State in Washington D.C. Please refer to [Schools Worldwide - United States Department of State](#) for more information. Throughout its existence, GIA has enjoyed a special relationship with the US Embassy in Guyana, and the support of the United States Ambassador. GIA also enjoys the unofficial support of other embassies and high commissions including the Indian High Commission, Canadian High Commission, and European Union.

GIA is also a member of the American International Schools in the Americas (AMISA), a group whose mission is to provide and promote programs and services to member schools to enhance the quality of American International Education, as well as the Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE), and International Schools Services (ISS). GIA is also an associate member of the TRI-association, the

association of American Schools of Central America, Colombia-Caribbean, and Mexico.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Health information may be shared with school personnel on a “need to know” basis when information about your child’s health is necessary for school personnel to care for and respond to your child’s needs. It may be necessary to best serve the interests of your child that you sign a release of information between the school and healthcare providers.

Emergency Information—The school must have a way to reach you in an emergency. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep emergency information up-to-date.

Immunizations

Students ARE required to present proof of the following immunizations.

All immunizations must be up to date:

- Measles, Mumps, Rubella
- Diphtheria
- Polio
- Pertussis

The following immunizations are recommended:

- Yellow Fever
- Hepatitis B
- Tetanus
- Covid-1

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL AND ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

SCHOOL HOURS

The normal school day for students begins at 8 a.m. Parents should drop off their children between 7:20 - 7:55 AM. Students are not allowed on campus before 7:20 am as there is no student supervision.

Beginning at 7:20 students are allowed to play on the playground and/or stay in the cafeteria. Classrooms will be open for students at 7:45 am..

Students are required to be seated in their classroom by 8:00 AM.

Students who arrive at school later than 8:00 AM or are not seated by 8:00 AM will be marked tardy for class. The last class of the day ends at 3:00 PM and dismissal begins. Our after school activities run from 3:15 - 4:00 PM.

Wednesdays are early dismissal days for students with classes ending at 2:30 PM with after school activities run from 2:30 - 4:00 PM. (see [Bell Schedule linked](#))

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Because GIA is responsible for each child's safety, we adhere to strict rules concerning student transportation, pick up, and drop off. Students are not permitted to leave school before the end of the regular day without a parent/guardian first notifying the school office. Students are expected to remain in school for all regular classes, festivals, and special events. Students will only be permitted to leave school at the request of a parent or guardian.

Parents should drop off their children between 7:20 and 7:55 AM. To facilitate the smooth flow of traffic, parents are asked to enter the campus through the entrance gate, drive to the drop off area and leave via the exit gate. Vans should drive through the entrance and proceed through the roundabout. They will drop off at the front of the school and proceed to merge with the cars. Vans will exit out of the second gate. With this arrangement, all traffic will flow in one direction. After entering campus, pull into the drop off lane to safely allow students to exit the vehicles on the left hand side. Teachers and administrative staff will receive your children at the drop off lane. We ask that you avoid as much as possible retrieving items from the trunk so that the arrival process can flow smoothly, safely, and quickly. If you would like to walk your child in, please do so by parking in one of the available visitor parking spaces (see map linked here). Following drop off, you may pull out of the drop off lane and use the right most lane to exit campus via the first gate.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Nursery students enrolled in the half-day program must be picked up at 11:30 AM each day. Students of grades PreKindergarten through 12 must be picked up between 3:00 and 3:15 PM each day unless the student is participating in after school activities or tutoring. Students whose parents/guardians have not picked them up by 3:15 PM will be required to wait inside the school's office.

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Upon enrollment each family will receive an official vehicle placard with a unique ID. Any vehicle picking up your child should have this placard. If you would like additional or replacement placards, please request from the receptionist. To register a driver or other personnel as someone authorized for pick up, please send an email to your child's respective principal stating the name of the person and also include a copy of the person's ID card or a picture of the person. When changing drivers or having someone else pick up your child, please notify the school via email to your child's respective principal. Your update email should include the name of the person, a copy of the person's ID card or picture of the person, and the time period for which this pick up arrangement will last.

During dismissal time, vehicles must join the queue and display the unique vehicle placard in a prominent position on the dashboard so that it is easily

seen by dismissal personnel. Upon proper identification, dismissal personnel will announce for your child(ren) to come down to the dismissal lane to be walked to the vehicle. This allows school personnel to safely and efficiently ensure each child has been securely handed over to the correct driver and vehicle. Please note that students will not be permitted to walk home or leave with non-parents or non-guardians unless the parent has made special arrangements via the school office. **All parents and drivers must make every attempt to ensure a smooth, regular flow of the pick up queue. We ask parents and drivers not to break from the line or impede its flow. Parents wishing to walk their child to the car must wait in the atrium for dismissal. Parents will not be allowed to go directly to the classroom.**

If you prefer to park and walk into the school compound at dismissal time you must use the visitor parking area inside the campus gates.

For proper identification, students are not permitted to walk to their vehicles without a parent accompanying them.

LEAVING CAMPUS

Students are not permitted to leave school before the end of the regular day without a parent/guardian first notifying the school office. Students will only be permitted to leave school with a parent/guardian, or someone identified as an emergency contact. Students are expected to remain in school for all regular classes, festivals, and special events.

If your child is leaving before the end of the school day, this should be communicated by calling the office or in writing to the respective school principal. Any change in your child's pick up arrangements should be communicated via email. Please send a copy of the ID of anyone authorized to pick up your child(ren).

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential to the educational process and achievement of each student. GIA students are expected to attend all classes scheduled during the school year, except in the case of illness or approved co-curricular activities. Students are expected to make up work missed due to absence.

In high school, teachers will record attendance period by period. Where minutes of tardiness combined with full absences total 20% of the class time for a particular class, a student will earn a grade of 'Incomplete' for the term unless the Head of School authorizes an exception due to special circumstances or a 'school-excused' absence. A grade of Incomplete will have a negative effect on the GPA and transcripts of students in Grades 9-12. Parents will receive written notification to the student, parent, and mentor if a child has missed 15% of the class time for the term.

Each teacher is responsible for recording attendance for his or her classes. This includes recording absences and the number of minutes the student

is tardy for class. Tardy minutes exceeding 50 total minutes will equate to a 1 period absence in the recording class. The class teacher is required to make each student aware of his or her respective absences.

LUNCH AND SNACK

Students receive a snack/recess break each morning and are expected to bring their own nutritious snacks and beverages from home or purchase them from the GIA kitchen. The lunch/recess periods are from **10:30 to 11:30** (Pre-K), **11:00 to 11:55** (Kinder through Grade 5), and **12:00 to 12:45** (Grades 6 through 12). Students have the option of purchasing a hot lunch from the lunch vendor or bringing their own lunch from home. Microwaves are available for students to reheat as needed.

For security reasons we cannot allow deliveries with the exception of the parent or guardian. Lunch may be dropped off from **10:30-11:00 for lower school students and 11:25-11:55 for upper school students**. If parents wish to drop off lunch for their children please advise them to ensure that it arrives prior to the start of the lunch period. When students' lunches arrive late, they miss valuable class time.

Students must eat in the cafeteria, food will not be allowed in the halls, classrooms, or common spaces. Students will not be allowed in classrooms or in the hallways during their lunch period unless given prior approval by a faculty member.

Lunch expectations for students in Grades PreK through 5:

1. Eat food only in designated lunch or snack areas.
2. Be courteous to others.
3. Remain in your seat.
4. Use a quiet voice.
5. Keep your eating area clean.
6. Go to recess only when you have been excused by the teacher on duty
7. Follow the rules of sportsmanship and fair play on the playground

Lunch expectations for students in Grades 6 through 12:

1. Eat food only in designated lunch or snack areas.
2. Be courteous to others.
3. Remain in your seat.
4. Use a quiet voice.
5. Keep your eating area clean.

VISITORS AND DELIVERIES

GIA's teachers and administrators welcome visits from parents and other guests, however, GIA is a closed campus. Security protocols require visitors to provide advance notice of their arrival. . All visitors, including parents, will be issued

and are required to wear a visitor's pass before proceeding to their destination.

If you wish to enter campus for any reason other than planned school events please contact the office prior to arrival. Visitors requesting meetings with faculty are asked to schedule the meetings before or after school. It is important we do not interrupt instructional time. If you do not make prior arrangements to enter the school compound, you will be asked to wait outside the campus while our guards confirm your identity and gain authorization for you to enter the premises. Please note that weapons are never permitted beyond the GIA gates.

The school is unable to sufficiently guarantee complete safety and security of personal property. Therefore, staff and students are expected to care for their own property. The school accepts no liability for the personal property of staff and students. ([Visitor Code of Conduct linked](#))

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

GIA offers a Nursery through Grade 12 curriculum that is compatible with those of US-based schools. Since 1998, our school has received accreditation every 5 years from the accrediting organization, Cognia (previously known as Southern Association of College and Schools and AdvancEd). In 2024, we will be seeking accreditation again from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Accreditation protocol and GIA's Board policies require that the faculty provide a rigorous PK-12 curriculum to enrich and reflect the needs and diversity of the school's international student body.

The curriculum at GIA is reviewed, implemented, revised, refined, and evaluated on a frequent basis to ensure that all are up to date, meet US and international standards: The curriculum is made up of AERO (American Education Reaches Out). These standards are US standards adapted by the US State Department, adapted to meet an international context. If you would like more information please click on the [AERO link](#).

In addition to the curriculum frameworks that outline the expectations and content for courses in each subject offered at GIA, we also offer several AP courses. The course content and syllabi for all AP courses are created and distributed by the College Board. AP Tests are offered once a year and students have the potential to earn college credit depending on the score they earn from taking the AP Test. However, the score that students earn on the test does not affect the credits earned towards their graduation requirements for the actual course class time attended at GIA.

In addition to the core curriculum, GIA's academic program is augmented by music, art, French, Spanish, and physical education. Also, GIA's curriculum is designed to take advantage of the unique educational opportunities provided by the school's location in Guyana.

Grading system

The school year is divided into four terms, with 46-48 days in each term. Report cards are sent home at the conclusion of each marking period. Student number and letter grades apply to Grades 1 through 12. Student grade point averages are calculated on a four (4) point scale and show the cumulative effort of high school students and are applied from Grades 9 through 12.

Grade Point System		Grade Point Average**	
Number Grade	Letter Grade	Non-weighted	Weighted*
98-100	A+	4.33	5.33
93-97	A	4.00	5.00
90-92	A-	3.67	4.67
88-89	B+	3.33	4.33
83-87	B	3.00	4.00
80-82	B-	2.67	3.67
78-79 no	C+	2.33	3.33
73-77	C	2.00	3.00
70-72	C-	1.67	2.67
68-69	D+	1.33	2.33
63-67	D	1.00	2.00
60-62	D-	0.67	1.67
0-59	F	0	0

*Advanced Placement courses in which students sit for the exam at the end of the course are assessed an additional Grade Point Average weight of 1.00.

Grade Retention or Advanced Grade Placement

At the time of admission, a student will be assigned to an appropriate grade according to his or her previous school records or, the GIA age cut-off date of October 15th. Typically, students' needs are best met by remaining at the same grade level as peers of the same age. In cases where a student is over- or under-challenged at his or her grade level, teachers will provide supplementary learning experiences. In rare cases, a student's needs would be better met by repeating the current grade or being advanced a grade, and the faculty may recommend grade retention or advancement.

Retention refers to having a student repeat a grade or subject.

Advancement refers to placing a student in a grade level/subject area that is above age grade placement. The process for advancement will not begin until after the third week of classes to allow appropriate observation time.

No requests for grade advancement will be processed beyond the end of the first quarter of the current school year

Class Size

When class size reaches 20 in grades N - 2 and 22 in Grades 3-12, the Head of School **may** split the class into two sections or provide a teaching assistant, as financial and human resources permit. If the enrollment in a particular grade is too low to permit students to engage in social learning and cooperative education, the Head of School may opt to combine two grades.

Student assignment to one homeroom or another will be done in an equitable way to ensure both groups have even distributions of students by gender, learning styles, cultures, cognitive and emotional development/needs, and proficiency in the English language. In support of this process, we welcome parents' insights into their children's placement along with any other relevant information but we cannot in any way guarantee to meet all parent requests. We will not receive requests for classroom placement with specific teachers and/or staff. Our focus and commitment is on creating the best and most productive class groups which benefit ALL students.

Appreciation of Cultural Diversity

The school strives to utilize every means possible to expose students to the traditions and richness of culture and environment of Guyana and of the countries represented by the students at GIA.

GIA's practice of observing and/or celebrating holidays and other special events is not for the purpose of promoting any religion, culture, political position or interpretation of history. Our practice is rather in support of the school's mission or purpose which commits us to sharing the rich cultural mix of our school community, host country, and other cultures of the world. Most holidays and events commemorated on our official school calendar provide specific opportunities to reinforce certain universal and positive values (such as those enshrined in the U.N. Charter). GIA makes educational use of these opportunities. This reinforcement is intended to be independent of any religious or cultural bias.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Statement

At Georgetown International Academy, we advocate to create an inclusive environment and foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. To achieve our DEI goals, we recognize the importance of ongoing education, communication, and action. We are committed to continuously educating ourselves and our community on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and actively seek out opportunities to learn from diverse perspectives and experiences. We prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusivity in all aspects of our institution, from recruitment to developing our students into globally aware and socially responsible citizens. We are dedicated to promoting equity by identifying and addressing systemic barriers that prevent individuals from accessing educational and professional opportunities. We strive to provide a safe and supportive

environment where all students can thrive, regardless of their background or circumstances. We foster open communication, including hard conversations, and listen to all voices--all stakeholders play a vital role in creating a truly inclusive community. We are committed to learning and adjusting as we move along on this journey to become a place that embraces diversity, equity, and justice for our community, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, socioeconomic status, and ability.

Library

Hours of operation

The GIA Library is open from 7:45 AM - 3:20 PM Monday to Friday with the exception of Wednesdays, when the opening hours are 7:45 AM - 2:30 PM.

Checkouts

	Number of checkouts	Lending period	
Early Years Students	1*	2 weeks	*Special permission for more materials may be granted when deemed necessary for an assignment.
Grades K-2 Students	2**		**In addition to their two books, kindergarten, first and second grade students may check out an early reader of their choosing.
Grades 3-12 Students	2*		*Special permission for more materials may be granted when deemed necessary for an assignment.

Overdue

Overdue notices will be sent weekly via email through our online catalog system. Students will have 1 month to locate missing books before they are asked to replace the book lost or pay 2x book value for repurchasing/importing costs.

Lost or damaged books

If a book is lost or damaged, the book must be replaced/paid for before additional books can be checked out. Payment for a lost book is refunded should the book be found and returned in good condition. Students who owe money are not eligible to borrow more books and will not receive their final report card.

Student Conduct

GIA student behavior standards apply as well as the following special library rules:

1. Take care of library materials and return them in the same condition in which they were borrowed.

2. Leave food and drink outside of the GIA library.

Library Committee

A library committee is formed at the beginning of each school year and its members include a volunteer teacher and parent representing each section (early years, elementary, middle school, high school), the Lower School Principal, and the librarian. The committee meets monthly to discuss library issues, programs, challenged materials, etc. Throughout the school year, all faculty members are encouraged to submit suggestions for future library purchases.

Management System and Website

Library materials are cataloged using Follett Destiny. The catalog is accessible online at <https://giagy.follettdestiny.com>. Our school website www.giagy.org also contains a link to the catalog as well as to [Sora by Overdrive](#) where students can access e-books using their school email and password.

MENTOR PROGRAM

Student mentoring occurs at all grade levels. In grades Nursery through 8, the homeroom teacher must fulfill all mentor responsibilities. Each student in Grades 9 through 12 is assigned a mentor from among members of the high school faculty. The mentor provides support and guidance to the student. The mentor also monitors the student's academic and behavioral progress, including completing the report card. The goal of student mentoring is to provide the student with a resource person and advisor. The Upper School Counselor is the head of the mentor program and can provide guidance and answer your questions.

Every student in Grades K through 8 will report to his/her homeroom at dismissal each day. The homeroom teacher will ensure that the students have their homework assignments and materials packed and ready for home. Each homeroom teacher is responsible for ensuring their students are ready for dismissal and proceed to the dismissal area to wait for their names to be called.

HOMWORK

Homework is an integral part of the school's instructional program and offers an opportunity for students to practice and reinforce skills and concepts learned or developed in the classroom. The completion of homework assignments also fosters the development of good independent study habits and personal responsibility. Homework is not an optional exercise at GIA. Students are required to keep a written record of all assignments and submit work on or before its due date. Any questions concerning specific homework assignments should be addressed to the class teacher. Any questions concerning GIA's homework policy should be addressed to the

Director of Teaching and Learning. GIA's homework philosophy has been based in part upon the results of Duke University's 2006 meta-analysis of sixty research studies on Homework. GIA uses the following guidelines when assigning homework:

- Homework is an extension of learning started in the classroom
- Homework is used to reinforce skills and concepts already taught
- Homework is not to be considered punishment
- Homework aims to establish the discipline of review on a daily basis
- Homework can include home study assignments in which no written work is required
- Homework should be assigned for the purpose of preparation, recall, practice, and research
- Homework teaches children to work independently and improves skills of time management
- Homework assignments may be of many types, e.g., weekly assignments, long-range projects, drills, make up work, review, etc.

Although we recognize that there is no one timetable that can fit all students' needs, personal speed, and abilities, we will attempt to use the following time guidelines when assigning homework:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| ● Grades 1 & 2 | 10 to 20 minutes |
| ● Grades 3 & 4 | 30 to 40 minutes |
| ● Grades 5 & 6 | 45 to 60 minutes |
| ● Grades 7 & 8 | 1 to 2 hours |
| ● Grades 9 through 12* | 1.5 to 3 hours |

***Note that students taking AP classes may have additional hours of homework.**

BOOKS AND SUPPLIES

Teachers will maintain a register of all textbooks and school materials assigned to students, including the condition at hand out and collection. Textbooks must be returned at the end of the year or at the termination of a class. Students are responsible for keeping these books in good condition and will be charged if books are lost or damaged. Students provide their own school supplies, including pencils, pens and paper.

At the beginning of the school year, parents are provided with a student supply list. The supply list is general. Some teachers may ask for additional items throughout the year.

Grade level	Supplies
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Nursery, Pre-K, Kindergarten	Backpack, snack bag, crayons, glue stick, safety scissors, pencils, erasers, sharpener, pencil case, pocket folder, hand sanitizer, tissues, a change of clothing in case of accidents, water bottle
Grades 1 through 5	Backpack, snack bag, crayons, markers, pocket folder, colored pencils, erasers, scissors, glue, ruler, apron or large shirt to wear during painting and other messy work, hand sanitizer, tissues, dry erase markers, water bottle, headphones
Grades 6 through 8	Pencils, sharpener, erasers, blue and black ink pens, dry erase markers, highlighter markers, graph paper, colored and white index cards, binder and index dividers, scissors, colored pencils, ruler, glue stick, 6 two-pocket folders with fasteners, student dictionary and thesaurus (hard copy or electronic), fine tip black Sharpie, colored markers, protractor and compass, hand sanitizer, lab coat (can be purchased on 2 nd floor of Fogarty's department store), tissues, flash drive, water bottle, small padlock for locker Device -laptop or tablet (please see our BYOD)
Grades 9 through 12	Pencils, sharpener, erasers, blue and black ink pens, dry erase markers, highlighter markers, graph paper, binder and index dividers, scissors, colored pencils, ruler, glue stick, 6 two-pocket folders with fasteners, post-it notes, student dictionary and thesaurus (hard copy or electronic), fine tip black Sharpie, protractor and compass, hand sanitizer, lab coat (can be purchased on 2 nd floor of Fogarty's department store), tissues, flash drive, calculator, water bottle, small padlock for locker Device -laptop or tablet (please see our BYOD section)

*Please refer to BYOD policy regarding tech device requirements for students of Grades 6 through 12.

MAP TESTING

Twice per academic year, GIA students take tests called Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). We give students MAP tests to determine their instructional level and to measure academic growth during the school year, and from year to year. Your children will take the tests in their classrooms. MAP tests are unique in that they adapt to be appropriate for the child's level of learning. As a result, each student has the same opportunity to succeed and maintain a positive attitude toward testing. Following each testing period, parents will receive a progress report. For more information on MAP Testing and goal setting, please contact the respective principal for your child's grade level.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Field Trips

GIA incorporates learning activities outside the classroom as well as within. Field trips are a regular and important feature of GIA's academic program. In many respects, the community and natural environment are the school's laboratory. The Head of School encourages class and school-wide field trips that directly or indirectly support GIA's learning goals. The school is open to field trip suggestions from parents/guardians or students.

Parents/guardians are also encouraged to assist with transportation. **Please note that students are required to wear red polo shirts on all field trips.**

The following guidelines are provided to ensure the safe, orderly, and purposeful organization and management of field trips. These trips should at all times directly enhance the goals of the curriculum and a specific unit of inquiry. A detailed set of safety and security procedures has been developed by GIA for field trips. Teachers are required to review these procedures with their principal before planning and leading a field trip.

Supervision

Field trips will have an adequate number of chaperones to cover emergency situations. Students will be accompanied by at least one adult for every ten students (for example, a group of 21 students would require a minimum of three adults). Students in Pre-School, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten will be accompanied by at least one adult for every five students.

Liability

The school will ensure that all participating parties have signed a basic waiver form prepared by GIA Counsel and signed by parents.

Extra-Curricular Activities

GIA organizes extra-curricular activities that are open to the student body. These are optional and are meant to help students develop interests that are not directly provided for by the school curriculum. We invite ideas for extra-curricular activities from all GIA stakeholders. We encourage parents/guardians, students, and teachers to volunteer their time should they have skills or hobbies that might interest students (see [GIA Events](#) linked).

Holiday and School Calendar

GIA's [School Calendar](#) is posted on the school's web site. The school year is organized following a two-semester, four-term schedule. GIA observes all declared Guyanese holidays as well as the major American holidays. In addition, GIA teachers participate regularly in professional development activities that sometimes require school to be closed to students for whole or half days.

As observance of holidays and other special events has the demonstrated potential of causing disruption and misunderstanding in almost any school situation, the GIA staff has by consensus evolved a school policy with the knowledge and consent of the Board. It is agreed that our school's practice of observing and/or celebrating holidays and other special events is not for the purpose of promoting any religion, culture, political position, or interpretation of history. Our practice is rather in support of the school's mission and philosophy which commits us to sharing the rich cultural mix of both our school community and host country, Guyana.

UNIFORMS

Private and College Preparatory schools typically require students to adhere to a policy in the belief that school uniforms are a student's professional attire. Uniforms and policies regarding jewelry, hair, and makeup are intended to promote school spirit, minimize distractions, create a sense of fairness, and positively affect school climate. At GIA we encourage students to focus upon developing their skills and ethics rather than emphasizing material effects. Please note that GIA respects students' religious customs and permits students to wear yarmulkes, hijabs, topi caps, etc. **To schedule an appointment to purchase, please contact the receptionist via email or by calling the main office at 225-8347 or 226-1595.**

Students are expected to emphasize safety, respect, neatness, and consideration of others. Thus, students are required to adhere to the following rules:

- All clothing should fit appropriately. **Uniforms should be replaced when they become faded, stained, or torn.**
- Any jewelry or cosmetics that a student might wear must be minimal and non-distracting. Students will be required to wash off heavy colognes and visible eye makeup. Jewelry is limited to watches, small earrings, moderate chains or pendants, and/or small bracelets that do not make noise.
- On school property or at school-sponsored events, students are not permitted to have bags, folders, attire, jewelry or any other item that promotes drug, alcohol or tobacco use, violence, discrimination, sex, etc.

Footwear

For safety purposes, students must wear close-toed, flat shoes, with a rubber or other non-skid sole. These may include rain boots when appropriate. Students must wear sneakers, track shoes, or court shoes during physical education classes and activities. Students are not permitted to wear shoes with skate wheels on school property or any school-sponsored event. Sandals, flip-flops, and similar footwear are not permitted unless the student has an injury or condition that requires

special consideration. In such cases, the parent must present written notification to their child's principal.

Clothing

Uniform tops and bottoms may be purchased through GIA's business office. Students must wear tops that have the school's logo. **Every student is required to own a red GIA polo shirt for field trips and a white button-down GIA shirt for formal occasions such as the graduation and awards ceremony.**

PE uniforms

PE uniforms should consist of a plain, short sleeved t-shirt and sport shorts to allow for comfortable movement. Lower school students should wear their PE uniforms on their scheduled PE days. Upper school students will have the opportunity to change into their PE uniforms at the start of class and to then change back into their school uniforms at the end of class.

Lab Attire

For safety purposes all students in Grades 6-12 must adhere to the following regulations when doing science labs:

- Long pants and closed shoes are required
- Lab coats are required. Note: lab coats must be made of cotton or cotton blend fabric since 100% polyester can melt and burn the skin. Lab coats must fit the student appropriately. Loose clothing and coats can brush against Bunsen burners or chemicals whereas clothing that is too tight does not provide the space for a protective small air layer
- Long hair must be tied back in a ponytail and medium length hair must be pinned back and secured properly.
- Watches and small earrings may be allowed depending on the type of lab, but may not be worn as they present a potential burn hazard.

Dress Down Days

At various times throughout the year students will be allowed to attend school out of uniform. On those occasions, students are required to observe the guidelines for dress down days to maintain professionalism:

- Avoid shirts with cut-outs, lace, or see-through fabrics
- Avoid offensive words or symbols on any clothing
- Shirts must reach waistline and navel/midriff must be covered
- Shorts/skirts must be no more than 3 in above knees

Consequences

The principals are responsible for enforcing GIA's policy. Parents should pose questions regarding uniform expectations to their child's principal. Interpretation of the policies are at the discretion of the principal and such decisions will be final.

- Students who arrive at school out of uniform will be given a warning. If the attire is deemed inappropriate for the classroom students will be given a new uniform to change into and their parents will be invoiced.
- Students who arrive at school in footwear that does not meet our safety requirements will sit in the office until their parents can bring appropriate footwear for them to change into
- Students who do not adhere to uniform expectations will be handled by the Principal on a case-by-case basis.

Exceptions

In rare cases, the principal may grant a student a short- or long-term exception to one of the rules. Parents (not students) must make requests for exceptions directly to their child's principal. Please note that in such cases parents are required to supply their children with clothing that matches the school's as closely as possible. Grounds for an exception include:

- Medical conditions that are exacerbated by close-toed footwear. (Doctor's note required)
- Skin allergies or conditions that limit students to wearing specially treated fabrics. (Doctor's note required)
- Physical conditions that make it difficult for the student to button and unbutton trousers
- Religious tenets that require specific codes of dress

Please note that all students who are new to GIA will receive an automatic one-week grace period before being required to adhere to the policy.

COMMUNICATION

Positive communication along established lines with and between students, parents, teachers, the administration, and the Board is essential. GIA teachers and administrators encourage open, frequent, and respectful communication among all school stakeholders. Teachers and members of GIA's office staff are required to regularly communicate with parents and encourage the exchange of ideas. We ask that all GIA Community members adhere to the following general procedures.

School to Home Communication

Teachers in each section will provide parents and students with a school to home communication plan. Teachers will send home weekly newsletters to inform parents of events in the classroom. Parents may also access students' grades, week by week, via the PlusPortal. Each student and parent will have usernames and passwords. Via the student and parent portals, families are able to see

- An attendance and grades overview for the student
- A homework hand-in area
- A school directory with messaging capabilities

- Students' current grades and student information
- Dates for school upcoming school events including Board meetings
- Unit plans
- Assignments for each class

Please contact the student database administrator (see directory) for more information. In order to learn more about PlusPortals for Parents and Students you may visit <http://www.rediker.com/parentplus-studentplus>

In general, please direct queries as follows:

- Curriculum--- Director of Teaching and Learning
- Parent or Student Portal---Student Data Administrator
- Uniforms---Receptionist and/or Principal(s)
- After School Activities---Lower School Assistant
- Invoices or payments---Business Manager
- School lunch---Cafeteria vendor
- To make appointments---Receptionist
- Facilities--- Facilities Manager
- College advisement---Upper School Counselor
- Student health--- Nurse
- Discipline policy and procedures including attendance—Principal(s)
- Student Council--- Upper School Counselor
- Key Club---Advisor
- Service Learning---Upper School Counselor
- Online courses--- Data Manager
- AP Program or SAT--Upper School Counselor
- MAP Testing---Director of Teaching and Learning or Principal(s)
- To speak with Head of School---Assistant to the Head of School
- PTO---PTO President
- Report Cards---Student Data Administrator
- Yearbook---TBD

Email is a frequently used tool for communication between home and school. While convenient and quick, the intent of an email message can be easily misconstrued by the recipient and may cause hard feelings. If you receive an email that “doesn’t feel right,” please give the sender the benefit of the doubt and talk with him/her. We respectfully request that you refrain from sending an email when angry. Instead, call the office and ask for the teacher to return your call or meet with you in person. Teachers will respond to phone calls within 24 hours and emails within 48 hours.

Student progress conferences are important tools for facilitating good communication and aiding mutual reinforcement and assessment of educational goals for students. Strong communication and cooperation between teachers and parents/guardians facilitate the educational and emotional growth of the child. The teacher or parent may initiate a conference. Parents are asked to attend a minimum of two conferences per academic year, occurring at the end of the first and third terms. The first conference is generally a parent/teacher conference and the second is

a student-led conference. Parents are encouraged to schedule additional conferences whenever there is a special concern. Please inform the assistant to the principal or the receptionist and they will contact the teacher to arrange the conference. Teachers and other faculty members have many responsibilities and are not expected to see parents who drop in without an appointment.

Report Cards

Student report cards will be sent home electronically four times per year, at the end of each 9-week term. Report cards for Terms 2 and 4 will include narratives.

ABSENCES

Excused

A student is absent from classes due to co-curricular activities; school sponsored events; or a valid reason, supported by parent confirmation and documentation and approved by the Head of School. These do not count towards the 20% absence limit. Absences due to a special event or other reason are permitted up to three instances in a semester.

Unexcused absence

A student is absent without parent/guardian confirmation and/or for reasons not accepted by the school. These count as missed class time and towards the 20% absence limit.

Though absences are categorized as excused or unexcused, **all absences are added to the same pool of overall total absences as indicated on the report card.**

Tardies

A student arrives in class after scheduled start times. These count as missed class time and toward the 20% absence limit. For example, 50 minutes of cumulative tardiness is equivalent to one absence for the specific class. However, if the student arrives after the scheduled start time of their first class but the reason for tardiness qualifies as an excused absence, the minutes of tardiness will not count toward the school's 20% absence limit.

Procedures for Absences (Excused and Unexcused)

Whenever possible parents are strongly encouraged to make arrangements for absences well in advance.

Step 1: Send request to principal via email along with supporting documentation to request categorization as an excused absence.

Step 2: Notify the reason for the absence.

Step 3: Upon return, request make-up work from the homeroom teacher. The student will be granted as many days as he/she was absent to complete the make-up work. Students may be required to remain in class during a portion of recess/lunch or after school for as many days to complete any missed assessments or assignments that require one-on-one instruction. Students will receive credit for the work completed. Students may also be required to do additional homework to demonstrate mastery of the skills learned by the rest of the class during the absence. In the case where a student missed an assessment, taking a makeup assessment will be at the teacher's discretion. Teachers will evaluate each case based on: amount of instruction received during makeup period, demonstration of student readiness, type of assessment missed.

Excessive Absences

If a student misses more than 20% (9 days) of the term he/she will receive an incomplete on the report card for that term and will have the opportunity to make up missed work. If a student misses more than 30% (14 days) he/she will receive an incomplete on the report card for that term.

Exceptions

Where a student is enrolling for the first time and misses more than 20% (9 days) due to a delayed start time/enrollment, he or she will receive a report card with narratives on progress.

RESOLVING CONCERNS

Protocol

- 1 Concerns relating to the classroom must be referred to the teacher affected. Parents or guardians must request a conference with the teacher to discuss classroom concerns. If the parent/guardian does not feel that the problem has been adequately resolved, he or she will be free to bring the issue to the attention of the Principal.
- 2 If after the above step has been followed, the parent/guardian does not feel that the problem has been adequately resolved, he or she is free to bring the issue to the attention of the Head of School.
- 3 If after the above steps have been followed, the parent/guardian is free to bring the concern to the Board. The concern should be addressed to the Board in a formal letter that indicates the steps that have been taken and describes the resolution the parent/guardian seeks. The letter should be sent to the Chairperson of the Board who will promptly acknowledge receipt of the letter. Letters must be submitted at least one week before the regularly scheduled monthly Board meeting to enable the item to be placed on the agenda. Any complaints relating to the Head of School or employees will be heard only in an Executive Session of the Board. The decision of the Board in such matters is final. The minutes of Executive sessions are confidential, but the person filing the concern will be notified of the Board's decision in the matter within 14 days of the decision.

Meetings with Principal or Head of School

The Principals are the instructional leaders of the school whereas the Head of School has general oversight. If you have questions regarding curriculum, the academic program, etc. please contact the Director of Teaching and Learning to schedule an appointment. If you have questions of a general nature or other reasons to speak with the principal or Head of School, please schedule an appointment by contacting the respective assistant.

The Head of School is the normal channel of communication between the Board and the school community. Positive communication along established lines with and between students, parents, teachers, and administration and the Board is essential and desired.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

*Please note, the student discipline procedures are being reviewed. The new procedures will be shared with students and parents within the first quarter of school. Until that time, faculty will follow the existing procedures listed below.

One goal of GIA's discipline program is to assist each student to develop self-discipline and to learn to accept responsibility for his or her actions. Our goal is to work in partnership with parents to help each student develop sound ethics, personal accountability, and a sense of responsibility to society and the environment. Parents are important partners in the achievement of good student conduct and will be informed of behavioral concerns and disciplinary actions such as after school detentions. **Corporal punishment is prohibited at GIA.**

At the beginning of each academic year, parents will receive information from homeroom teachers about expectations for student behavior according to grade level. Our student behavior policies reflect our school community's five agreements to:

- Show mutual respect
 - This agreement helps people, young and old, respect other's personal feelings, physical space, belongings, cultural differences, uniqueness and special contributions.
- Consistently strive for a personal best
 - For children and adults to improve, they must always be working at their personal best. Setting personal goals and working toward them is the pursuit of excellence.
- Allow others the right to pass
 - The right to pass is used during group sharing activities and is designed to build "community" and a positive environment for learning. Research has shown that voluntary participation enhances learning, thus this agreement is important for building a learning environment that feels safe and comfortable for each student. The right to pass is not

practiced during academic instruction time, and students do not have the option to “pass” on academic assignments.

- Show appreciation to others and avoid put downs
 - This two-fold agreement is very important. It means treating each other kindly and stating appreciations for unique qualities and helpful contributions. It also means avoiding negative remarks, name-calling, hurtful gestures and behaviors.
- Listen attentively to everyone
 - Attentive listening means paying attention to another’s expression of ideas and feelings, letting others know that they have been heard, and checking for understanding. It means, “listening with your heart as well as your head.”

Rights and Duties

Paramount to all of the rules is respect. GIA’s student discipline philosophy is underpinned by our official rights and duties, which are posted and visible in each classroom and on the school’s web site. These five rights and duties listed below serve as a basis for ongoing instruction and discipline:

- Students have the right to learn.
- Teachers have the right to teach.
- Students and teachers have the duty to help and support one another.
- Everyone has the right to be respected and treated fairly.
- Respect the property of others.

Dangerous Weapons

Students are prohibited from possessing, carrying, exhibiting, and displaying weapons, firearms, explosives, knives, or other dangerous objects while on school property or at school-sponsored events. Any device that is used with the intent to harm, threaten, or harass is considered a weapon.

Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping Devices

Students are not permitted to possess alcohol, tobacco products, or cigarettes of any type on GIA's campus or at any school events. Students are also prohibited from attending any school sponsored events while under the influence of any of these products. These rules apply to all students, including those who are over 18 years of age. Possession of one of these items will result in certain suspension from school for a first offense and possible permanent expulsion from our school. The school also reserves the right to report the matter to the police.

Violation of School Regulations

Violation of school regulations may lead to discipline sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

ANTI-BULLYING

Students thrive in an environment wherein they feel accepted, safe, and supported. At GIA, we believe that **all** students and staff members are responsible for creating a safe, inclusive, caring and protective environment in which everyone can work and learn in an atmosphere free from intimidation.

Bullying strikes at the basis of these values and prevents students from reaching for excellence in every dimension of life. Students are entitled to receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. At the beginning of every academic year and at other specifically designated times students will receive training on bullying. It is important for students to notify a teacher or parent whenever they feel bullied.

Students who are bullied may develop low self-confidence or esteem, feelings of insecurity, extreme anxiety and/or depression. Students who witness bullying may experience feelings of distress, guilt, or anxiety.

Students who engage in bullying behaviors are at risk of becoming depressed, performing poorly in school, and developing antisocial characteristics (Source: Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools in Ireland, 2013).

Definitions

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behavior, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Examples of unacceptable behavior include:

- Physical (including sexual) assault
- Verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks
- Cyber-bullying is the use of electronic technology to harass, threaten or intimidate someone; examples include using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, videos, What's App, Snapchat, e-mail, etc.
- Indirect emotional tormenting by exclusion from social groups or spreading malicious rumors.

The above list is not exhaustive but merely represents the most common forms of bullying. To list all forms of bullying is beyond the scope of this policy.

Responsibilities of Students, Parents & Teacher

Students

- Tell/report if he or she is being bullied or is aware that someone else is being bullied.
- Help anyone who is being bullied.
- Participate in developing and upholding a creed against bullying.

Teachers

- Ensure students are supervised at all times and remain vigilant about supervisory duties.
- Model mutual respect and appropriate behavior at all times.
- Teachers are expected to take a professional problem-solving approach that is caring but calm and unemotional when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behavior reported by pupils, staff or parents. Teachers and other parties are also expected to protect the privacy of all involved and to conduct interviews with sensitivity.

Parents

- Watch for signs that their children may be experiencing bullying
- Encourage their children to “tell” / “report” if they are bullied
- Speak to the homeroom teacher/mentor, principal, or head of student affairs regarding incidences of known or suspected bullying.
- Parents and students are expected to cooperate with any bullying investigation and assist the school in resolving issues.
-

All reports of bullying will be investigated by the principal. If the principal determines that bullying behavior has occurred, they will contact the parents of the parties involved to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. Parents are expected to reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.

DEVICES, BYOD AND NETWORK

Computers, PDAs, and smartphones can be used as valuable tools to support learning and the pursuit of knowledge. Students may use devices that fall into the following categories: (1) laptops, (2) netbooks, (3) tablets, (4) e-Readers, and (5) smart phones. However, if misused, these devices can be detrimental to the learning environment. GIA has a “BYOD” (bring your own device Program). We encourage students to use personal devices appropriately. Students must adhere to the following expectations:

- Devices may not be used for personal reasons (texting, phone calls, etc.) during class time. Students may use devices for personal reasons only during designated times and in designated locations.
- Students may use devices during class time for educational purposes but only after permission has been granted by the teacher. Teachers will confiscate devices if students do not adhere to this expectation.
- During exams, each student must lodge all personal devices with the teacher at the beginning of class. Failure to do so will likely result in a grade of zero on the exam.
- School personnel are under no obligation to search for students’ missing devices. Students will not be excused from class in order to search for a misplaced device.

GIA will not be held accountable for lost or stolen devices. Parents have the responsibility of determining their child's age appropriateness to take on the responsibility of having a personal device. . We discourage students from leaving any electronic devices in their desks or lockers. Such devices should be safeguarded by the owner or lodged by Mr. Richards, Ms. Joseph, or Ms. Velazco for safekeeping. GIA will only be liable for damage, loss, or theft that may occur when a device has been lodged by a member of the school's IT Team for safekeeping.

BYOD Program for Grades 6-12

All students of Grades 6 through 12 are required to have a device with wireless Internet connectivity capability.

Device requirements:

Machine Type	Laptop or Tablet
Platform	PC or Mac
Processor	Intel i3 or Higher AMD Athlon II or Higher (older processors can be accepted if 4-6GB RAM is available)
RAM	4 GB or Higher
Hard Drive	250 GB or Higher
Operating System	Windows 7 Professional or Higher, Mac OSX 10.6 or Higher The operating system must be in English; must have document creating capabilities (e.g. Word)
Wireless	802.11b/g/n (2.4 GHz or higher)
Ports	2 or more USB ports preferred, Audio in/out, built-In microphone, VGA or HDMI
Battery Life	At least 4+ hours (4+ cell or higher)

Students may use their electronic devices in class as instructed by the teacher. Students may use their electronic devices during classroom instruction, the lunch period, dismissal time, when in the Library or when otherwise authorized by school personnel provided that the devices are being used in accordance with GIA's acceptable use of technology agreement.

Each student will be required to sign an Acceptable Use of Technology agreement, one copy of which will remain in the student's school file and one copy of which will be given to parents.

If you have questions of a technical nature, please refer those to the Ed Tech Coordinator or IT Manager. If you have questions about how technology and the Internet will be used to support your child's educational experience at GIA, please contact your child's principal. If you have questions regarding GIA's educational philosophies, please contact the Head of School.

NETWORK USE GUIDELINES

General school expectations for behavior and communications apply. Users are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or in any school facility, and should be polite and respectful. Communications on the network are often public in nature. Within reason, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored. Students are held responsible for seeking appropriate materials and avoiding other potentially offensive materials. The list below illustrates, but is not limited to, actions which are not permitted:

- Displaying, saving or distributing offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene or vulgar language
- Damaging or disrupting computers, computer systems or computer networks
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Revealing the personal address or the phone numbers of students or colleagues
- Violating copyright laws
- Using another's password or account without their permission
- Trespassing in another's folders or work
- Intentionally wasting limited resources (i.e., bandwidth, file space and printers)
- Downloading software for non-instructional purposes, such as music
- Distributing any material in such a manner that might cause congestion of the video and data network
- Using chat programs without permission
- Employing the network for commercial, political or profit-making purposes
- Accessing inappropriate sites

Violations may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the school administration.

We encourage students to use their own laptop computers. However, we require that any computers using GIA's network have up to date, comprehensive virus protection. When students are not using their laptops or other electronics, they must lodge them in the office for safekeeping. GIA is not liable for damage to or loss of computers and electronic devices or phones that have not been lodged in the office.

SECURITY AND EMERGENCIES

School Nurse – Health Room

A health room is located on the ground floor of the main building. The school nurse will be available for consultation and emergency situations. All accidents in which injury occurs, or may have occurred, are reported immediately to the administration. Any injury should have an accident report filled out regarding it. In cases where injury or illness is or may be presumed to be serious, the parents shall be informed. Parents must be informed of any head injury. The school nurse and other staff members have been trained as “first responders” and may be called upon to assist in an emergency.

Drills

Fire drill: A fire alarm will be signaled by the sounding of an alarm throughout all buildings. Students and teachers will leave the buildings by filing out in an orderly line. They should then form single lines by class on the field. Teachers should make a head count and immediately notify the Head of School or Head of School designee. if any student is missing. Students and teachers may re-enter the buildings only after permission to do so has been given by the Head of School or Head of School designee. Visitors to campus should follow these procedures.

This protocol is followed in case of fire, smoke, a gas leak or similar situation in which all students, personnel, and visitors should evacuate the buildings for their personal safety.

Take cover drill: An announcement will be repeated across the PA system. Students and teachers who are outdoors should quickly walk to their homerooms and sit on the floor away from any windows. If the classroom does not have a windowless area, the students should sit in the hallway. Students and teachers may resume regular activities only after permission to do so has been given by the Head of School. Visitors to campus should find the closest windowless area to shelter.

This protocol is used in case of gunfire or explosions outside of the school grounds. It is not used if gunfire or an explosion occurs within the school grounds.

Lock down

An announcement will be relayed via the PA system or intercom. If this is not possible, the message will be relayed via cell phone and other means. Students and teachers are to barricade themselves in the classrooms. Visitors to campus should find the closest area to shelter. Physical education classes should move into the closest classroom, bathroom or locker room, lock all doors, and find a safe area (one that is least visible from windows and doors). Students should move to the nearest classrooms. If students, teachers, or visitors are in the bathrooms, they should move to a stall, lock it, and stand on the toilet so that they cannot be seen from below the door. Anyone in the hallway should move to the closest classroom immediately.

This protocol is followed in the event there is an intruder on campus.

eEmergency Notification (School Messaging System)

The school maintains an emergency messaging system that sends notifications to families in three formats: phone call, text message, or email to the contact information we have on file for you. Drills and tests are conducted periodically to ensure accuracy. We appreciate feedback from you in confirming receipt or reporting non-receipt of messages. Please keep your contact information up to date, by promptly informing us of any changes (see the [Emergency Action Plan linked](#)).

GIA FAMILY HANDBOOK AGREEMENT

The Georgetown International Academy Handbook contains important information regarding the policies and practices of the GIA.

I, _____, as the parent of

_____, have been given access to the Handbook for the 2023-24 school year. I have read the Handbook with my child and we understand and agree that we shall abide by all of the policies set out in this Handbook.

Signed Parent:

Signed Student:

Date: