

GEORGETOWN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026–2027 • Aligned Edition

Curiosity • Empathy • Agency • Reflection • Social Responsibility

Aligned with the Consolidated Board Policy Manual, the Board Operating Procedures Manual, the HR Manual, and the By-Laws of Georgetown International Academy Inc.

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GENERAL GIA INFORMATION

Vision

GIA cultivates globally-minded, empathetic leaders ready to drive success and innovation in a changing world.

Aligned to Consolidated Board Policy Manual §1110.

Mission

To ignite innovative, deeper learning that empowers students to excel, embrace diversity, and pursue their passions in an inclusive community.

Aligned to Consolidated Board Policy Manual §1110.

Core Values

Our foundational pillars are Academics, Social Emotional Learning, and Belonging (athletics and activities are included in Belonging). Our core values are:

- **Curiosity** — uphold the highest standards of education; cultivate continuous improvement and intellectual curiosity.
- **Agency** — empower individuals to become well-rounded, self-directed learners.
- **Reflection** — promotes a growth mindset, resilience, and adaptability for life-long learning.
- **Empathy** — fostering understanding and appreciation of our interconnected world; value diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusivity.
- **Social Responsibility** — instill ethical leadership, integrity, accountability, civic engagement, service learning, and environmental sustainability.

School Board

Our School Board consists of seven elected members and an appointed U.S. Embassy representative who are responsible for guiding the school's strategic direction. The Board approves policies and oversees the annual budget, ensuring GIA's continued commitment to academic excellence and global awareness. Board meetings, governance, and powers are set out in the By-Laws of Georgetown International Academy Inc. (1991, amended 2015), the Consolidated Board Policy Manual, and the Board Operating Procedures Manual.

The Board typically meets monthly. To contact the School Board, email board@giagy.org.

PTO

The GIA Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) supports our educational program. The PTO serves as a voice for children, a resource for families, and an advocate for the education and well-being of every child. The PTO is authorised by the Board to raise funds and operates under the GIA PTO Constitution approved by the Board (Board Policy §7210).

School Affiliations

GIA is an American Overseas School (A/OS) and receives aid grants from the U.S. Department of State. GIA is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and is a member of AMISA, AAIE, ISS, and an associate of the TRI-association.

Shared Community Statement

In fulfilling the mission of Georgetown International Academy, we are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where all students, staff, and families feel valued and respected. We prioritise fairness, respect, and a global mindset, preparing students to be socially responsible citizens. The Head of School is responsible for creating a safe and nurturing space where all students and staff can thrive, regardless of background or circumstance (Board Policy §1170).

Primary Contacts

As a parent or guardian, you may have questions or concerns. The following staff members should be contacted:

Area of focus	Who to contact
Admissions, enrollment, attendance certificates, withdrawal process, and transcripts for Pre K3–Grade 5.	Admissions Manager, Nashana Persaud Director of Admissions & Development, Billie Jo Heister admissions@giagy.org
After School Activities	Activities Coordinator: Mel Bowman — bowman@giagy.org

Area of focus	Who to contact
Appointment with Head of School	Executive Assistant: Lizanne London — london@giagy.org
Appointments with Principal	Upper School Assistant: Nyasha Bunbury — bunbury@giagy.org Lower School Assistant: Jasmine Henry — henry@giagy.org
AP Program or SAT	Upper School Counselor: Leah Ben-Israel — ben-israel@giagy.org
Athletics	Athletic Director: Michael Lomax — mlomax@giagy.org
Attendance procedures	Division Principal
Classroom questions or concerns	Classroom Teacher (always Step 1 of Resolving Concerns)
College advisement	Upper School Counselor: Leah Ben-Israel — ben-israel@giagy.org
Curriculum	Director of Teaching and Learning: Karli Lomax — lomax@giagy.com
Discipline policy	Division Principals
Development: GIA Alumni, Social Media, Marketing	Director of Admissions & Development, Billie Jo Heister bheister@giagy.com
Facilities	Director of Operations: Sarah Pfund — pfund@giagy.org Manager of Operations: Mustafa Dick — dick@giagy.org
Tuition, Invoices or payments	Director of Finance: Tineka Singh — singh@giagy.com
MAP Testing	Director of Teaching and Learning: Karli Lomax — lomax@giagy.com
Online courses	US Counselor: Leah Ben-Israel — ben-israel@giagy.org
Powerschool Parent or Student Portal	IT/Data Administrator: Stephanie Joseph — joseph@giagy.com

Area of focus	Who to contact
PTO	PTO President: pto@giagy.org
Report Cards	IT/Data Administrator: Stephanie Joseph — joseph@giagy.com
School lunch	Cafeteria vendor: Crumbs Bakery — crumbsbakerygy@gmail.com
Student Council	LS Counselor: Lisa Plank — plank@giagy.org US Counselor: Leah Ben-Israel — ben-israel@giagy.org
Student health	Doctor Ali — nurse@giagy.com
Service Learning	Upper School Counselor: Leah Ben-Israel — ben-israel@giagy.org
Uniforms	Receptionist: Chad Campbell — campbell@giagy.org
Technology Helpdesk	Director of Technology — techsupport@giagy.org

Calendar

GIA's 2026–2027 and 2027–2028 calendars are posted on the school's website (giagy.com). The school year is organized on a two-semester, four-term schedule. GIA observes all declared Guyanese holidays and Thanksgiving (U.S.). Other holidays observed by GIA families are recognized through special in-school observances. The Board approves the annual calendar (Board Policy §6510 — minimum 180, maximum 190 student attendance days).

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Knowing who does what in the School community helps families direct questions and concerns to the right person and understand how decisions are made. The four roles below are arranged in descending order of overall school accountability. Each role works in support of the others, and each is bound by Board policy as set out in the Consolidated Board Policy Manual, the By-Laws of Georgetown International Academy Inc., and the HR Manual.

Head of School (Superintendent / Director)

Title and Authority

By resolution of the Board of Directors, the title “Head of School” used throughout this Handbook refers to the same office as the “Superintendent” of the School and the “Director” established by Articles XI(D), XVIII(A)–(B), and XIX of the By-Laws of Georgetown International Academy, Inc. All three titles designate a single office — the Chief Executive Officer of the School — and bind that office identically. In external correspondence with accrediting bodies, the U.S. Department of State, embassies, host-country regulators, and universities, the title “Superintendent” may be used; in internal and family communications, the title “Head of School” is used. The titles are interchangeable.

Reports to: The Board of Directors.

Role Summary

The Superintendent is the Chief Executive Officer of the School and the Board’s sole employee. The Superintendent translates the Board’s vision, mission, and policy into the strategic direction, organizational structure, and educational program of the School, and is accountable to the Board for the performance of the institution as a whole. The office exercises executive authority over all personnel, programs, operations, and resources of the School, and serves as the primary point of accountability between the Board and the school community.

Primary Responsibilities (per Board Policy §2110)

- **Governance and Board Relations** — Serves as Chief Executive Officer of the School and as the Board’s principal policy advisor; recommends policy where new or revised policy is needed; implements adopted Board policy through administrative procedures, directives, regulations, and guidelines; and ensures that Board decisions are faithfully executed across the institution.
- **Executive Leadership** — Provides strategic and operational leadership of the School through the Deputy Head of School and the Principals, who report to the Head of School. Establishes the organizational structure, sets annual goals, and holds the leadership team accountable for results consistent with Board policy and the School’s strategic plan.
- **Human Resources** — Holds final authority over the recruitment, hiring, assignment, evaluation, professional development, discipline, and dismissal of all School personnel, including Directors and Principals (Board Policy §3110–§3250; HR Manual Chapters 3–9). Ensures personnel practices comply with Board policy, host-country law, and the School’s equity, health, and safety obligations.
- **Vision, Mission, and Culture** — Articulates and stewards the Vision and Mission of the School (Board Policy §1110) with families, faculty, students, the Board, and the wider community. Establishes and sustains a school culture grounded in the School’s core values of curiosity, agency, reflection, empathy, and social responsibility.
- **Educational Program** — Oversees the design, delivery, and continuous improvement of the comprehensive curriculum and its assessment framework (Board Policy §6110–§6350), ensuring alignment with the School’s mission, accreditation standards, and the needs of an internationally mobile student body.
- **Safety, Health, and Equity** — Creates and maintains a safe, secure, and welcoming environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Ensures compliance with workplace health-and-safety standards, child-protection requirements (Board Policy §4820, §4830), and the School’s equity policies (Board Policy §1170). Exercises delegated emergency authority under Board Policy §2310 and §5650–§5660.
- **Finance and Operations** — Directs the financial and physical stewardship of the School, including strategic planning, revenue generation, budget development, expenditure control, capital planning, and facilities management, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Board Treasurer (Board Policy §5110–§5690), and within the framework approved by the Board.

- **Accreditation and Regulatory Compliance** — Maintains the School’s accreditation status with NEASC and any additional accrediting bodies, and ensures the School remains in good standing with all host-country regulatory authorities and the U.S. Department of State Office of Overseas Schools.
- **External Relations and Advancement** — Serves as the chief external representative of the School. Coordinates communications, public relations, government and international relations, and institutional advancement activities with families, alumni, partner schools, embassies, host-country authorities, and the broader community.
- **Final Administrative Authority on Student Matters** — Holds final administrative authority on individual student matters, including admission (Board Policy §4110), retention and advancement (Board Policy §4210), expulsion (upon recommendation of the Principal, Board Policy §4520), and exceptions to curriculum, attendance (Board Policy §4610), and dress-code policies.
- **Final Escalation Point** — Serves as the final administrative point of escalation for family and staff concerns before any matter reaches the Board (Board Policy §7120; HR Manual Chapter 14; see Resolving Concerns).

Deputy Head of School (Chief Operating Officer)

Title and Authority

The Deputy Head of School is the senior operations officer of the School and the principal deputy to the Head of School. In external correspondence, the title “Chief Operating Officer” may be used; internally and in family communications, the title “Deputy Head of School” is used. The titles are interchangeable and bind the office identically. The Deputy Head exercises the full authority of the Head of School in matters delegated by the Head of School and serves as Acting Head of School whenever the Head of School is unavailable.

Reports to: The Head of School.

Role Summary

The Deputy Head of School is the principal operations leader of the School. The Deputy Head focuses on the day-to-day running of the institution so that the Head of School can focus on governance, strategy, accreditation, and external relations. The Deputy Head coordinates across academic, facilities, technology, security,

transportation, food services, and after-school activities; chairs the School Operations meeting; and serves as the operational escalation point for non-academic, non-divisional concerns.

Primary Responsibilities (per Board Policy §2120)

- **Acting Head of School** — Acts as Head of School during any absence (travel, leave, or unavailability) with the full authority of the office for that period, and immediately notifies the Board Chair of any decision taken in that capacity that requires Board awareness (Board Policy §2120).
- **Operational Leadership** — Owns operational coordination across the academic, facilities, technology, security, transportation, food-services, and after-school-activities functions. Chairs the School Operations meeting, bringing together the Principals, the Director of Finance, the Director of Technology, the Director of Facilities, the Director of Human Resources, and other Directors as appropriate.
- **Calendar and Scheduling** — Owns the implementation of the School Calendar approved by the Board (Board Policy §6510), the daily school schedule, the examination calendar, and the event calendar.
- **Emergency Preparedness** — Owns the School's emergency plans and drills, including standfast, lockdown, on-site evacuation, and off-site evacuation. Ensures plans are tested and reviewed per Board Policy §5650 and §5660 and maintained in the Emergency Procedures Manual; coordinates with the School Nurse on the Communicable Disease Plan (Board Policy §4870).
- **Cross-Divisional Coordination** — Coordinates between the Lower School and Upper School Principals on cross-division matters, including LS-US transition, school-wide events, school-wide discipline implementation, and uniform standards.
- **Finance and Procurement Support** — Supports the Head of School in budget preparation, vendor management, contract review, procurement, and risk identification, in coordination with the Director of Finance (Board Policy §5210–§5280).
- **Facilities and Security Liaison** — Liaises with the Director of Facilities on building security, the semi-annual maintenance survey, capital projects, and grounds (Board Policy §5690); maintains the School's relationship with on-site security and the Placa-registered vehicle protocol.
- **Technology and Data Liaison** — Liaises with the Director of Technology on systems, data protection (Board Policy §5540), CCTV (Board Policy §5550), and the Acceptable Use Policy for Students (Board Policy §6345).

- **Personnel Support** — Supports the Head of School in onboarding, induction, and the operational supervision of non-instructional staff, in coordination with the Director of Human Resources (HR Manual Chapters 5–9).
- **Operational Escalation Point** — Receives parent and staff escalations on operational matters that are non-academic and non-divisional (e.g., transportation, security, facilities, food services). Resolves where appropriate or escalates to the Head of School. Operational escalations from school-sanctioned WhatsApp groups are routed through this office (see Communication — WhatsApp).
- **Delegated Authority** — Exercises any further authority specifically delegated by the Head of School and documented in the Deputy Head’s annual delegation memorandum.

Principal — Lower School / Upper School (Division Principal)

Title and Authority

Each Division Principal is the chief academic, pastoral, and disciplinary leader of one school division — the Lower School (PK3 through Grade 5) or the Upper School (Grades 6 through 12). The Division Principal is the building leader for the division and the named administrator for parent and staff matters within the division. The office is established under Board Policy §2130 and the HR Manual Chapter 9.

Reports to: The Head of School, with day-to-day operational coordination through the Deputy Head of School.

Role Summary

The Division Principal owns the educational program, the student-conduct environment, and the family relationship for the division. The Principal supervises and evaluates teachers and teaching assistants within the division, chairs the divisional Discipline Review Committee, and serves as Step 2 of the Resolving Concerns hierarchy. The Principal advises the Head of School on divisional performance and recommends expulsion in cases that exceed the Principal’s authority.

Primary Responsibilities (per Board Policy §2130)

- **Instructional Leadership** — Owns the implementation of curriculum within the division (Board Policy §6110–§6140) in coordination with the Director of Teaching

and Learning. Ensures alignment with AERO standards, Common Core, NGSS, the AP program, and the IB Diploma Programme as adopted.

- **Student Conduct and Discipline** — Owns student conduct and discipline within the division (Board Policy §4510–§4520). Makes decisions on warnings, parent meetings, behaviour-support plans, and short-term suspensions; chairs the divisional Discipline Review Committee; recommends expulsion to the Head of School where warranted (Board Policy §4520).
- **Attendance** — Owns attendance management within the division (Board Policy §4610). Reviews attendance data, convenes the Attendance Committee at the prescribed thresholds, approves travel-related absences and Attendance Improvement Plans, and refers exceptional cases to the Head of School.
- **Family Engagement (Step 2 of Resolving Concerns)** — Owns the parent and guardian relationship for the division. Serves as Step 2 of the Resolving Concerns hierarchy (Board Policy §7120) and resolves concerns at the divisional level wherever possible before any escalation to the Head of School.
- **Faculty Supervision and Evaluation** — Supervises and evaluates the teachers and teaching assistants in the division (Board Policy §3250; HR Manual Chapter 9) with approval and final sign-off by the Head of School. Identifies professional-development needs and coordinates divisional in-service.
- **Safeguarding and Anti-Bullying** — Owns the division-level implementation of child safeguarding (Board Policy §4820, §4830) and anti-bullying (Board Policy §4550). Receives, documents, and acts on safeguarding concerns the same school day and coordinates with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Every employee remains a mandatory reporter.
- **Divisional Operations and Events** — Owns the homeroom and advisory schedule, the divisional events calendar, parent-teacher conferences, divisional assemblies, and ceremonies.
- **Field Trips** — Approves grade-level field trips for the division within Board chaperone-ratio standards (Board Policy §6250). Recommends overnight and international trips to the Head of School for final approval.
- **Dress Code and Exceptions** — Administers the uniform policy within the division and grants short- or long-term uniform exceptions on request from parents (Family Handbook — Uniforms; aligned to Board Policy §4570).
- **Grade Placement and Promotion** — Reviews recommendations on grade retention and advancement (Board Policy §4210) and forwards to the Head of School for final decision.
- **Reporting and Data** — Receives written progress, assessment, and attendance data from teachers; reports to the Head of School on divisional academic

outcomes, conduct trends, and safeguarding caseload; and contributes the divisional narrative to the Board's reports.

- **WhatsApp Oversight (Divisional)** — Serves as the named escalation point for school-sanctioned WhatsApp groups within the division (see Communication). Has authority to require the removal of non-compliant content and the closure of a non-compliant group, with notice to the Head of School.

Teacher

Title and Authority

The Teacher is the front-line educator of the School and the primary point of contact for parents and students on the day-to-day classroom experience. The office is established under Board Policy §3210 and the HR Manual Chapters 3, 9, 12, and 19. The Teacher acts under the supervision of the Division Principal and within the framework of the GIA Curriculum, the Faculty Handbook, the HR Manual, the Acceptable Use Policy, and the GIA Code of Ethics.

Reports to: The Division Principal (Lower School or Upper School, as applicable).

Role Summary

The Teacher is the chief instructional practitioner in the classroom and the first and primary point of contact for parents on classroom matters. The Teacher plans, delivers, and assesses instruction; manages the classroom; communicates with families; safeguards children; and exemplifies the School's core values in daily practice. The Teacher is Step 1 of the Resolving Concerns hierarchy and a mandatory reporter under Board policy.

Primary Responsibilities (per Board Policy §3210)

- **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment** — Plans, delivers, and assesses instruction against the GIA curriculum (AERO standards, Common Core, NGSS, and AP/IB as applicable). Differentiates instruction for the students in the class and contributes to grade-level and departmental curriculum review (Board Policy §6110–§6140).
- **Classroom Management** — Establishes and enforces classroom expectations consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and the school discipline policy (Board Policy §4510); employs proactive behaviour support and restorative practices; refers cases beyond the classroom level to the Division Principal.

- **Attendance and Records** — Maintains accurate attendance records, reports patterns and concerns to the Division Principal at the prescribed thresholds (Board Policy §4610), records grades in PowerSchool, and prepares report-card narratives per the Family Handbook.
- **Family Communication (Step 1 of Resolving Concerns)** — Communicates proactively with families through the weekly class email, the PowerSchool Parent Portal, parent-teacher conferences, and other school-supported channels. Responds to parent emails and phone calls within 24–48 hours or the following business day. Receives and works to resolve parent concerns at the classroom level as Step 1 of the Resolving Concerns hierarchy (Board Policy §7120).
- **Safeguarding (Mandatory Reporting)** — Owns first-tier safeguarding. Every Teacher is a mandatory reporter (Board Policy §4820, §4830; HR Manual Chapter 19). Concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead the same school day. Teachers review the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct and complete mandatory annual training.
- **Supervision** — Supervises students at all times during instructional time and on assigned duties (recess, lunch, drop-off, dismissal, and field trips), within Board chaperone-ratio standards (Board Policy §6250).
- **Professional Practice** — Participates in faculty meetings, professional development, curriculum-review cycles, and the annual evaluation process (HR Manual Chapter 9). Maintains qualifications and certifications required for the assigned role.
- **Code of Ethics and Confidentiality** — Adheres to the GIA Code of Ethics, the Faculty Handbook, the HR Manual (including Personal Technology and Social Media — Chapter 12), the Acceptable Use Policy (Board Policy §6345), and the confidentiality obligations of Board Policy §1635.
- **Generative AI in Student Work** — Authorises, structures, and enforces the use of generative AI tools in the classroom consistent with Board Policy §6350; ensures students cite the tool used, describe the prompt or method, and take personal responsibility for submitted work.
- **Outside Tutoring** — Does not accept private payment for the tutoring of own current students and does not engage in any outside activity that conflicts with the School's interests or that compromises classroom impartiality (Board Policy §3520).
- **WhatsApp Group Use** — Administers school-sanctioned WhatsApp groups for the assigned class where established and ensures group content remains within the Family Handbook rules (see Communication — WhatsApp); escalates breaches to the Division Principal.

STUDENT & PARENT EXPECTATIONS

Student Code of Conduct

At GIA, students, parents, and staff work together to make our school a safe, welcoming, and exciting place to learn by embracing the core values of Curiosity, Agency, Reflection, Empathy, and Social Responsibility. We expect parents to embrace these values in all activities and interactions with students, staff, and other families.

Curiosity — stay open to learning

- Be excited to learn new things and ask questions.
- Participate in class and school activities with a positive attitude.
- Do your own work honestly and give credit where it's due.
- Help your classmates by sharing ideas and working together.

Agency — take responsibility for your choices

- Set goals for yourself and work hard to reach them.
- Be proactive — find solutions to problems instead of waiting for others to fix them.
- Own your actions, whether they lead to success or mistakes.
- Ask for help when you need it and be willing to help others.

Reflection — learn and grow from experience

- Think about what you're doing well and where you can improve.
- Don't give up when things get hard — challenges help us grow.
- Listen to feedback with an open mind and use it to get better.
- Believe in yourself and keep trying.

Empathy — treat others with kindness and respect

- Make GIA a place where everyone feels valued and included.
- Listen to others, even when they see things differently than you.
- Use kind words and actions to create a safe and welcoming space.
- Speak up against bullying, unfair treatment, and unkind behavior.

Social Responsibility — make a positive impact

- Help make GIA and the world a better place through your actions.
- Be honest, fair, and trustworthy.
- Take care of our environment by making smart, sustainable choices.
- Follow school rules so everyone can learn and feel safe.

Attendance

Consistent school attendance is vital for academic success. The normal school day for students runs 8:00 am – 3:00 pm (Wednesday early dismissal at 2:30 pm). Students who are not seated by or arrive after 8:00 am will be marked tardy.

Student Expectations

- Attend all classes regularly and on time.
- Parents/guardians must notify the school by 8:00 am on the day of an absence.
- Arrive to each class on time, prepared to learn.
- Do not leave school before the end of the regular day without a parent/guardian first notifying the school office.
- Remain in school for all regular classes, festivals, and special events.

Absences

- **Excused absence** — approved with appropriate documentation (illness, family emergency, religious observance, pre-approved travel, school-related activities). For extended travel plans, families must request approval from the Division Principal at least two weeks in advance. Travel during academic sessions is discouraged.
- **Unexcused absence** — any absence not verified or accepted by the school.
- **Late to class** — unexcused lateness exceeding 30 minutes is recorded as an unexcused absence for that class period.

Late to School (All Students)

- **Late to school** — a student who accumulates three (3) unexcused tardies to school in a term will be issued a 30-minute after-school detention. Parents/guardians will be contacted, and the detention will be served within three (3) school days of the third tardy.

Attendance Response (cumulative across the school year)

Absences / threshold	Response
2 consecutive unexcused absences	Teacher records in school student information system, attempts follow-up with parent; gentle reminder.
3–4 Absences	Attendance concerns notification to parent/guardian; students may complete missed work during recess/lunch; teacher conference.
5–6 Absences	Mandatory meeting with Division Principal, student, parent; written Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP); ineligibility for non-academic privileges may begin.
7+	Attendance Committee review (Division Principal, Counsellor/Dean of Students, Homeroom/Advisory Teacher); formal warning letter; in some cases impact on course credit (HS), retention decisions (K–8), or documentation for school reports.
8 (15% of term)	The teacher notifies the student, parent, and division leader; the teacher creates an improvement plan with parents.
9 (20% of term)	Narrative progress report as an addendum to the report card.
15 (30% of term)	Grade of Incomplete — negative effect on GPA for grades 9–12; narrative progress report addendum. The Head of School (Superintendent) may authorise an exception for special circumstances (Board Policy §4610).

Late to Class Consequences (Grades 6–12)

- Because Upper School attendance is taken each block, the following cumulative, per-class, per-term consequences apply to students in Grades 6–12 in addition to the “Late to class” rule above.

Lateness to a class (per class, per term)	Response
3rd lateness	Lunch detention.
4th–5th lateness	After-school detention.
6th lateness	One day of In-School Suspension (ISS).
7th–10th lateness	An additional day of In-School Suspension (ISS) for each further lateness.
11th lateness and beyond	One day of Out-of-School Suspension (OSS); recorded as an unexcused absence. Any assessments missed will not be eligible to be made up.

Make-Up Work

Teachers will support students in catching up on missed work for excused absences. Teachers are not required to offer make-up work for unexcused absences, though they may do so at their discretion. Missed assessments due to unexcused absences may result in a zero.

COMMUNICATION

GIA encourages open, frequent, and respectful communication between parents, students, teachers, and administration. We communicate with parents through:

- **Weekly class email from the teacher (Lower School)** — focus of learning from the past and upcoming week; links to assessments, rubrics, and curriculum; class and school announcements; reminders.
- **Google Classroom Guardian Summaries (Upper School)** — Upper School uses Google Classroom in all classes; parents are invited to receive Guardian Summaries, and email digests of assignments, upcoming work, and class activity sent directly from Google. Parents choose the frequency at which they receive these summaries.
- **Weekly Principals' Update** — email from the Division Principals focusing on upcoming events.
- **Leap Ahead** — monthly school newsletter from the Head of School sent the first week of each month, with reports on recent events, upcoming events, important dates, and volunteer requests.
- **PowerSchool Parent Portal** — grades and report cards.
- **Direct email and phone calls** — for individual student matters; teachers respond within 24 hours or by the following business day.

Email Courtesy

Email is a frequently used tool for communication between home and school. Please refer to Primary Contacts to determine who should be your first contact. We 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 and email within 48 hours or by the following business day, depending on weekends and holidays.

WhatsApp Groups — School-Sanctioned Use Only

School-sanctioned WhatsApp groups are for school communication ONLY.

Where the School has established a WhatsApp group for a class, grade level, division, club, team, or other school purpose (a “school-sanctioned WhatsApp group”), the

following rules apply to every member of the group — parents, teachers, administrators, and any other adult participant.

What school-sanctioned WhatsApp groups ARE for

- **Time-sensitive school logistics** — bus delays, pickup changes, last-minute schedule changes, weather-related closures.
- Reminders about school events, deadlines, materials needed, dress-down days, picture days.
- Sharing of school-approved photos of students with parents' standing consent on file (Board Policy §4930).
- Quick coordination between the teacher and class parents on routine matters (snack roster, classroom supplies, event volunteers).

What school-sanctioned WhatsApp groups ARE NOT for

- **Political content of any kind** — no party-political discussion, no political endorsements, no political news, no political fundraising, no political imagery, no commentary on Guyanese, U.S., or other government politics. GIA maintains a posture of religious and political neutrality (Board Policy §1150).
- Complaints about teachers, administrators, students, families, the school, or any school decision. Complaints follow the four-step Resolving Concerns hierarchy below (Step 1 is the teacher; never WhatsApp).
- Personal grievances or disputes between parents.
- Sharing of confidential information about any student, family, employee, or Board matter (Board Policy §1635 confidentiality applies to anyone with access to such information).
- Promotion of personal businesses, products, services, fundraisers (other than school-approved), or solicitation of any kind.
- Religious content or proselytisation. Out of respect for our internationally diverse and faith-diverse community, no religious messaging on school-sanctioned groups.
- Memes, jokes, forwards, chain messages, unverified news, or other content unrelated to school business.
- Photos or videos of other students without those students' parents' consent.
- Gossip, speculation, accusations, or anything you would not put in writing to the Head of School over your full name.

Best Practices for School–Sanctioned WhatsApp Groups

- Assume every message you post can be screenshotted and read by the Head of School, the Board Chair, and the parent of the student being discussed. Write accordingly.
- Use the group only at reasonable hours (07:00 – 20:00 local). Mute the group outside those hours if it disturbs you.
- Keep messages short and on-topic. If your message has more than three paragraphs or contains a substantive complaint, send it as an email to the teacher or the Division Principal instead.
- Do not respond emotionally.
- **Do not name a specific student in any concern or complaint** — that’s a private matter for the teacher and the parent, not the group.
- Use the @mention feature sparingly and respectfully.
- Do not photograph or video any school event in a way that captures students who are not yours, without prior parental consent.
- If you witness another adult posting content that violates these rules, ask them privately (not in the group) to remove it and to follow the Resolving Concerns process. If the conduct repeats, notify the Division Principal.
- Leave the group when your child leaves the class, division, or school.

Administration and Enforcement

Every school-sanctioned WhatsApp group shall be administered by a GIA employee (typically the class teacher, advisor, or coach) or by a designated parent volunteer working with the teacher. The administrator may:

- Remove a member who posts content that violates these rules, with notice to the Division Principal.
- Close a group that becomes uncontrollable, with notice to the Division Principal.

Non-official WhatsApp groups should not be created by parents using GIA’s name, logo, class identifier, teacher’s name, or other GIA brand element. Where a non-official group exists, GIA is not responsible for its content and the school-sanctioned-group rules do not apply, but parents who participate are still expected to behave consistently with the Parent Code of Conduct.

Escalation of WhatsApp Issues

Concerns about content posted on a school-sanctioned WhatsApp group should be raised:

- With the group administrator (typically the teacher).
- If unresolved, with the Division Principal.
- If unresolved, with the Deputy Head of School or Head of School.

Serious breaches — content that names a specific student, that defames a teacher or administrator, that breaches confidentiality, or that creates a safeguarding concern — shall be escalated directly to the Head of School.

Meeting with Teachers and Administrators

When there is a question or concern, parents are encouraged to reach out to the teacher or administration contact (see Primary Contacts). For an in-person meeting, please email the teacher or the appropriate administrative assistant to schedule a meeting. Teachers and other faculty members may not be able to meet with parents without an appointment.

RESOLVING CONCERNS

If you have a concern, please follow this four-step process to resolve it. The process is designed to resolve concerns at the level closest to the child, which is almost always the fastest, most effective, and most relationship-preserving route. Skipping a step delays resolution. Aligned to Board Policy §7120 and HR Manual Chapter 14 (Grievance Procedure, where the grievant is a staff member).

Step	Action	Description
Step 1	Conference with the teacher	Discuss the concern and possible options with the classroom teacher. Most concerns are best resolved at this level. Request a meeting — do not raise the concern on a WhatsApp group. If your concern is about a non-classroom matter (e.g., bus routes, lunch, facilities) start instead with the relevant contact from the Primary Contacts table.
Step 2	Meet with the Division Principal	If not satisfied after Step 1, request a conference with the Division Principal (Lower School or Upper School, as appropriate). Bring a copy of your concern and a note of what you and the teacher discussed at Step 1. The Division Principal will discuss the remedy and possible resolutions, and only escalate to the Head of School where divisional resolution is not possible.
Step 3	Meet with the Head of School (Superintendent)	Only after Steps 1 and 2 have been completed and only where the matter remains unresolved should the parent/guardian request a meeting with the Head of School. The Head of School will review the prior efforts to resolve the issue, the relevant policy framework, and any additional steps that may be taken. The Head of School's decision is final at the administrative level.

Step	Action	Description
Step 4	Written appeal to the Board	If not satisfied after Step 3, the parent/guardian may submit a written and signed complaint to the Board of Directors. The complaint must be submitted at least one (1) week before the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The written complaint shall include: (a) all steps already taken and the resolution sought; (b) an explanation of the concern and details of all previous efforts to resolve it. Complaints are discussed in Executive Session only; sessions are confidential; the parent/guardian is notified in writing of the Board's decision within fourteen (14) days. Board decisions are final and cannot be appealed further. The Board will not respond to unsigned complaints.

Important — what NOT to do

- Do not raise complaints on school-sanctioned WhatsApp groups (see Communication).
- Do not skip the teacher (Step 1) and go directly to the Division Principal, Head of School, or Board. We will route the matter back to the teacher.
- Do not post complaints publicly on social media, the school website, or the parent portal. These channels are not for grievance airing and posts may compound the matter.
- Do not approach another family or another family's child to address a concern about that child's behaviour. Bring the matter to the teacher.
- Do not send complaints anonymously. The School and the Board do not respond to anonymous complaints.

Safeguarding Exception

If your concern is about the safety of a child — yours or another — go directly to the Division Principal or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Do not wait for any other step. Every GIA employee is a mandatory reporter (Board Policy §4830).

POLICIES

Visitors

All visitors on GIA property must be issued a visitor pass by the receptionist. Visitors shall sign in and out, wear a visitor's pass for the duration of the visit, return the pass on sign-out, and be escorted by a GIA employee while on campus. Any unauthorised visitor failing to secure a pass will be asked to leave the premises.

| *Aligned to Board Policy §7410.*

Uniforms

To maintain a consistent and professional appearance, all students adhere to the following:

- **Bottoms** — pants, shorts, or skirts in grey, khaki, or navy. Sweatpants are not permitted.
- **Tops** — polo shirts or button-down shirts in grey, navy, or white with the school logo.
- **Outerwear** — hoodies, sweaters, jackets in grey, navy, or white that do not promote drug, alcohol, or tobacco use, violence, discrimination, sex, etc.
- **Footwear** — close-toed, flat shoes with rubber or other non-skid sole. Rain boots are permitted when appropriate. Sandals, flip-flops, and similar footwear are not permitted. No shoes with skate wheels.
- **PE uniforms** — official PE kit purchased from Reception; sneakers, track shoes, or court shoes during PE. Lower-school students wear PE uniforms on PE days. Upper-school students change into and out of PE uniforms.

New GIA students receive an automatic one-week grace period to adhere to the uniform policy.

Exceptions, Enforcement, Dress-Down Days

In rare cases the Division Principal may grant a short- or long-term exception. Parents (not students) must make requests directly to the Principal. GIA respects students' religious customs and permits students to wear yarmulkes, hijabs, topi caps, etc.

A student arriving out of uniform receives a warning; if attire is deemed inappropriate, the student is given a new uniform to change into and parents are

invoiced. A student in footwear that does not meet safety requirements sits in the office until parents bring appropriate footwear. Repeated non-compliance is handled by the Division Principal case-by-case.

Dress-down days: avoid shirts with cut-outs, lace, or see-through fabrics; no offensive words or symbols; shirts must reach the waistline and cover the navel; shorts/skirts no more than 3 inches above the knee. No items promoting drug, alcohol, or tobacco use, violence, discrimination, sex, etc.

Child Safeguarding

GIA is committed to creating a safe, nurturing environment where every student can thrive. Every person employed by or partnered with GIA is responsible for ensuring the welfare and protection of all children. All staff review the GIA Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct and attend mandatory annual training. Every GIA employee is a mandatory reporter under Board Policy §4820 and §4830; concerns are reported on the same school day to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Anti-Bullying

Bullying is not tolerated at GIA. Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behavior, usually repeated, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Examples include physical (including sexual) assault, verbal abuse / name-calling, cyber-bullying (social websites, mobile phones, messaging, photos/videos, WhatsApp, Snapchat, email, etc.), and indirect emotional tormenting by exclusion or rumour. To report bullying, follow the Resolving Concerns process.

| *Aligned to Board Policy §4550.*

Weapons

Students, visitors, and staff are prohibited from possessing, carrying, exhibiting, or 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.

| *Aligned to Board Policy §5665.*

Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping

GIA's campus is a smoke-free campus. Tobacco products, cigarettes, vapes, and similar are prohibited at all school events. Students are prohibited from attending

any school-sponsored event under the influence of any of these products, including students over 18.

| *Aligned to Board Policy §4530.*

Academic Integrity

All students and staff act with a commitment to fundamental values — honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Academic integrity includes giving proper acknowledgement when using the ideas, data, or language of another; taking personal responsibility; being honest in research and assessments; and holding others accountable in a fair and respectful way.

| *Aligned to Board Policy §4540.*

AI and Generative AI in Student Work

Students may use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude) only where the teacher of record has explicitly authorized their use for a specific assignment. In every case the student shall (a) cite the tool used, (b) describe the prompt or method, and (c) take personal responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the submitted work. Submitting AI-generated work as one's own, where disclosure is required and not given, is a violation of the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

| *Aligned to Board Policy §6350.*

Phone-Free Initiative (Yondr Pouches)

Georgetown International Academy is phone-free. Students in Grades 6 to 12 with a mobile phone are issued a Yondr pouch. Lower School students may not bring phones or other devices to school. Distribution and responsibility: each student is issued a pouch at the start of the school year, is responsible for keeping it for the year, and bringing it daily. Phones not brought in the pouch are stored in a locked cabinet in the Upper School office for the day and retrieved at dismissal. Phones are turned off and placed in the pouch on arrival; pouches are unlocked at the magnet station at the end of the day. Lost or damaged pouches cost USD \$30 to replace.

Use of personal electronic devices during instructional time other than in the Yondr pouch is prohibited (Board Policy §4560).

If a student has their phone out of the Yondr pouch during school hours, the following will take place:

- The first offense: The phone will be confiscated and given to the Principal.

- The second offense: The phone will be confiscated and given to the Principal. The parents will be notified.
- The third offense: The phone will be confiscated and given to the Principal. The parents will need to come to school and retrieve the phone, the device will not be returned to the student.
- The fourth offense: The phone will be confiscated and given to the Principal. The parents will be notified and the student will serve a one-day in-school-suspension.
- The fifth or more offense: The phone will be confiscate

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

Students in grades 6–12 are required to provide one of the following devices for school use: laptop or tablet. Lower School students are issued school-owned Chromebooks. Each student signs the Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement (Board Policy §6345).

Student expectations: take responsibility for personal devices (GIA is not liable for loss, damage, theft); keep devices silent unless the teacher permits sound; bring headphones; charge at home; respect privacy (no recording, photographing, or filming others during school hours or events without explicit teacher permission); stay on task; keep software updated; manage storage; protect with case; secure login.

Device Requirements

Component	Specification
Machine Type	Laptop or Tablet
Platform	PC, Mac, or iPad
Processor	Devices equipped with Snapdragon processors do not satisfy the current GIA technical specifications and are therefore not permitted for institutional use. PC: Intel i5 or AMD Ryzen 5 or higher; Mac: Intel Core i5 or better; iPad: Modern A-series or M-series
RAM	8 GB or higher
Hard Drive	250 GB or higher

Component	Specification
OS	Windows 11, macOS 26, or iPadOS 26 (English; document-creating capability)
Wireless	802.11b/g/n (2.4 GHz) and 802.11ac (5 GHz)
Ports	2+ USB; audio in/out; built-in microphone; VGA or HDMI
Battery Life	4+ hours (4+ cell or higher)
Browser	Chrome (recommended)

Photo and Video Release

GIA does not publish photographs or videos of identifiable students on websites, social media, or in print materials without written consent of the parent or guardian, obtained at enrolment and renewable annually. Parents may withdraw consent in writing at any time. Consent is granular — parents may consent to internal use (yearbook, newsletters) while declining external publication.

| *Aligned to Board Policy §4930.*

Data Protection

GIA collects, holds, and processes personal data of students and families only for stated educational, employment, or operational purposes, in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2023 of Guyana. Parents may request access to the personal data the School holds about their child or family at any time, with a response within 30 calendar days.

| *Aligned to Board Policy §5540.*

CCTV

CCTV is operated on the GIA campus for the security of students, staff, and property. Cameras are not installed in any location where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy (toilets, changing areas, nursing/lactation rooms). Recordings are retained for thirty (30) days and then automatically overwritten, except where retained for incident investigation.

| *Aligned to Board Policy §5550.*

PROCESSES

School Transportation

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. All vehicles entering the school must be registered with Placa or submit ID at the security gate. Any person picking up your child must be registered in PowerSchool and/or have written permission from the parent or guardian and submit an ID at the receptionist desk. To register a driver authorised for pick-up, email the Division Principal with the person’s name and ID picture. Notify the school by email to the Division Principal when changing drivers, including the duration of the arrangement.

Arrival / Dismissal

Drop-off and pick-up times:

Time	What happens
7:20–7:55 am	Drop-off window. Students may play on the playground or stay in the cafeteria. Students are not allowed on campus before 7:20 am — no supervision.
7:45 am	Classrooms open for students.
8:00 am	Students must be in their classroom.
11:30 am	PreK students enrolled in the half-day program may be picked up.
3:00–3:15 pm	Students of grades PK–12 must be picked up unless in after-school activities.
4:00 pm	Students picked up from after-school activities.

Drop-off instructions: enter through the entrance gate; pull into the drop-off lane so students exit on the left-hand side; drive to the end of the drop-off area or pull up directly behind the car in front; exit by pulling out and using the right-most lane to exit via the second gate. Vans enter and use the roundabout, drop at the front of the school, then merge with cars and exit. Avoid retrieving items from the trunk. Park in visitor spaces if walking your child in.

Pick-up instructions: pull into the drop-off lane so the child enters on the left-hand side; teachers and admin staff bring your child to the car; exit by pulling out and using the right-most lane. Students may not walk home or leave with non-parents/guardians unless special arrangements have been made via the school office. To walk your child to the car, park in the visitor area and proceed to the waiting area outside the entrance doors.

Leaving Campus

Students may not leave school before the end of the regular day unless a parent/guardian calls the school office or emails the Division Principal. Students will only be permitted to leave school with a parent/guardian or someone identified as an emergency contact.

Student Discipline

When a situation requires discipline, the following principles guide the steps taken: proactive behaviour support; restorative practices; developmental appropriateness; equity and inclusion; safety and security. Corporal punishment is prohibited at GIA.

Step	Action	Who is involved	Description
1	Redirection / reflective / restorative conversation	Student & Teacher	The teacher provides a reminder, reflection, or facilitated conversation.
2	Parent communication	Teacher & Parent(s)	Teachers and parents discuss strategies for improvement or restitution.
3	Behavior Support Plan	Parent(s), Teacher, Counselor	Plan developed to address the behaviour.
4	Administrative involvement	Student, Parent(s), Principal	Division Principal meets with student and parent to establish consequences and support; may include short-term suspension and reintegration plan.

Step	Action	Who is involved	Description
5	Grievous incidents / severe consequences	Parent(s), Principal, HoS	For grievous incidents (physical assault, weapons, severe vandalism, repeated harassment) the Division Principal may recommend suspension or expulsion to the Head of School or designee, who makes the final decision.

For persistent behavioural issues or serious infractions beyond minor classroom disruptions, a Discipline Review Committee is formed to address the behaviour in a balanced, fair, and restorative process. For more information on student discipline, contact the Division Principal.

Aligned to Board Policy §4510 and §4520.

Enrollment and Withdrawal

Enrollment

Georgetown International Academy (GIA) accepts applications throughout the year on a rolling admissions basis, subject to space availability. Families seeking enrollment must complete the GIA application process and provide all required academic records and supporting documentation. Depending on the student's grade level and individual circumstances, additional assessments, teacher recommendations, English language proficiency testing, or an interview may be required.

Admission is based on the student's eligibility, academic and age requirements, available space, and completion of all enrollment requirements. Once accepted, families must complete the required enrollment and financial documentation and pay applicable fees to secure enrollment.

Families should contact admissions@giagy.org with questions regarding applications, enrollment, re-enrollment, or grade placement.

Withdrawal

Families planning to withdraw a student from GIA are required to provide the Admissions Office with at least three months' written notice. This requirement also applies to students who re-enroll and subsequently withdraw after the school year has begun.

To complete the withdrawal process:

- Parents/guardians must submit the required [Withdrawal Form](#).
- Prior to the student's final day, all school materials, technology, library items, and other GIA property must be returned and the Lower School and/or Upper School check-out process are completed
- All outstanding financial obligations must be cleared with the Finance Office.
- Following approval of the withdrawal and submission of final grades, the student's official records/transcript will be released.

Families should be aware that **tuition and other fees may be non-refundable**. Any refund eligibility is subject to GIA's withdrawal and financial policies, including compliance with the required three-month notice period.

For complete procedures, financial conditions, and applicable deadlines, families should contact the Admissions Office: admissions@giagy.org

ACADEMICS

Class Size

Average class sizes: Early Years to Grade 2 – up to 20 students per class; Grades 3–12 – up to 22 students per class. When class size reaches the threshold, the Head of School may split the class or provide a teaching assistant, as financial, human-resources, and space permit (Board Policy §6120).

Class Placement

Students are assigned to a homeroom 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 English. We welcome parents’ insights into their child’s needs but don’t guarantee any requests. Parents may not request placement with specific teachers or staff.

Homework

Homework is related to learning in the classroom and used to reinforce skills already taught. It may not be considered as punishment. Guidelines for the cumulative amount of homework per day:

Grades	Homework time (per day)
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 9–12	1.5 to 3 hours

Curriculum

Our PreK through Grade 12 U.S.-accredited curriculum aligns with the standards of private, college-preparatory schools in the United States and abroad. We adhere to the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics, the Next Generation Science Standards, and the AERO standards. AERO undergoes a five-year

review cycle. Our student-centred approach encourages active learning through inquiry-based investigations, discussions, projects, demonstrations, role-playing, group work, and interdisciplinary assignments. AP courses are offered from Grade 8; IB Diploma Programme courses are offered in Grades 11–12.

Testing

Once per academic year (Spring), students K–9 take MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) tests. Twice per academic year (Fall, Winter), students K–10 take iReady Diagnostic tests. These tests help the school determine students' instructional level and measure academic growth.

Grading

Lower School (K–5) – 4-point rubric

4 Mastery • 3 Proficient • 2 Developing • 1 Needs Improvement • N/A Not assessed.

Middle School / High School

Grade Point Averages and weighted grades are calculated for high school (grades 9–12) on a four-point scale. AP courses in which students sit for the exam receive an additional 1.00 weighting.

Grade	Range	Unweighted GPA	Weighted GPA
A+	98–100	4.33	5.33
A	93–97	4.00	5.00
A–	90–92	3.67	4.67
B+	88–89	3.33	4.33
B	83–87	3.00	4.00
B–	80–82	2.67	3.67
C+	78–79	2.33	3.33
C	73–77	2.00	3.00
C–	70–72	1.67	2.67
D+	68–69	1.33	2.33
D	63–67	1.00	2.00

Grade	Range	Unweighted GPA	Weighted GPA
D–	60–62	0.67	1.67
F	0–59	0	0

PowerSchool Parent Portal

Parents may access students' grades via the PowerSchool Parent Portal. For access, contact the IT Helpdesk (techsupport@giagy.org).

Report Cards

Student report cards are posted to PowerSchool four times each year — at the end of each 9-week term. Parent-student-teacher conferences are held at the end of Term 1 and Term 3. Reports for Terms 2 and 4 include narratives.

Grade Retention and Advancement

Typically a student's needs are best met by remaining at the same grade level as peers of the same age. 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 to the Head of School, who makes the final decision after considering all the information. Advancement requests are processed only after the third week of classes and before the end of the first quarter (Board Policy §4210).

Field Trips

Field trips are a regular and important feature of GIA's academic program. The community and natural environment are the school's laboratory; class and school-wide field trips that directly or indirectly support GIA's learning goals are encouraged. Chaperone ratios are set by Board Policy §6250: Nursery–Grade 2 = 1:6; Grades 3–5 = 1:10; Grades 6–8 = 1:12; Grades 9–12 = 1:15. Overnight trips require at least one male and one female chaperone with a maximum ratio of 1:8. International trips of more than seven days require a medical professional or trained first-aider. Indemnity forms must be signed by parents.

Novels and Reading Materials (Grades 6–12)

Parents and guardians are responsible for purchasing assigned novels and other long-form reading materials for students in Grades 6 through 12. Personal ownership of these texts allows students to highlight, annotate, mark up margins, and otherwise interact actively with the book, which is an expected part of the Upper School academic experience. Booklists for each course are published by the Division Principal's office before the start of each term so families have time to source the titles. Where the purchase of an assigned title would represent a hardship, families should contact the Division Principal in confidence; the School maintains a small reserve of titles to lend in such cases.

Controversial Material; Use of Media

Novels and other reading material sometimes touch on controversial issues. Teachers use discretion in assigning reading material. If you have a concern about the materials being used, please contact the teacher. The use of full-length films may occasionally support instruction with prior approval from the Division Principal; faculty inform parents in advance and offer an opt-out.

SUPPORT RESOURCES AT GIA

Counseling

All students have access to a variety of services provided by counselors, including orientation to programs, schedules, and facilities; information concerning school and community resources; interpretation of personal, academic, and assessment results; individual and group counselling; and educational and career planning. Counsellors adhere to principles of ethical behaviour and inform students of limitations to confidentiality (legal requirements; the implementation of weapons and substance policies; the maintenance of health, safety, and welfare of students).

Mental-Health Crisis Response

GIA recognises mental-health crises as medical emergencies. The Head of School maintains a Mental-Health Crisis Response Protocol covering identification of warning signs, safe-room procedures, same-day parent/guardian notification, same-day referral to a qualified mental-health professional, and re-entry planning. Aligned to Board Policy §4850. If you are concerned about your child's mental health, please contact the school Counsellor or the Division Principal.

Health Room

A health room is located on the ground floor of the main building. The school Nurse is available for consultation and emergency situations. The Nurse may also administer medications, if needed during the school day. As part of the enrolment process, parents must complete the medical form (medical history and any medications). Parents are responsible for lodging the medication and accompanying instructions at the nurse's office. The Nurse must receive consent from the parent before administering over-the-counter medication for ailments such as aches, pains, and fevers.

| *Aligned to Board Policy §4860.*

Communicable Disease and Pandemic Response

The Head of School, in consultation with the School Nurse, maintains and updates annually a Communicable Disease Plan covering routine exclusion criteria,

immunisation enforcement, isolation procedures, parent notification, outbreak reporting to the Ministry of Health, and remote-learning activation triggers.

| *Aligned to Board Policy §4870.*

Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management

GIA maintains an up-to-date register of all students with diagnosed life-threatening allergies. Each such student has an Individual Allergy Action Plan signed by the student's physician and parent. EpiPens are stored both with the School Nurse and in the student's classroom; staff are trained annually. The Food Services provider is informed of all food allergies. A school-wide no-peanut/tree-nut policy in shared spaces is reviewed annually by the Head of School.

| *Aligned to Board Policy §4880.*

Concussion and Sports-Injury Management

Any student suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury during a school-supervised activity is removed from play immediately and not returned to play that day. The student does not return to play or to physical-education classes until cleared in writing by a qualified medical practitioner using a recognised return-to-play protocol. Parents are notified the same day.

| *Aligned to Board Policy §4890.*

Immunizations

Required: Measles, Mumps, Rubella; Diphtheria; Polio; Pertussis (Board Policy §4310).

Recommended: Yellow Fever; Hepatitis B; Tetanus; COVID-19; BCG (Tuberculosis); Hepatitis A; Rotavirus; Pneumococcal (PCV); Haemophilus Influenza Type B.

Student Intervention

When a student is struggling academically, the Student Support Services Team is available to help teachers and parents determine the support services needed. Services may include differentiated instruction, an Accommodations Plan, an Intervention Plan, an Individual Learning Plan, or recommendations for outside services including tutoring.

Library

Open 7:45 am – 3:20 pm Monday to Friday (Wednesdays 7:45 am – 2:30 pm). PreK students check out 1 book; K–2 students 2 books (plus an early reader); Grades 3–12 students 2 books. The lending period is two weeks. Overdue notices weekly via email; one month to locate missing books before replacement is required (2× book value including repurchasing and importing costs). Students who owe money are not eligible to borrow more books and do not receive their final report card.

Lunch

Students receive a snack/recess break each morning and are expected to bring snacks/beverages from home or purchase from the GIA canteen. Hot lunch may be purchased from the lunch vendor or families may bring lunch. Lower School students eat in the cafeteria. Upper School students may eat in the cafeteria, the student lounge, the Lower Atrium, or designated Upper Atrium areas. No food in classrooms or hallways. Drop-off times for lunch: 11:00 (Lower School), 12:00 (Upper School).

Emergency Planning

Keeping students, faculty, and staff safe is our highest priority. Several emergency drills are scheduled throughout the school year to prepare the community. Four response types are practised: standfast, lockdown, on-site evacuation, off-site evacuation. The Head of School maintains the Emergency Procedures Manual and the Lockdown & Active-Threat Response Protocol (Board Policy §5650 and §5660), with drills at least twice per academic year. Drills do not include simulated active-shooter role-play involving students.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Key Club

GIA is a member of the Kiwanis Key Club program (since June 2014). Key Club is a worldwide community-service organisation. Students of Grades 7–12 are encouraged to join. Key Club meets weekly during the after-school activities block.

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 initiate, promote, and implement programs and activities for student and school development.

After-School Activities

The after school program allows students to participate in a variety of activities not already covered in the GIA curriculum that support their physical, intellectual, and emotional health. This program is optional and open to all students in grades PK3–12.

After-school activities (ASAs) are teacher-led and available to students every day of the week from 3:15–4:00pm (2:45–4:00pm on Wednesdays only). The ASA Coordinator publishes the schedule for each semester in advance so that students and families can sign up for the activities they're most interested in.

Clubs can also be found on the ASA schedule. Clubs can be either teacher- or student-led, and must be approved by the relevant principal before formal establishment. Unlike ASAs, clubs may choose to limit or regulate participation, depending on their purpose. In such cases, club advisors will need to approve students who sign up for a club via the online registration process. Clubs with this requirement will be clearly marked upon sign-up.

Questions or suggestions can be sent to the ASA Coordinator, Mel Bowman (bowman@giagy.org).

Athletics

Students in grades 6–12 are eligible to participate in GIA’s competitive athletics programs. After-school sports are offered to students in grades PK3–5 through the ASA program.

The Athletic Director is responsible for setting the athletic schedule, including out-of-season practice schedules to prepare for international tournaments. Practices will take place from 4:00–5:30pm, Monday–Friday.

Students participating in Athletics but not in ASAs will have the option to attend study hall during the hour between school dismissal and their scheduled practice time.

Sports currently offered through the athletics program include: Basketball, Volleyball, Table Tennis, Badminton, Cricket, Karate, Soccer, and Track & Field. For interest in a particular sport, contact GIA’s Athletic Director, Michael Lomax.

Questions or suggestions can be sent to the Athletic Director, Mike Lomax (mlomax@giagy.org)

Clubs

Clubs in the Upper School (Grades 6–12) are not part of the After-School Activities (ASA) program. Depending on the club, meetings may take place during the ASA block or during lunch. All clubs are supervised by GIA staff but are student-led.

To join a club, students must meet with the club advisor and submit an application to join. In the Upper School, parents may not sign their child(ren) up for a club on their behalf — students apply directly. Depending on the club, meetings may run for a single semester or continue throughout the school year.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

At Georgetown International Academy, a strong, caring school community starts with the way we treat one another — students, parents, guardians, teachers, and staff. This Parent Code of Conduct ensures we are all on the same page about how we communicate, support one another, and keep GIA a place where everyone feels safe, valued, and heard.

This Code applies to:

- All conduct, speech, and actions, including emails, texts, phone calls, social media, and other communications.
- All school activities, on school campus or any other location where students, staff, and visitors are gathered for school purposes.

Through our core values, GIA expects all parents, guardians, and visitors to:

- Treat others with respect.
- Respect and adhere to school policies.
- Work with staff and administration to support the learning environment.
- Set a good example for students.
- Adhere to and encourage academic integrity.

Commitments Specific to School–Sanctioned WhatsApp Groups

By signing this Parent Code of Conduct I confirm that, when I participate in any school-sanctioned WhatsApp group, I will:

- **Use the group ONLY for school communication** — logistics, reminders, event coordination, school-approved photos.
- NOT post political content of any kind.
- NOT post complaints; complaints follow the four-step Resolving Concerns hierarchy (teacher → Division Principal → Head of School → Board).
- NOT share confidential information about any student, family, employee, or Board matter.
- NOT promote personal businesses, products, services, or fundraisers (other than school-approved).

- NOT post religious content or proselytisation, in line with GIA’s neutrality (Board Policy §1150).
- NOT post memes, jokes, forwards, chain messages, unverified news, or other off-topic content.
- NOT photograph or video other students without their parents’ consent.
- Use the group only at reasonable hours (07:00 – 21:00 local), keep messages short and on-topic, and pause for 24 hours before replying when emotional.
- Leave the group when my child leaves the class, division, or school.
- Acknowledge that I may be removed from the group, and that the matter may be escalated to the Division Principal or the Head of School, for repeated breach of these rules.

Commitments Specific to the Resolving Concerns Hierarchy

By signing this Parent Code of Conduct I confirm that I will follow the four-step Resolving Concerns process:

- **Step 1** — Teacher first.
- **Step 2** — Division Principal (if Step 1 does not resolve the matter).
- **Step 3** — Head of School (Superintendent) (only after Steps 1 and 2).
- **Step 4** — Written, signed appeal to the Board (only after Steps 1, 2, and 3).

I will not raise complaints on WhatsApp groups, on social media, on the school website, or anonymously. I will go directly to the Division Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead in any matter concerning a child’s safety.

☐ **I have read and agree to follow this Code of Conduct, including the WhatsApp commitments and the Resolving Concerns commitments above.**

Print Name (Parent/Guardian):

Signature (Parent/Guardian):

Date:
