

# Family Handbook

## 2021-2022



## **Gaston Day School Philosophy**

### **Vision**

To be the finest independent day school in the southeastern United States.

### **Mission**

To educate our students and prepare them for academic success and responsible, productive lives.

### **Community Values**

Integrity, Compassion, Excellence, Curiosity and Creativity, Service and Generosity, Responsibility and Self-Discipline, Confidence and Courage, Respect for Self and Others.

### **Portrait of a Graduate**

Gaston Day School Spartans pursue scholarship and knowledge as a means to...  
create solutions, collaborate, and drive innovation within their world,  
discover their unique talents and ignite their passions,  
embrace their humanity and diversity,  
approach opportunities and challenges with self-motivation and resilience,  
achieve a life of curiosity, balance, and purpose.

## **Core Beliefs**

*The Gaston Day School Core Beliefs reflect our commitment to make a positive difference in the lives of all we touch and to inspire such commitment from others.*

### **Student Centered**

The student is at the center of everything we do; the growth of the student is our foremost consideration.

### **Teaching Excellence**

The faculty will be highly qualified, professional, and care deeply about each student's academic success and personal growth. The school is committed to developing our faculty and academic administrators into leaders in independent school education.

### **Challenging and Relevant Curriculum**

The curriculum will be inspiring, dynamic, and promote academic excellence, critical thinking, creative application, physical development and personal integrity. Further, it will reflect the best educational theory and practice, entertain innovation, and prepare our middle and upper school students to compete successfully in local, regional, and national competitions.

### **Safe and Nurturing Community**

The school must be a place that keeps students safe physically and emotionally, and one that promotes our community values.

## I. GENERAL INFORMATION & COVID-19 RESPONSE

### Organization of Gaston Day School

Gaston Day School, a preschool through twelfth grade independent, college preparatory school, is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees. This board delegates the management of the total school program to an appointed Head of School. In essence, the Board of Trustees sees its primary functions as follows: the establishment of the philosophy, mission, broad goals, and the overall policies of the school; the employment and evaluation of the Head of School to operate the school within those goals and aims; and the preservation and enhancement of the assets of the school, including land, buildings, endowments, and regular income. Once policy has been established, the Board of Trustees chooses not to interfere with the daily operation of the school; therefore, it directs all inquiries to the Head of School and his staff.

### COVID-19 Response

The purpose of Gaston Day School's COVID-19 Response Policy and Procedures is to provide reasonable direction to all members of the GDS community on how basic functions within our operating system during school hours will be managed during the COVID-19 crisis. We recognize that the following policy and procedures will not provide management of, or procedures for, every aspect of campus life. In addition to addressing the daily functions of campus activity, these guidelines offer practical approaches and solutions to concerns around health and safety issues as they apply to the COVID-19 virus and any other associated virus linked to COVID-19 (Kawasaki and pediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome) for the reopening of Gaston Day School. Gaston Day School is also prepared to return to a partial or full-scaled virtual environment as a last option.

Our obligation is, and always will remain, the safety of our GDS family while administering the best education possible under given circumstances. To accomplish that primary task, we have elected to follow, as closely and as reasonably as possible, the guidelines and mandates provided by as many recognized health and safety experts as possible. Although not inclusive of all, since they may expand and/or retract as more information becomes available, the guidelines and recommendations we are using to maintain a safe campus environment are as follows:

- Local health professionals
- Federal health professionals
- [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)
- [John Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center](#)
- [School Safety & Security Alert](#)
- [Strong School NC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry](#)

While we expect to offer in-person operating modes for the 21-22 school year, we are prepared to shift to alternate modes following local, state, or federal directives. The alternate modes of operation are as follows:

- Phase Green - Open / No Restrictions

- Phase Yellow - Open / Minimal Physical Distancing
- Phase Orange - Open / Moderate Physical Distancing
- Phase Red - Closed / Virtual Learning Only

When shifts in phases are foreseen, an announcement will be made via email at the earliest possible time. However, due to the uncertainty and rapidly evolving changes related to COVID-19, shifts in phases may need to occur with short notice. The school has plans in place to make sure we maintain academic continuity as much as possible if transitions are required to take place.

The implementation of best practices, guidelines and mandates as they pertain to our GDS environment has culminated into the policy and procedures in sections II and III of the Family Handbook.

#### **Office Hours: Administrative Offices**

School year: 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Summer: 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

#### **School Hours**

Preschool 3's: 8:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Pre-Kindergarten 4's: 8:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

K - 4<sup>th</sup> grade: 8:00 a.m. - 3:10 p.m.

Grades 5<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>: 8:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

All students are expected to be in their appropriate classes or groups and prepared to begin the day when the opening bell rings at 8:00 a.m.

#### **Voicemail and Email**

Faculty and staff voice mailbox numbers and email addresses are listed in the Directory on OnCampus as well as the Gaston Day School website at [www.gastonday.org](http://www.gastonday.org). Although personal cell phone numbers are provided for special circumstances and field trips, families should use voicemail and email for communication with faculty, staff, and administration. During the school day, a teacher's primary responsibility is academic instruction and student safety. Teachers periodically check their email and voice mailbox and are expected to return messages within 48 hours, or in the case of weekends or holidays, by the end of the next two business days. Faculty, staff, and administration are not expected to check or respond to email outside normal work hours. In case of an emergency that requires immediate attention, please contact the Main Office to get a message to your student's teacher or division head.

#### **Messages from Home**

Messages will be delivered to students in class only when there is an emergency or a crisis. Middle and Upper School students will receive notification of messages received from home through their assigned school email account. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her email throughout the day for messages. Parents are asked to make arrangements about carpool pickup, doctor's appointments, and other scheduling specifics prior to their student arriving at school in the morning. When texting or calling a student on a cell phone, a parent should be mindful not to disrupt the classroom environment.

### **Use of Office Telephones and Student Cell Phones**

Students may use the telephone in the Main Office for emergency calls to home provided they have permission from the office staff and are not missing class time to make the call. Students are asked to refrain from unnecessary telephone calls that tie up the office phone.

In general, cell phones should not be visible in any classroom, and phones intentionally or repeatedly used in class will be confiscated. In Lower School, cell phones and smart watches are not permitted on campus, with the exception of students that ride the bus. In Middle School, 5th and 6th graders may have their cell phones and smart watches powered off and kept in their backpack or homeroom cell phone holder from 8:00 am to 3:15 pm each school day. 7th and 8th graders may have their cell phones and smart watches in their possession throughout the school day; however students are expected to follow the GDS Responsible Use Policy, devices should not be a disruption to the class or themselves, and all devices should be powered off during any type of assessment. In Upper School, students are permitted to use their cell phones between classes and during open campus and lunch. Cell phones should be kept in backpacks during class.

### **Emergency Closing of School**

Severe weather, utility problems, or health emergencies may necessitate the closing of the school. When such closings can be foreseen, an announcement will be made at the earliest possible time. For weather closings, the decision will be made by 6:00 a.m., if possible, and will be posted on OnCampus, communicated through email, and broadcast over local television stations WBTV ([www.wbtv.com](http://www.wbtv.com)), WSOC ([www.wsoc.com](http://www.wsoc.com)), and WCNC ([www.wcnc.com](http://www.wcnc.com)).

When emergency conditions cause the closing of school during the school day, the school will promptly notify parents through a variety of communication methods, including local television stations, social media notification, and email. Teachers and administrators will remain with students until safety is assured. During school day closings, all students will be required to sign out with their homeroom teacher. Students who ride with Gaston Day School parents other than their own, student drivers other than siblings, or other adults should notify their homeroom teacher.

If weather conditions outside the immediate school area are of a serious threat, parents from those areas may call in and pick up their student(s) early.

### **Delayed School Opening**

Occasionally, due to inclement weather, the opening of school may be delayed one or two hours. In this event, students should plan to arrive at school at the normal time plus the amount of the delay. For instance, a one hour delay would mean that students should be in their classrooms or homerooms by 9:00 a.m. instead of the normal 8:00 a.m. Bus riders should report to their designated pick-up site at the normal time plus the amount of the delay. If their normal pick-up is 7:00 a.m. and there is a one hour delay, the bus will pick up at 8:00 a.m.

### **Emergency Management Plan**

Gaston Day School's Emergency Policies and Procedures is a guide for administrators, faculty and staff, students, and community members on how to address a wide range of potential emergency situations on the campus. The step-by-step procedures in the plan provide guidance to coordinate protective actions prior to, during, and after any type of emergency situation. The students in each school will be informed and drilled in the plans and procedures in the event of a fire, tornado, lockdown, or extended power outage during the school day.

### **Website**

The School website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. All content on the Gaston Day School website is managed by the Office of Marketing and Communications. Any requests for website updates, please contact the Director of Marketing and Communications.

### **Social Networking (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Blogger, etc.)**

The School uses social networking to provide information about the school and promote the school to a wider audience. All content on the Gaston Day School Facebook page, Twitter account, Flickr account, YouTube channel and Blog is managed by the Office of Marketing and Communications. Members of the faculty and GDS community are encouraged to contribute appropriate items by contacting the Director of Marketing and Communications for such requests.

### **Use of Images**

Gaston Day School maintains standardization in all of its branding components including logos, colors, font selection, and document formats. In order to strengthen the visual image of Gaston Day School in the community, the Office of Marketing and Communications serves as the protector and keeper of the brand. Any items bearing the Gaston Day School name or images should be approved through the process outlined below.

#### **Promotional Items or Signage /Approval Process**

- Requests for approval should be submitted to the Director of Public Relations.
- Include information regarding products to be ordered and required artwork/text/design specifications.
- Permit (4) weeks for the design process. In some instances, designs may be provided sooner.

### **Communications**

All school-wide communications are produced from within the Office of Marketing and Communications. The Director of Marketing and Communications reviews information with the designated representative of the department or organization. Editing and preparation for publicizing are managed by the Director of Marketing and Communications and reviewed with the representative. The School, via the Office of Marketing and Communications, sends the communication out to the community.

### **Press Releases**

- Article and press release submissions are encouraged.

- All documents should be submitted to the Office of Marketing and Communications.
- Articles and releases may be edited.
- The Office of Marketing and Communications will distribute all articles and releases to the media and community.

### **Photography**

All professional photography (images of the school and students used in marketing materials) is managed by the Office of Marketing and Communications. All other photographs should be submitted to the Office of Marketing and Communications for proper inclusion on the school website and school publications and marketing.

### **Non-Solicitation Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to establish rules for advertising and place certain restrictions on commercial solicitation including the posting of notices and the display and distribution of literature within its facilities, on its telecommunications resources (web pages, email, social media), through the postal system, and in other ways designed to reach the GDS community. This policy does not apply to official Gaston Day supported solicitations that are intended to address the School's broader mission to serve the community.

- Advertising for commercial purposes by businesses, organizations, entities or individuals not associated with Gaston Day School is prohibited.
- Advertising may be purchased and placed in certain School publications; yearbooks, theatre programs, and athletic banners.
- Products, services, or events may be offered to faculty, staff, and students in designated locations when approved by the Director of Marketing & Communications.
- Distribution of flyers or literature may not be placed on windshields of vehicles parked on Gaston Day School property.
- Signage, such as yard signs, may not be placed on Gaston Day School property.
- Advertising, except for GDS related activities, may not be distributed through the Gaston Day School email system.

### **Gaston Day School Non-Discrimination Statement**

Gaston Day School has an institutional commitment to the principles of diversity. In that spirit, Gaston Day School does not discriminate in violation of the law on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical challenge, national origin, or any other characteristics.

## **II. PROCEDURES - SAFETY, SECURITY, and OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**



### Campus Morning Operating Hours

Gaston Day has established operational hours for when campus entry in the morning is allowed. The hours were established in an effort to control building access through thermal temperature check-in stations.

Students: May enter campus after 7:30 a.m.

Check-in locations are as follows:

1. Academic Building Front Lobby - All Lower School students, visitors, and parents should enter through the front lobby. Families with students in multiple divisions should also use this entrance.
2. Pamela Kimbrell Warlick Visual and Performing Arts Center Side Entrance - All Middle and Upper School students should use this entrance.

### Campus Gates

The three gates on Gaston Day School Road are generally opened as follows:

J.B. Davis Drive (One Way—entrance only all times)	Monday – Friday 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. 2:30 - 6:00 p.m.
Middle Gate (One Way—entrance only all times)	Monday - Friday 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. 2:30 - 6:00 p.m.
East Gate (One Way—exit only all times)	

### Before School Supervision

Unfortunately, we will not be able to offer before-school supervision this school year. Until otherwise notified, we are not able to make exceptions to the hours listed above. There will be no early drop-off for students requiring child care for the 21-22 school year.

### After School Supervision

Gaston Day School will continue to provide after-school care supervision for our Lower School students. The Lower School program is located on our campus, based in the Commons. Homework time will be provided as well as snacks and scheduled games, projects, and crafts. All Lower School students who remain on campus after 3:15 p.m. will be required to enroll in the Lower School after-school program. Adult-supervised after-school care is provided until 5:30 p.m. There is a \$25 per day fee, or \$80 weekly fee, for this service. The Lower School after-school program can be reached by phone at (704) 999-4815.

Gaston Day School will continue to provide after-school care supervision for our Middle School students. Homework time will be provided as well as snacks and scheduled games, projects, and crafts. Middle School students remaining on campus after 3:15 p.m. are required to report to after-school care in the Library. Adult-supervised after-school care is provided until 5:30 p.m. There is a \$12 per day fee, or \$45 weekly fee, for this service. The Middle School after-school program can be reached by phone at (704) 999-8875.

Upper School students are permitted to be on campus until 5:30 p.m. They are expected to follow safety and security policies and should work in their designated open campus area (commons, library, or PKW Lobby), but they are not supervised during this time.

All students must be off campus by 5:30 p.m. each school day unless participating in an evening event and under supervision by GDS personnel or a parent.

### **Traffic Safety**

*The safety of our students is of primary importance and will not be compromised.* Therefore, all vehicular and pedestrian traffic on campus is subject to the regulations governing public traffic areas. Students and parents should continually be alert to the need for safety and caution. The speed limit on campus is 10 mph. This speed limit is to be observed at all times, not only while school is in session but also after school, evenings, and weekends. Cell phone use is not permitted during carpool.

### **Arrival and Departure - Early and Lower School**

At morning drop-off, Lower School guardians should enter campus through the middle entrance and drop off students at the main office of the Academic Building. Guardians should be prepared to assist their child by exiting their vehicles without the assistance of any GDS staff. Staff will be present to direct students to the right school entry door. Once inside, all students will pass through a thermal temperature check-in station before being directed to their designated classroom areas.

For afternoon pick-up, guardians should line up in the afternoon dual parking/waiting lanes in front of the Academic Building. Guardians will be responsible for the placement of their child in their vehicle without the assistance of staff. Staff will still direct each child to the appropriate vehicle and will be motioned when it is their turn to leave. While waiting, drivers should remember to turn off their vehicle as it may be difficult for some students wearing masks to breathe with your vehicle's exhaust system.

Lower School students who arrive late or who must be picked up early for appointments will go to the main office for check-in and check-out.

Staff assigned to the drop-off/pick-up process will be required to wear their face mask at any time they are within 6 feet of another person.

### **Arrival and Departure - Middle School**

At morning drop-off, guardians will enter campus using the gates at J. B. Davis Drive. Upon entering, please use the left lane to drop your student off on the side of the PKW. If you also have a Lower School

student in your vehicle, you may drop off all of your students at Lower School carpool, located by the front main office, by entering the middle gates. All students will be directed to the foyer where they will pass through a thermal temperature check-in station before being directed to their designated classroom areas. Students should go directly to their first period class and not linger in hallways, bathrooms, or common areas. For afternoon pickup, middle school guardians will enter using the gates at J. B. Davis Drive and use the right lane to drive around towards the back of the Henry Center where you may pick up your student by the sidewalk. Only one vehicle at a time will be allowed for student passengers to enter or exit, unless otherwise directed by GDS staff. As soon as the first vehicle leaves, the next vehicle may pull up and release or pick up its student passenger(s).

Middle School students who arrive late will go to the main office for check-in. Middle school students that must be picked up early for appointments or early dismissal can also be picked up by the main office after checking out.

### **Arrival and Departure - Upper School**

Students being dropped off will enter campus and pull up to the side entrance of the Pamela Kimbrell Warlick Visual and Performing Arts Center. Students will exit their vehicle one at a time, or as directed by staff, and will be directed inside by assigned staff. As each vehicle leaves the next will be allowed to pull up and exit, unless directed otherwise by staff. Student drivers will park in assigned parking spaces and will also be directed from their vehicles to the side entrance of the Pamela Kimbrell Warlick Visual and Performing Arts Center. Once inside, all students will pass through a thermal temperature check-in station before proceeding to their designated classroom areas. Students should go directly to their first period class and not linger in hallways, bathrooms, or common areas.

Afternoon pick-up will be conducted at the same location as drop-off. Upper School students who arrive late or leave early must report to the front office for check-in/check-out.

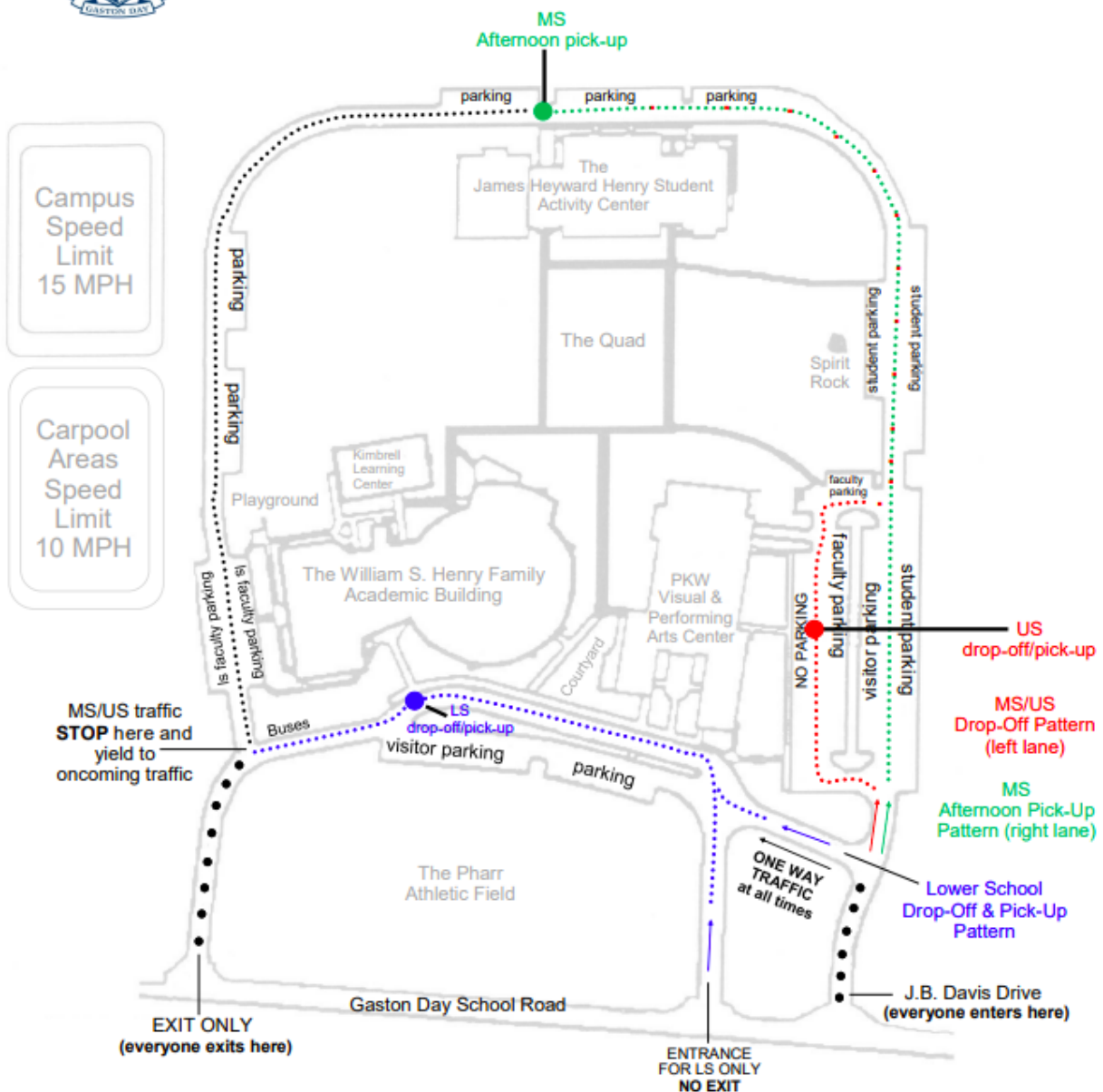
### **Student Drivers**

The privilege to drive on campus carries with it the following regulations for student drivers:

1. Only licensed students in grades 10, 11, and 12 may operate a vehicle on campus.
2. Students must register with the Upper School Office. This registration includes an OnCampus form signed by the student and parents.
3. Students may park only in designated parking spaces and will be assigned a numbered space.
4. Student drivers must abide by speed limits and yield to pedestrians at all times.
5. The school is not responsible for damage or loss resulting from operating a vehicle on campus.
6. Students should be in the parking lot only when arriving or departing campus. A student will not be permitted to access his/her car during the school day or loiter in the parking lot during free periods, lunch, or breaks. All items needed during the school day should be stored in lockers or classrooms, not in a vehicle.
7. Failure to abide by these guidelines may result in serious consequences, including the loss of on-campus driving privileges for the remainder of the academic year.



# Gaston Day School Traffic Pattern



- All traffic enters at J.B. Davis Drive **OR** LS traffic can enter through the middle gate.
- **Middle/Upper School in the morning**- After entering J.B. Davis Drive, there will be a double line...the **left line** enters the PKW parking area and turn left, drop-off along sidewalk by PKW Center for **MIDDLE/ UPPER SCHOOL**. The **right line** will drive straight for student parking.
- **Middle School in the afternoon** will be picked up at the back of the Henry Center by the sidewalk. When entering J.B. Davis drive use the right lane and continue straight to the Henry Center.
- **Upper School in the afternoon** will be picked up at the same place as morning drop-off, along the sidewalk by the PKW Center. When entering J.B. Davis Drive use the left lane and turn left.
- **Lower School** - Take the first left after you enter J.B. Davis Drive or the first left after entering the middle gate. You will drive in front of the school. Drop off and pick-up will be at the awning in front of The William S. Henry Family Academic Building. To exit continue straight. Follow the black dots on the map to exit.
- If multiple children carpool together, they should be dropped off in the designated area of the youngest child in the morning and picked up in their designated grade level area in the afternoon.

### **Thermal Temperature Checks**

All students that come to campus are subject to a thermal temperature check at one of the designated stations on a daily basis. Any student that has a temperature reading of 100.4 degrees or above will be isolated and re-checked. If their temperature remains elevated, that student will be taken to a separate, safe holding area for reunification with their parent or parent-approved responsible person. Student drivers will be allowed to drive themselves back home after communicating with their emergency contact.

### **Student Access Badge Security Procedures**

All Middle and Upper School students are issued a GDS identification badge. In order to ensure the safety of the Gaston Day community, students should follow the guidelines below:

- Middle and Upper School students must carry their badges with them at all times during the school day while on campus. Badges must be shown to advisors at homeroom check-in each day. Students that repeatedly fail to show their badge may be issued a violation.
- Badges may not be bent, cracked, or chewed.
- Badges may not be modified or decorated with stickers, tape, markers, etc. If a badge has been modified or decorated, the student must remove all decorations or be responsible for a replacement badge.
- Badges may not be exposed to excessive heat.
- A student must wear or carry his/her own school-issued badge and may not lend his/her badge to another person.
- If a student finds a badge, s/he must immediately return the badge to its rightful owner or to any faculty/staff member.
- If a badge is lost or damaged, students will be responsible for paying \$10.00 for a replacement badge.
- If a student badge stops functioning, the student should return the defective badge to the Main Office and may be eligible to receive a replacement badge without a fee.
- Student badge access is limited to Monday - Friday from 7:30 am to 6:30 pm.

### **Entry Doors**

Students are permitted to hold doors for other students, faculty, and staff members who are wearing badges. Students may not allow entry door access to persons without clearly visible badges but should direct visitors without badges to the Main Office. Students may not prop a door open to allow entry or re-entry into the building without the use of a badge. In order to ensure the safety of the campus, parents must report to the Main Office for access to the school and may not use student access badges to enter buildings.

### **Visitors**

All campus visitors must report to the Main Office of the Academic Building. After 8:30 all doors normally open for student entry will be locked. Unscheduled visitors, if allowed gate entry, will be directed to the main office. The main front entrance door will be locked throughout the day. **Therefore, the use of the doorbell system will be necessary.** Once entry is granted, all persons will be subject to a thermal

temperature check. If elevated readings are detected, visitors may be asked to leave campus and resume their business when they have complied with our return to campus policies. Parents may be asked to leave and return another day, or return to their vehicle and wait if they are on campus to pick up a student for an off-campus appointment.

All visitors must sign in and out at the Main Office. Visitors are required to wear a visitor's badge while on campus. If a parent wishes to visit a student's classroom or teacher, the teacher should be contacted in advance so that the visit may be scheduled and the appropriate division head notified. Students are not permitted to invite visitors/friends to school while it is in session. Alumni visits with students and faculty are discouraged during the school day. Prospective students interested in spending a day on campus must make arrangements through the Admissions Office.

### **Drills**

The only mandated drill for our school is the fire drill. Fire drills will be conducted throughout the school year. Additional drills will be considered on an as needed basis.

### **III. HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

#### **Health Requirements, Services and Medication**

All students admitted to Gaston Day School must provide a completed Health Form on OnCampus. In addition, a copy of a record of immunizations should also be submitted. No students are permitted to register for or to attend classes without this information being on file with the school.

All illnesses should be reported to the Wellness Coordinator. This individual will assist students in coordinating their care, which may include administering over-the-counter medication which has been authorized by a parent or guardian, being sent home, or, if serious, to the local hospital. Any expense for medical treatment is the responsibility of the parent.

Any student requiring a prescription medication administered during the school day must keep the medicine stored with a designated school official. Prescription medication can only be taken in the presence of a designated school official and only with explicit written instructions from a medical professional and parent permission. At no point is a student allowed to possess prescription medication on his/her person, in a backpack, locker or other unmonitored location, nor may he/she self-administer such medication without the direct supervision of a designated school official.

Students requiring non-prescription, over-the-counter medication (for allergies, colds, pain relief, etc.) may only take such medication in the presence of a designated school official. At no point may a student self-administer such medication without the direct supervision of a designated school official.

The health and safety of all Gaston Day students is of critical importance. At no point may a student have unsupervised access to any prescription or over-the-counter medication. Failure to comply with these expectations must be treated as a threat to the safety of our student body.

#### **EpiPen Policy**

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death. Anaphylaxis can be caused by a variety of allergens, the most common of which are food, insect bites, medication and latex. Anaphylaxis typically begins within minutes, or even seconds, of exposure to an allergen. Emergency treatment of an anaphylactic reaction includes injection of epinephrine (EpiPen), immediate summoning of medical personnel, and emergency transportation to the hospital.

Students with known severe allergies are expected to notify the school at the beginning of each year through completion of the Medical Form and supply their own EpiPens. Student EpiPens should be labeled with the student's name and grade level. Homeroom teachers for students in grades preschool through 4th grade will keep all EpiPens in their classroom to use in case of emergency. Students in grades 5th through 12th are expected to carry their EpiPens with them at all times in case an allergic reaction occurs.

Gaston Day will maintain a supply of EpiPens for the treatment of students that are unaware of their allergy, do not have access to their personal EpiPen, or require multiple EpiPen injections to delay the onset of anaphylaxis. In case of an anaphylactic reaction to an allergen, known or unknown, Gaston Day School will administer epinephrine to any student to delay anaphylaxis until first responders can arrive and provide continued care to your student. Gaston Day is dedicated to the safety of your student, and the use of epinephrine to treat anaphylaxis is vital. If you prefer the school not use epinephrine on your student when they are at risk of anaphylaxis, you may opt out of this policy by emailing the school Registrar or appropriate Division Head.

### **Notification of Medical Emergencies and Accidents**

School officials will make every effort to reach a parent or guardian in the event of an emergency, but if the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the school will notify the person(s) designated emergency contact. ***Parents and guardians should always leave updated contact information for being reached in emergency situations on OnCampus.*** The completed online form contains authorization and consent for Gaston Day School staff to administer such first aid or other minor medical treatment as deemed best under the circumstances. All physical injuries will be examined as soon as possible. In the event of an emergency requiring immediate medical care in which the school is unable to notify the parents, the school is also authorized to have the student treated by a qualified physician at the nearest medical facility.

### **Mental Wellness**

The mental wellness of our students is a top priority for the 21-22 school year. We understand that there will be many changes and new routines for students that may cause an increase in feelings of anxiety, stress, and social isolation. With the help of a part-time School Counselor, Gaston Day plans to support employees, families, and students during this challenging time. We encourage members of our community to visit and become familiar with the resources that are available on OnCampus, attend events as they are offered throughout the school year, and reach out to the School Counselor as needed.



## **IV. LOWER SCHOOL'S HANDBOOK**

The goal for Lower School behavior is the creation of an environment where all students can learn and grow to their fullest potential.

Teachers use a behavior monitoring system based on the principles of respect and responsibility. Appropriate behavior and attitudes will be encouraged and acknowledged. Minor infractions will be handled by the classroom teacher. Any action that is detrimental to another child or to school property will be handled by the Lower School Head and will involve notification of parents.

Consequences for violations of behavior expectations include:

- Verbal warnings and explanations
- Notes of apology
- Written reflections
- Missed recess (partial)
- Service to the community (you mess it up- you clean it up)
- Parent/student/teacher meetings
- Discussions with administrators

We view bullying as "physical and/or psychological intimidation that occurs repeatedly over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse." When there is a pattern of unwanted, intentional unkindness or attention, the more serious behavioral consequences are employed. Discipline in lower school is an ongoing educational process that involves logical consequences, explanations, directed class lessons, morning meeting discussions and individual counseling.

### **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

Gaston Day provides an exciting, challenging academic environment for children. Their academic progress is recorded on interim reports and comprehensive semester reports. One parent/teacher conference is scheduled in October, and additional conferences are possible at parent or teacher request at any time.

Homework is a part of the academic expectations at Gaston Day School. Daily assignments are the responsibility of the students, and each student will keep a homework assignment notebook. All students are expected to be read to or to read daily at home. Students who do not complete assignments in a timely manner will work with the teacher and parents to arrange time for completion. This could involve using a portion of free time at school or after school time.

Beginning in third grade Gaston Day students take the ERB CTP 5 standardized test. This is a test normed against other independent school students and is used as a benchmark of student progress and instruction. Scores are shared in writing with the parents.

Lower School grades are not intended to be used as comparisons to other children in the class. They are a reflection of a child's progress along the curriculum expectations. Please remember that report cards are "living documents" that give us a benchmark at a particular time and help us plan for the future.

## **ILLNESS/MEDICATION**

[NON- COVID illness reference page](#)

Students who become ill at school will see the Lower School Head, classroom teacher or wellness coordinator before parents are notified of illness. Any student running a fever will not be allowed to remain at school. Children may not return to school until they have been fever/vomit free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. Prescription medications must be in the original container and be accompanied by specific instructions for administration. Parents can sign a release form allowing the school to administer age appropriate over the counter pain medication such as tums and children's Tylenol.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Lower School Students are expected to be in the classroom by 8:00 am. Students entering the room after 8 o'clock will be reported as tardy. Regular attendance at school is important for consistent academic progress. While we recognize the value of travel, we ask that prior arrangements be made for extended absences so coverage of critical work can be arranged. Excessive absences or tardies that disrupt a student's academic progress will be reported to the Lower School Head by the classroom teacher. Parents will be notified and asked to schedule a conference. Please fill out the form at the connected [absent link](#) for all absences.

## **THE EARLY SCHOOL DRESS CODE FOR STUDENTS IN**

### **PS and PK**

- Practical clothes for play and learning because learning can be messy
- Closed toed shoes are preferred
- All jackets, gloves, winter hats, sweaters, and sweatshirts must be labeled

### **DRESS CODE FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES K- 4th**

**For the Fall of 2021 LS students will not need High Dress- We will re-evaluate the need for high dress in the spring.**

The intent of Gaston Day's dress code is to have children wear clothing that is free from distractions to themselves and others, and that allows them to work and play freely. These guidelines allow parents to purchase clothing from a variety of sources and adapt to the varied sizes and shapes of students.

- Polo style shirt, long or short-sleeved, solid color, with or without school logo
- Solid colored collared polo-style dresses
- Solid colored button-down shirt, solid color turtleneck shirt, with or without school logo

- Khaki or navy pants, shorts, skorts, jumpers, or skirts
- Plain, unembellished blue jeans are acceptable. Oversized pants are not acceptable.
- Leggings with a polo are NOT acceptable
  - Leggings are intended to be worn under a dress or skirt
- Solid color or printed tights and socks
- Solid colored sweaters, vests, or sweatshirts with or without GDS logo
  - Sweaters, hoodies, and other jackets worn in the classroom need to be solid colored
- Footwear must be neat and clean. Sneakers are acceptable. Backless shoes/clogs and flip-flop style sandals are not allowed.
  - Embellished, flashing, sequined shoes are not allowed.
- Children MUST wear athletic shoes for PE.
- All jackets, winter hats, gloves, sweaters, and sweatshirts must be labeled.

Clothing will continue to be available through the Lands End catalog, local stores, and other companies with the GDS logo. Please note that not all clothing needs the GDS logo.

Official school clothing is worn Monday through Thursday by students in grades kindergarten through fourth. Friday dress must be clothing that respects the intent of the dress code. Oversized clothing, basketball jerseys, spaghetti strap tops, and “short shorts” are not appropriate.

Students who are out of dress code will be given a note to take home with reminders of the dress code guidelines.

#### **FIELD TRIPS - will return where appropriate for the 21-22 school year**

Field trips are an important part of the academic program at Gaston Day School. They begin in the lower grades with short trips and culminate with the 3-day Sunship Earth program in Fourth Grade. Students will wear the navy/khaki/white combination of official school clothing for all trips unless notified of special dress requirements. Methods of transportation will vary depending on length of trip but is most often on GDS buses with appropriately licensed drivers.

#### **Requests For Teachers/Classroom Placement**

We believe that the teachers’ in-depth knowledge of each student in combination with their knowledge of fellow faculty members’ styles and practices allows them to make the best class placement decisions for our students. Throughout the placement process our teachers at each grade level along with our learning specialist work in collaborative teams to ensure that each child is placed thoughtfully into their next year’s homeroom class. The educational team takes into consideration social and emotional factors as well as learning and teaching styles when placing a child. The goal is to provide the absolute best learning environment for each individual student. Therefore, we do not take parent requests for teachers.

## **PE/GYM SHOES**

Students at every grade level must wear athletic shoes for all PE classes. You will receive a PE schedule in the fall indicating the days each grade has PE. Athletic shoes can be worn to school or changed into prior to PE class. Students without athletic shoes will not be allowed to participate in PE class.

## **SECURITY**

All parents and visitors must sign in at the front office when visiting the school and wear a visitor badge while on campus. Exterior classroom doors will be locked during the day. Please enter the classroom building through the main entrance. Children must enter the front doors at the beginning of each school day.

## **PHONE CALLS/IMPORTANT MESSAGES**

Because of scheduling, teachers are often unable to check voicemail messages or emails before the end of the day. Please leave any critical messages regarding change of transportation or dismissal plans with the front office. Teachers will return phone messages at the end of the day in a timely manner. Only emergency messages will be delivered to students during class time.

## **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**

After school care is offered for students in grade Pre- School through grade 4. The hours are 3:15- 5:30. The accounts payable department will bill for weekly use.

## **CARPPOOL PROCEDURES**

The safety of all Gaston Day students is our primary concern at drop off and pick up times. We will try to move the line as quickly as possible while keeping safety as our goal.

### **Morning Drop-off:**

After entering the campus on JB Davis Blvd, turn left in front of the Pamela Kimbrell Warlick Center to approach the Lower School entrance. Students should be dropped off along the sidewalk at the front door. Please pull as far forward as possible before allowing your child to exit the car. Have the children exit next to sidewalk if at all possible. Children should be ready to exit, book bags and lunchboxes in hand. If papers need to be signed, checks written, or afternoon plans discussed, please pull into a parking space. Then you can safely complete the necessary activities and return to the line. If you plan to enter the building during arrival time, please park in the Pamela Kimbrell Warlick Center parking lot. This will eliminate people walking through the line of cars unloading children. **Do not park curbside.**

### **Afternoon Pick-up:**

Again, enter the campus on JB Davis Blvd. and turn left to approach the Lower School entrance. To pick up children, form a double line after turning left. Teachers will direct you to move forward one line at a time to the loading area. When in the loading area TURN OFF your car's engine. The noise, heat, fumes and possibility of accidents makes this necessary. We ask that you not use cell phones while in this double line. It takes the attention of all of us to keep our students safe. Do not allow children to come to your car until they are directed to do so by a teacher. After all cars in the double line are loaded, the teacher at the front of the line will signal for loaded cars to leave. The flag pole median row will usually leave first. Do not pull away until directed to leave. If you plan to enter the building or meet your child on the sidewalk during dismissal time, please park in the Pamela Kimbrell Warlick Center parking lot. This will eliminate people walking through the lines of cars loading children. Do not park curbside. These simple rules are the result of many years of working to safely and quickly return your children to you at the end of the day. To keep 200 children safe these procedures are necessary. Please cooperate with teachers when they remind you of the daily procedures. Thanks for your help.

### **Pre-School /Pre-K Dismissal**

Parents should follow the same procedure as morning drop-off, forming a SINGLE line along the front curb. Teachers will bring the children to your car.

### **LS Technology Policy**

Smart Watches- Lower School students may not wear SMARTwatches at school. A student may keep them in a book bag if a parent needs them to have it for bus riding or another off-campus after school activity.

Cell Phones- Lower School students who ride the bus may keep a cell phone in the off mode in their bookbag. The cell will not be used during the school day.

BYOC- [BYOC POLICY](#) for 3rd and 4th grade

**Remote Learning for an extended time frame-** See remote learning schedules by grade level on your child's On Campus page. Remote learning will involve whole group and small group synchronous instruction in conjunction with asynchronous assignments. Students will have 3- 4 hours a day of instruction delivered in a combination of synchronous instruction and/or small groups and independent assignments and project based learning activities.

- PS/PK - should be on campus as a child care facility- see section on Early School
  - K-1 45- 70 min of synchronous instruction daily
  - 2-4 70 -90 mins of synchronous instruction daily
- K-1
    - 3-4 short recorded lessons a week

- 45-70 mins a day of direct instruction- broken up into small segments
  - 15- 20 mins of small group instruction
- 2-4
  - 1-2 recorded review lessons - if needed
  - 70-90 mins a day of direct instruction broken up into 20-30 blocks
    - 15- 20 mins of small group instruction

**Policy if children are out sick for more than 2 days with a covid related illness-**

Teachers will record direct instruction for lessons in Math and Language Arts that introduces new material. It will be sent out as a recording on a delay of 24 hours- Science and SS recordings will occur as the teacher sees appropriate to the learning process.

- Assignments will be delivered in a variety of ways-
  - Google classroom
  - Readworks
  - Raz Kid
  - Reflex Math
  - Textbooks
  - Other materials as needed
- Family responsibility for Assignments and completion
  - Parents are responsible for picking up material in a timely manner from the school
  - Cycle for completing work and returning will follow a 36 hour delay policy
    - Ex. receive work at 3 pm on Monday
    - Return work 8 am on Wednesday
      - That gives the student an entire day to complete work and upload or return to school
  - Grades will be taken on school work and assessments
- Touchpoints
  - A parent can arrange with the teacher one 20-30 minute session a week for help or support.

## V. MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK: STUDENT LIFE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

### A. ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Regular classroom attendance is essential to a student's learning at any grade level. It is the responsibility of the student to attend all scheduled classes and activities. Absences for causes other than illness or emergency are therefore to be avoided with firm resolve. Parents can be most helpful by not asking for permission to schedule vacations beyond those times allotted in the school calendar. Parents are also encouraged to make every effort to arrange doctor, dental, and orthodontia appointments for students after the school day.

Middle School students are expected to attend homeroom and all classes for which they are registered. Attendance policies apply both when campus is open with in-person learning and if campus is closed with virtual learning. Parents should complete the [online student absence](#) form available on OnCampus to inform the school of all student absences. Class attendance records are completed each period of the day. A student's attendance record appears on all academic progress reports. **Students are allowed to miss a maximum of ten class periods in each class each year. Students are allowed to miss a maximum of ten homeroom periods each year. Students missing more than fifteen class periods in a single year may lose course credit.** (School-related absences or students learning from home do not count toward absence limits.)

Students with more than ten absences will be assigned a Saturday School to avoid loss of course credit. Multiple Saturday Schools may be assigned—at the discretion of the Head of Middle School or Dean of Students—based on the number of absences in excess of the limit. Specific instances related to COVID-19, of serious extended illness, or other extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Daily attendance totals are reported at the end of every school year on a student's transcript. Students in grades 7th-8th must be present for at least two academic periods to be counted present for that school day. Students in grades 5th-6th must be present for at least four academic periods to be counted present for that school day.

Absences are categorized as follows:

#### **Excused**

Excused absences allow a student to make up all assignments for full credit (see make-up work section). All excused absences count toward the maximum absences allowed per class.

1. Personal illness
2. College visit
3. Death in the family
4. Religious holidays
5. Physician's appointments

6. Pre-arranged absences (provided student has completed a Pre-arranged Absence Form one week prior to absence).

### **Unexcused**

Unexcused absences allow students to make up daily assignments, tests, and exams for 50% credit. All unexcused absences count toward the maximum absences allowed per class.

1. Truancy
2. Failure to bring a doctor's note or parent note (email to Main Office at [attendance@gastoday.org](mailto:attendance@gastoday.org) from parent is acceptable) explaining an absence within three days of return to school

Notes, emails ([attendance@gastoday.org](mailto:attendance@gastoday.org)), or phone calls to the Wellness Coordinator from parents explaining absences will be accepted within the first three days of the student's return. Any student not following proper sign-out procedures will be considered truant.

### **Learning From Home**

Due to the updated health and wellness policies as part of our COVID-19 Response, we expect an increase in students being absent from campus for the upcoming school year. For that reason, students will have the ability to attend class from home when they have a COVID-related absence that has been approved by the Wellness Coordinator. Parents are expected to complete the online COVID-related Absence Form to notify the school of the absence and request that their child be able to learn from home. Students that are attending class from home will be marked "Present-Learning From Home" on OnCampus upon attending their virtual class and should follow virtual learning classroom expectations.

**These absences from campus will not count toward a student's absence total for the year.**

We also understand that some families may choose for their students to learn from home due to the potential COVID-related risks of being on campus. Families are required to make a decision about their learning preference prior to the start of each grading period and will be expected to stay with that learning preference for the duration of the grading period. Families that choose for their student to learn from home are expected to complete the online Learning From Home Selection Form by the deadline to notify the school of their learning preference. Students that are attending class from home will be marked "Present-Learning From Home" on OnCampus and should follow virtual learning classroom expectations. **These absences from campus will not count toward a student's absence total for the year.**

In order to avoid distractions, students that are learning from home should plan to attend class for the entire period. Partial periods, except those due to technical difficulties, will not be permitted when learning from home. Students must also follow the Student Behavior Expectations described in Section X of Family Handbook.

### **Religious Holidays**

As a diverse community, Gaston Day School seeks to be respectful of all religions. To this end, we allow students to be absent on the day of a religious holiday. Additionally, in the case that students are up late honoring a religious event the night before a school day, students may opt to take the following day off. When a student takes a day off for religious reasons, he/she may participate in co-curricular events that



same day. Students who choose to come to school, though, should be prepared for all classes and daily expectations.

### **Make-up Work for Personal Illness, Death in the Family, or Unexpected Absence**

Students should arrange with teachers to make up all work missed. The time limit for making up work is the total number of days missed plus one day. For example, a student absent for two days is expected to make up work within three days of his/her return. A student absent on the day a long term project or paper is due will be expected to turn in the assignment on the day he/she returns to school; if a student is absent from a class in which a long term project or paper is due but attends a class or classes on the same day, the long term project or paper must be submitted on/before 4:00 p.m. A student missing a test or quiz without missing any prior review will be expected to take the test or quiz on the day of his/her return. . As part of the COVID-19 Response, students with extended absences related to COVID-19 will be reviewed on an individual basis by the Head of Middle School.

### **Pre-Arranged Absences and Religious Holidays**

Students planning to be absent from school should complete all work possible prior to leaving or obtain assignments to complete during the absence. Students should be proactive in talking with teachers regarding assignments. It is the student's responsibility to consult with a teacher well in advance in the event that work cannot be completed before the absence. To help prepare for planned absences, students are encouraged to complete a Pre-arranged Absence Form.

### **Family Trips**

Family trips that necessitate absences of five or more school days may require completion of an academic project in order for the absences to be excused. If required, the project will be assigned by the Head of Middle School based on the nature and duration of the trip and must be submitted to the Head of Middle School within the first three days of the student's return.

### **School-Sponsored Activities and Medical Appointments**

Students who miss class for school-sponsored activities or medical appointments are expected to submit assignments and take quizzes and tests prior to leaving campus. Students must coordinate early assignments, quizzes, and tests with their teachers prior to departure.

### **Early Departure from School**

Students who become ill or must otherwise depart school early must report to the Wellness Coordinator in the PKW lobby to check out. Parents who come to pick up their students must complete the online student absence form to notify the school that the student will be dismissed early.

If a student must leave school early for an appointment, the parent should complete an early dismissal form through the online student absence form prior to the start of the school day. The student will be given permission to leave by the teacher whose class they will leave early. Parents should plan to pick up students with an early dismissal from behind the Henry Center.

Students missing more than 20 minutes for 5th-8th grade due to an early departure will be counted absent for class that day.

### **Late Arrival to School**

If a student arrives late to school, he/she must sign in at the PKW check-in point with the Wellness Coordinator to complete a temperature check and obtain a wristband. Students arriving late due to doctors' appointments should submit proof of the appointment to [attendance@gastonday.org](mailto:attendance@gastonday.org) so they may enter class without being counted as tardy. Students missing more than 20 minutes for 5th-8th grade due to a late arrival will be counted absent for class that day.

### **Tardiness**

Any tardy is a disruption to class time and repeated tardies contribute to poor academic performance. It is the responsibility of each student to be on time for all classes. Students who arrive to a class up to 20 minutes late in 5th- 8th grades will receive a tardy. Students missing more than this amount of time from class will be marked absent; if a student is on campus, he/she must report to class regardless of how much time remains. Recognizing that there are unavoidable reasons for arriving late to a class, each student is allowed three tardies per class per semester. Students who exceed this limit will be assigned a violation for each tardy over the limit of three.

### **After School Supervision**

Middle School students remaining (unsupervised) on campus after 3:30 p.m. are required to report to after-school care. Adult-supervised after-school care is provided until 5:30p.m. There is a \$6.00 per day fee for this service.

### **Attendance Requirement for Participation in Co-curricular Activities**

Students who do not attend school on the same day as a co-curricular activity may not participate in the activity. Students must arrive at school by 10:40 a.m. in order to participate in co-curricular activities that day. Students missing school after 10:40 a.m. for a prescheduled doctor's appointment must present a doctor's note in order to participate in a co-curricular activity that day. Any other reason for an excused absence after 10:40 a.m. must be pre-approved by the Director of Athletics or Head of Middle School in order to participate in co-curricular activities on the same day.

### **Middle School Lunch**

As part of the COVID-19 Response, all 5th and 6th students will eat lunch in their homerooms or other designated learning spaces. All 7th and 8th students will eat lunch in the lower dining hall. All students will be directed to wash their hands at a sink prior to eating lunch.

To remove unnecessary distractions, provide equal and fair opportunities to all of our students, and to limit unnecessary campus visitors, students are not permitted to bring lunch from local restaurants or fast food chains or to have parents or friends bring them lunch from off-campus establishments.

As part of the COVID-19 Response, group celebrations with shared food are not permitted at this time.

## **B. THE MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCIAL CONTRACT**

### **The Middle School Social Contract**

Although there is not a direct Middle School equivalent of the Honor Code or Honor Council, it is important to prepare our Middle School students to understand their future responsibilities in an Upper School community governed by an Honor Code.

At the beginning of each year, all Middle School students and teachers work together to create a Social Contract for grades 5-6 and a separate Social Contract for grades 7-8. These Social Contracts become the statements of general expectations that the Middle School community agrees to abide by. All Middle School students sign their names as a way of pledging their support and agreement with the Contract. The Middle School Social Contracts will be displayed and used for thoughtful discussions about acceptable behavior and logical consequences. These Social Contracts will be enforced by the teachers, Dean of Students, and Head of Middle School to serve the students in creating a community with the characteristics desired for learning.

## **C. BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

Gaston Day School maintains a secure, moral, and nurturing atmosphere, one where virtues such as integrity and respect are of the highest importance. The school believes that systematic rules of behavior will enhance the growth and well-being of each student and provide an atmosphere conducive to education. When students fail to live by the school's expectations, they must be prepared to accept the consequences of their lack of responsibility. Disciplinary consequences may include, but are not limited to, the loss of school privileges, suspension of eligibility in school-sponsored co-curricular activities, detention, Saturday school, suspension, or expulsion.

Gaston Day seeks consistent application of its disciplinary policies. While each situation is judged on its own merits, every effort will be made to ensure that decisions are equitable. Policies are clearly stated in this handbook so that students are able to anticipate the disciplinary consequences of improper behavior.

Gaston Day believes that our students represent the school even when not directly involved in a school-sponsored or sanctioned event. We, therefore, seek to encourage students to exercise good citizenship and integrity at all times. When misconduct occurs on campus, on a school-sponsored event, or on a school bus, disciplinary consequences will be applied. In situations where the relationship between the misconduct and the school is less direct, Gaston Day will determine what discipline and counseling may apply, and in extreme cases, may include suspension or expulsion of the student.

Gaston Day seeks to honor the privacy of students and families involved in disciplinary cases. The need for privacy should, however, be balanced with the need for a factual release of information to the Gaston Day community in order to encourage respect for the integrity of the procedures and understanding of the actions taken.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

Gaston Day School has the right and responsibility to define and to enforce acceptable standards of student conduct. These behaviors are described below.

Gaston Day students are serious about academic preparation for college and maintain high standards of integrity, respect, and responsibility. The following behavior is expected of all Gaston Day School students during on- or off-campus activities:

1. Speak positively
2. Respect everyone
3. Behave responsibly
4. Respect others' property
5. Do your best
6. Honor commitments
7. Serve others
8. Forgive easily
9. Respect your mind and body
10. Speak honestly and respectfully

## **Harassment and Intolerance**

A Gaston Day School student will not engage in actions or possess items that dishonor or disrespect the race, gender, sexual identity, ethnic origin, or religion of others, or that incite discord among the same, either intentionally or unintentionally. Doing so constitutes the highest level of misconduct and will therefore result in serious disciplinary consequences. Gaston Day School will also seek to educate our school community through the classroom, assemblies, advising, and other avenues to be appreciative of differences and respectful and tolerant of all persons.

## **Bullying and Harassing Behavior Policy**

In accordance with the NC School Violence Prevention Act, Gaston Day School defines bullying or harassing behavior as a repeated pattern of written, electronic, or verbal communication, or any physical act or any threatening communication that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, with the intention to hurt another person physically or mentally.

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by an actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

- No student or school employee shall be subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by school employees or students.
- No person shall engage in any act of reprisal or retaliation against a victim, witness, or a person with reliable information about an act of bullying or harassing behavior.

- A school employee who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall report the incident to the appropriate school official.
- A student or school volunteer who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall report the incident to the appropriate school official.

Bullying is not tolerated at Gaston Day School. Bullying involves repeated and intentional physical, verbal, and/or emotional harm to another person. It is important to differentiate between *teasing* and *bullying*, as teasing is not bullying. Teasing is done with the intention to be playful or funny and its primary purpose is not to harm, nor is it of an ongoing nature.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to, the repeated and intentional act of:

- Hurting someone physically by hitting, kicking, tripping, pushing, etc.
- Stealing or damaging another person's belongings
- Teasing someone in a hurtful way or playing cruel practical jokes
- Using insults
- Touching, showing or talking about body parts in a sexual way
- Gossiping or spreading cruel rumors about someone
- Excluding others on purpose or trying to get other students not to play with someone
- Threatening or intimidating acts, either verbal or non-verbal (i.e. malicious notes, e-mail, cyber-bullying)

Gaston Day School teachers are dedicated to creating and maintaining a positive, safe and nurturing environment. Teachers continue to work through bullying issues each year with students. Through the Developmental Design Program in Middle School, students and teachers work toward a cohesive, respectful environment. We recognize that bullying and aggressive behavior rarely occurs in view of an adult. We encourage students to immediately report to a teacher or staff member any act of aggression or bullying. If you suspect your child is being bullied or reports to you that he/she is being bullied, please notify the Dean of Students or Head of Middle School as soon as possible. The appropriate administrator will interview your child to get more information about the situation. If there is any evidence of bullying (i.e. notes, emails), please submit copies.

### **Technology**

Gaston Day School strives to integrate technology appropriately throughout the curriculum. At all grade levels, users experience both the privileges associated with adherence to the Technology Responsible Use Policy and consequences of violating the code, including but not limited to, detention, suspension, or expulsion for serious infractions.

### **Social Media**

Gaston Day School allows the educational use of social media on campus amongst students of appropriate age. Social media includes, but is not limited to, discussion forums, blogs, wikis, social networks, podcasts, image and video sharing, social bookmarking, and gaming.

Gaston Day School respects the right of each student's family to determine what constitutes appropriate at-home online behavior in relation to social media and to monitor such behavior at the discretion of the parent(s). However, a student who violates the Bullying or Harassing Behavior Policy through the use of social media will be subject to the Student Code of Conduct expectations expressed in the Blue Book.

As such, a Gaston Day student is responsible for his or her words, actions, images, and deeds posted to social media sites or any other electronic communication is in violation of the Honor Code and therefore may NOT under any circumstance:

- Post, share, or endorse electronic words or images that bully, harass, impersonate, or demean a student, teacher, or school official.
- Post or share electronic words or images that contain profanity, nudity, drugs, alcohol, or other illicit or illegal activities.
- Create or share images, audio, or video taken from inside a school bathroom or locker room.
- Post, share, or endorse electronic words or images that threaten the safety of students, teachers, or school officials.
- Post, share, or endorse electronic words or images that are offensive to others or embarrass the school.

### **Weapons**

Students bringing on campus any item that may be perceived as a weapon (i.e., knife, gun, Taser, pepper spray, etc.) will be subject to severe disciplinary actions, including but not limited to suspension or expulsion.

### **Alcohol, Drugs, and Other Substances**

Abuse of alcohol, drugs, and other substances is a societal problem of great concern to Gaston Day School. Students confront issues of drug and alcohol use and chemical dependency at an early age, and students at Gaston Day School are not immune to these challenges.

The first interest of Gaston Day School in this area is one of education and guidance. Students are systematically made aware of the dangers of alcohol, drugs, and other forms of drug use.

The use of alcohol under the age of 21 is illegal in the United States. The use of illicit drugs is forbidden regardless of age. Furthermore, the use of these substances interferes with the intellectual, social, and physical development of young people. Gaston Day School fully endorses these legal and ethical sanctions against the use of alcohol by those under 21, against the use of illegal drugs, and against the abuse of other substances.

A Gaston Day School student who abuses substances, misuses legal drugs, or uses or possesses illegal drugs or alcohol on school property or at a school-sponsored event can expect to be suspended or expelled. A student who comes to school or to a school-sponsored event under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any abused substance may also expect suspension or expulsion.

Tobacco and e-cigarettes are prohibited on campus at all times. A Gaston Day School student who uses or possesses tobacco or e-cigarettes on school property or at a school-sponsored event can expect to be suspended or expelled.

Furthermore, use of alcohol, drugs, or other substances is a problem of such magnitude in our society that families should expect the school to be concerned when a student at any time is abusing these substances. School staff will first be concerned with the safety of all involved and the full disclosure and discussion of the incident with all parents. Depending on the nature of the incident, its legal disposition, the danger posed to others, and the impact on the school, the staff may require one or more of the following for the student as a condition for continued enrollment: a professional assessment of drug or alcohol dependence; counseling; removal of the student from all extracurricular participation for a significant period of time; forfeiture of any elected or appointed position of leadership; Saturday School, community service; or other appropriate actions.

### **Search Policy**

The Gaston Day School administration reserves the right to search students, their property, lockers or similar spaces when there is a reasonable suspicion that a breach of the Student Life and Code of Conduct is or has occurred on school premises or at school-sanctioned events. Whenever there is reasonable suspicion for such a search, the student's permission will be requested. Students have the right to reject the request for a search, but consequences may include but are not limited to sequestering or locking the item (such as a backpack or locker) or immediate suspension and/or expulsion, as appropriate.

### **D. MIDDLE SCHOOL DRESS CODE**

Parents' cooperation is essential in helping the school enforce a dress code that reflects our community values and minimizes distractions. With a wide range of acceptable dress in the greater community, the school chooses to adhere to a dress code that favors more modest attire. Fashion is unpredictable and constantly changing; therefore, this dress code may not fully address every new trend. In areas where the dress code is silent or unclear, faculty and staff will interpret and enforce the intended "spirit" of the dress code with administrators' oversight. The school reserves the right to clarify or to modify this dress code throughout the school year. Any changes will be shared promptly, and in writing, with the Gaston Day community through email or direct mail.

#### **General Dress and Appearance Guidelines**

Students are required to be neatly and properly dressed at all times during the school day. This dress code applies to all students on campus at any time during any school day (including students on campus but not attending a class, temporarily on campus running errands, departing for a trip, etc.)

#### **Presentable Daily Wear**

- Students must wear clean and size-appropriate shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters, t-shirts, and jackets.
- Designs must contain appropriate language/images.
- Necklines should not expose cleavage.

- Shirts must completely cover torso during normal daily activity.
- No undergarments may be visible at any time. An undershirt may not be worn as a substitute for a shirt.
- Midriff tops, tank tops, and spaghetti straps are unacceptable. Sleeveless tops should have at least three finger-width straps.
- Pants/jeans must be size-appropriate, neat and presentable.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be no shorter than mid thigh.
- Shorts must be no longer than the bottom of the kneecap.
- Leggings are acceptable if worn underneath a size-appropriate skirt, dress, or shorts.
- Clothing that is frayed, torn, or slit is unacceptable.
- Athletic pants and warm-up suits are permitted. (No athletic shorts)
- Tennis shoes, casual shoes, and athletic sandals are acceptable.
- No hats or caps are to be worn inside any building on campus.
- Jewelry and accessories are acceptable as long as they are conservative.
- Piercings (other than ear) are unacceptable.

### **Dress Down Attire For Students**

On certain designated occasions, students have an option for a relaxed dress code. On any of these occasions, the “spirit” of the daily dress code applies. The faculty/administrator organizing an event will provide specific guidelines for relaxed attire; students should ask questions and seek any clarification for special dress guidelines in advance of the event. If a student is uncertain or confused about relaxed attire guidelines for a special occasion, he/she is expected to follow the standard daily dress code.

### **Dress Code Violations**

Students not following the dress code at any point during the school day will be assigned a violation. Repeated dress code infractions may lead to additional disciplinary consequences.

### **Business Dress Day Options**

As part of the COVID-19 Response, all high dress days for the 2021-22 school year have been suspended. We recognize that many of the events typically requiring high dress will not be possible in their traditional format. We will resume High Dress for the 2022-23 school year. For the 2021-22 school year we will have a Dress Day option which will follow a business casual dress code. This can be used for class presentations, field trips, and/or special events.

### **Acceptable Business Dress Day**

- Pants in solid colors black, navy blue, khaki or grey (no shorts, denim, or corduroy material)
- Dresses and/or skirts need to be mid thigh; If wearing a dress or skirt, tights (navy or black only), skin-tone pantyhose, navy or black ankle or knee socks or bare legs (no leggings or leg warmers)
- Belts, socks, traditional or bow ties should be GDS or solid (no pattern)
- Dress shoes (black, brown or navy) defined as closed-toe shoes with a back and in good condition; sandals (including Crocs and Birkenstocks), boots and canvas shoes are not acceptable; sperrys are acceptable if they are brown, black or navy; heels may be no higher than two inches



- Accessories must be conservative (no colorful belts, scarves, necklaces, or pins)

### **PE Dress Code and Uniform**

Students enrolled in physical education in grades 5-8 are required to comply with the following PE Uniform expectations:

- Students are highly encouraged to wear a t-shirt, long sleeve shirt, or hoodie with appropriate language/images.
- Students are highly encouraged to wear gym shorts, sweatpants or leggings/yoga pants (with shorts on top) of appropriate size and length.
- Students are highly encouraged to wear socks to prevent blisters.
- Students must wear appropriate athletic shoes with backs on the heels (no crocs or sandals).
- Students, especially in 8th grade, may want to bring a change of socks and shoes as they may have class when there is dew on the ground.
- Students must bring their masks with them in case class is held indoors.
- Students are highly encouraged to wear some kind of head covering, such as a hat, to protect them from the sun and heat.
- Students should expect to go outdoors for PE as much as possible, and should dress appropriately. This is most important in the winter months.

### **Game Day Dress**

As a matter of team and school pride and morale, athletic teams and other co-curricular groups may dress in a uniform manner on designated days. The group appearance may range from business dress day to team t-shirts. Students are not permitted to wear their game uniforms to school.

## **E. DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES**

Teachers are the primary disciplinarians for our students. When students act in ways that are disrespectful or disruptive, disciplinary procedures will be followed by teachers. Any questions about a discipline incident should first respectfully be addressed to the assigning teacher. A disciplinary consequence may be appealed to the Dean of Students and/or Head of Middle School, and then ultimately to the Head of School. Following any appeal(s), a disciplinary decision is final and obligatory. Continued enrollment at Gaston Day School will be contingent upon all disciplinary obligations being completed satisfactorily and in a timely manner. Parents may not refuse disciplinary measures for their children without jeopardizing their continued enrollment.

Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures that are described in the Family Handbook. These expectations are defined and reinforced throughout the school year by classroom teachers and the Dean of Students. For all reported violations, the teacher and Dean of Students will collectively determine the appropriate consequence. Consequences are determined to match the severity of the violation as well as to educate students on behavioral expectations. For that reason, student consequences will include a point system to help ensure the appropriate consequence is determined for each violation.

According to the point system, violations are divided into three levels in order to differentiate the severity of the student's behavior: yellow, orange, and red. Yellow violations are worth 1 point and are reported for minor infractions, such as chewing gum, unapproved cell phone use, or failing to adhere to the dress code. Orange violations are worth 3 points and are reported for more serious infractions, misbehaving during a safety drill, or failing to follow parking lot procedures. Red violations are the most serious infractions and are addressed immediately by the Dean of Students.

It is at the discretion of the teacher and Dean of Students to determine the level of the violation for a student infraction. Based on the level of the violation and the number of points a student has received during the current school year, the Dean of Students may issue one of the following consequences in addition to any teacher assigned consequence:

- 1-3 Points: Break Detention, served during break the day of, or school day following the violation
- 4-10 Points: After-school Detention, served on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 – 4:30 pm

Detentions are considered a time of reflection, and students are required to leave all electronic devices, books, magazines, notebooks, etc. at the front of the room and sit silently at an assigned seat. Students are not permitted to complete homework or sleep during this time. Students are allowed to participate in co-curricular activities on the day they serve the school detention once the detention has been served. Students may be required to complete a fix-it plan, write a letter of apology, or other task assigned by the Dean of Students.

The Dean of Students will notify parents of school detentions. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate his/her schedule and other obligations to serve the assigned detention promptly. Once assigned a school detention, a student must serve it within the next two scheduled detention offerings. For example, a student assigned a detention on Monday must serve it on Tuesday or Thursday; a student assigned a detention on Wednesday must serve it on either Thursday or the following Tuesday.

It is entirely the responsibility of the student to discuss any scheduling conflicts with the Dean of Students well in advance. Students arriving more than ten minutes late to an assigned detention or failing to serve an assigned detention will be required to make up the detention as well as be assigned an additional detention.

As part of the COVID-19 Response, it may not be possible for students to serve detentions throughout the school year due to physical distancing, supervisor availability, and campus zoning. So, for the 20-21 school year, the Dean of Students may assign alternative consequences to students receiving violations. These consequences include, but are not limited to, letters of apology, reflection papers, conferences with faculty, and loss of privileges.

For Middle School students accumulating 10 points or being reported for any red level violation, a conference will be set up with the Dean of Students, the student, and his/her parents to discuss the consequences and the parameters of a contract that will help the student develop acceptable school habits. In these situations, other consequences, described below, may be assigned by the Dean of Students.

Saturday School is a consequence of serious and/or habitual conduct or attendance infractions. Sessions will be offered as needed throughout the school year from 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at a cost of \$25.00 per student per Saturday. Families with students requiring Saturday School will be billed through the Finance Office. Students attending Saturday School will complete current or missing class assignments or other work deemed appropriate by their teachers and the Head of Middle School or Dean of Students. Students arriving unprepared will be assigned a research project to complete.

Students who are in serious violation of the Student Code of Conduct or who have repeatedly been assigned disciplinary consequences will be asked to separate themselves from their peers for one school day. Students will attend school and work independently in a designated location under the supervision of the Dean of Students. Students who are In-School Suspended must make up all work missed. All work completed during an In-School Suspension will receive 50% credit with the exception of tests, which will receive 100% credit. Additionally, students who are In-School Suspended may not attend or participate in any co-curricular activities that day.

Students who are in serious violation of the Student Code of Conduct or who have repeatedly been assigned disciplinary consequences will be asked to separate themselves from the school for an extended period of time (1 day minimum). Students who are Out-of-School Suspended must make up all work missed. All work completed during an Out-of-School Suspension will receive 50% credit with the exception of tests, which will receive 100% credit. Additionally, students who are Out of School Suspended may not attend or participate in any co-curricular activities for the duration of the suspension.

Students who, in the judgment of the Dean of Students, Middle School Coordinator, and the Head of School, pose an irrevocable and serious detrimental threat to the well-being of the Gaston Day School community, may be expelled from the school. Students may be expelled or dismissed for breaches of the Honor Code, for the possession or use of drugs, for the possession or use of alcoholic beverages, for violation of a probationary status, for repeated and flagrant attendance or code of conduct violations, or for other behavior deemed socially unacceptable. The school will notify parents as soon as possible about the incident and the specific process being used to deal with the situation. The Board of Trustees chooses not to involve itself with disciplinary matters and directs that any appeal be made to the Head of School. An expelled or dismissed student may be permitted to apply for readmission at a subsequent date, depending on the transgression and follow-up care.

In addition to the above consequences, the Dean of Students or Middle School Coordinator may assign letters of apology, essays on related topics, school clean-up/work project, loss of school privileges, community service, or other consequences deemed to be logical and appropriate for a particular infraction.

## **F. TECHNOLOGY USER EXPECTATIONS**

The technology systems and internet access available at Gaston Day School are intended for educational purposes only. The use of school technology is a privilege. Violation of the intended purpose will result

in disciplinary action, including detention, suspension, or expulsion. The school may restrict or terminate user access, without prior notice, if such action is deemed necessary under the expectations expressed in the Technology Code of Conduct, Technology Responsible Use Policy, or Student Code of Conduct.

All Gaston Day School technology users may NOT under any circumstance:

- Make any hardware modifications to school computers nor load any other operating systems nor repartition the hard drive nor change any settings on the hard drive.
- Install registry cleaners and/or batch files to stop computer device services.
- Make changes to the operating system, screen saver, laptop image, install software or attach devices such as a keyboard with the consent of the Director of Technology.
- Load movie, music, or video files onto the hard drive of a school computer or to the network drive.
- Make attempts to circumvent the internet filter, including proxy servers.
- Print personal documents, pictures, or any materials not required for legitimate educational purposes.

All electronic communications may be retained by the school and shared with authorities as required by local, state, or federal regulations.

### **Software Copyright**

1. The only software, other than users' projects, to be used on systems in the school's labs or classrooms are those products for which the school owns a valid license or the school may legally use.
2. Licensed and copyrighted software is not generally available for borrowing and may only be used at other sites with approval from the Director of Technology.
3. Copyrighted software shall not be downloaded from the Internet or further transmitted in any form without compliance with all terms of a preauthorized licensing agreement. Infringement or violation of U.S. or international copyright laws or restrictions will not be tolerated.
4. Any attempts to circumvent the licensing controls or the copying of software from the network without the Director of Technology's permission is prohibited.

### **Hardware**

1. Report equipment problems immediately to the instructor or the Director of Technology.
2. Leave workstations and peripherals in their designated places.
3. Keep work areas neat and clean and free from food, drink, and chewing gum.

### **Internet Responsibilities**

1. Electronic communications (email) is to be restricted to appropriate communications. It is the user's responsibility to maintain the integrity of the private electronic mail system. The user has the responsibility to report all violations of security.
2. All email received and sent must not contain pornographic material, profane language, inappropriate information, or text-encoded files that are potentially dangerous to the integrity of the hardware on the school premises.

3. Sending email to a general audience, such as chain mail and forwards, is forbidden.
4. Users should not reveal personal information in correspondences with unknown parties.
5. Computer games, other than those directly supporting curriculum, are not to be accessed on campus.

### **Student Email**

Gaston Day School assigns school email addresses to all students and provides internet access to all Middle School students. Like all technology resources on campus, email and internet usage are tools for educating students and facilitating the operation of the school. All students and school employees must be mindful that all communication is a reflection of the school as a whole.

Students are strictly forbidden from using their school email account as contacts on social media networking sites. Gaston Day School retains the right to monitor network use and school email accounts; students should have no expectation of privacy when using the school networks, systems, or electronic communication resources.

### **Respect for Others**

Users should respect the rights of others using the mobile labs and network.

1. Use assigned device, if required by teacher or technology department.
2. Be considerate when using scarce resources, such as scanners, printers, and paper.
3. Always log off the device when finished.
4. Avoid deliberately attempting to disrupt system performance or interfering with the work of other users.
5. Leave device in good condition for the next class or user.

### **Personal Technology**

In general, cell phones are not permitted in the classroom, and phones intentionally or repeatedly used in class will be confiscated. In Middle School, personal technology (including but not limited to cell phones, laptops, and tablets) may only be used from 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. at the discretion of a teacher. Personal technology should not be visible in any classroom without teacher permission and may be confiscated by a teacher if deemed a distraction to the classroom environment.

Headphones may not be worn in the halls.

### **Bring Your Own Chromebook (BYOC) Policy Grades 5-8**

The Gaston Day School Bring Your Own Device Policy requires all students in 5th through 8th grades to provide their own device to use at school daily. We believe this policy allows access to technology that meets the needs of a Middle School student in order to provide the best possible learning experience.

### **Responsible Use**

Gaston Day School holds high expectations for student behavior, academic integrity, and the responsible use of existing and emerging technologies. Students who use personal devices while on the Gaston Day School campus or at school-sponsored events shall demonstrate respect for the educational

environment and the rights and privacy of all individuals within the school community. All students and parents are expected to sign a responsible use form at the beginning of each school year.

### **Device Requirements**

Students in grades 3 through 8 are expected to have a Chromebook and students in Middle School should bring this device to school fully charged every day. Student cell phones are not considered an approved device and should not be used during classes. Given that there are certain technical requirements needed to be successful in the Middle School, students are required to have a Chromebook with the following features:

- Wireless internet access
- Keyboard
- Minimum 11" screen
- Camera and microphone
- Chrome Operating System (OS) (iPads and tablets are not permitted)

This year, students entering 7th or 8th grade may consider purchasing a laptop should they plan to continue on with the device upon entering the Upper School. 7th and 8th grade students that choose to use a laptop instead of a Chromebook should consider the following features:

- Wireless internet access
- Keyboard
- Minimum 13" screen
- Minimum i3 processor
- Camera and microphone
- Must be able to install and run software (chromebooks, iPads, and other tablets that cannot install and run software will not be permitted)

### **Device Registration**

Students must register their device with the technology department at the beginning of the school year in order to obtain wifi access and the appropriate school filters. Students will be required to submit the brand, model, serial number, and wifi/mac address through OnCampus forms to complete the registration process.

### **Wifi Requirement**

All students should also have access to a reliable wifi connection at home. If required to move to virtual learning, students will be expected to access lessons online, attend synchronous classes, and submit digital assignments.

### **Technology Code of Conduct Violations**

When any student's online behavior is determined by administrators to violate the law or to threaten the safety of the school, the school will notify the student's parents and take all appropriate actions—including referring the matter to law enforcement officials, requiring psychological counseling for the student and/or dismissing the student from the school. Violations are subject to disciplinary consequences, including but not limited to, suspension or loss of honors or school privileges, suspension

or ineligibility from leadership positions, honor societies, clubs, teams, organizations, or school suspension, or expulsion.

## **G. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL GROWTH AND SCHOOL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

At Gaston Day School we strive to provide opportunities for our students to grow academically and socially. Citizenship, respect/responsibility, and accountability are important community values that we strive to recognize school-wide. The following programs allow students to foster habits and dispositions that lead to responsible adulthood.

### **Character Development Programs**

Gaston Day School has designed a character education program to prepare our students to successfully handle the complexities of society and to enhance their self-confidence, motivation and self-esteem. We see these programs as a partnership between parents, students, and school. Discussing social issues, contemplating decisions and dealing with consequences enable our students to develop life-long skills that result in ethical behavior. In taking the time to encourage “healthy habits,” our school, community, and greater society become enriched.

### **Middle School Student Council**

Gaston Day School students are actively involved in school life and leadership through elected student government offices. Their function is to provide a representative voice to school administration and faculty, to serve as advocates for the student body, to plan and implement school functions for the betterment of the school and enjoyment of the student body, and to reach out into the greater community as student leaders. Middle School Student Council organization meets regularly throughout the school year.

Middle School Student Council officers are elected in the spring of each year. Rising 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders may run for any of the four offices: President, Vice-President, Secretary, or Treasurer. After the school year begins, each homeroom in grades 5-8 elects one class representative to serve on the Student Council.

### **Blue Key Society**

The Blue Key society is a group of students who have been selected to play a major role in the success of the Admissions office and the school by serving as ambassadors and tour guides to visitors. These students represent the school at open houses and other school related events both on and off campus.

### **Spartan Strong Volunteer Service Award**

Students at Gaston Day School are encouraged to extend themselves and actively serve as volunteers in the larger community. The Spartan Strong Volunteer Service Award recognizes Middle School students who have served 50 or more hours in a one-year period. These awards are presented at the Middle and Upper School Awards Ceremony each spring.

### **Advisory Programs**

The primary purpose of the Gaston Day School Advisory Programs is to provide every student with an adult role model who will:

- (1) supervise academic progress,
- (2) monitor social development and behavior,
- (3) alert school and/or parents when serious academic or personal concerns arise,
- (4) maintain community service records,
- (5) provide an attentive, responsible audience for students' questions and concerns.

Students in grades 5 - 8 participate in our Developmental Designs social curriculum, which includes an advisory component. Each Middle School student is assigned to a homeroom teacher who also serves as the advisory group leader, facilitating three advisory meetings in each seven-day rotation.

### **Experiential Education/Class trips**

Experiential education provides both an extension of classroom learning and an opportunity for students and teachers to spend time getting to know each other outside the confines of a normal classroom setting. Every other year, students will participate in overnight class trips to deepen their content knowledge while building collegiality between classmates. Fifth and sixth grade travel to Camp Thunderbird to learn environmental science and their impact on the world while also completing team building activities. Seventh and eighth grade students attend an overnight trip to study the government and history of the area. In years between the overnight trips, students attend day trips and focus on team building and stretching their comfort zones by engaging with high and low rope elements at places like Camp Canaan. As part of the COVID-19 Response, it may not be possible for students to participate in class trips during the 21-22 school year.



## **VI. MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK: ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **A. Middle School Curriculum by Grade Level**

Gaston Day Middle School is designed to prepare students for success at the Upper School level. Our curriculum blends skills as well as content. In addition to being well versed in their content studies, our curriculum is focused on producing students that create, collaborate, think critically, lead, and own their product. These skills, in combination with our technology rich environment, are designed to teach our students to be life ready. In addition to core content, Gaston Day provides students with access to the arts through exploratory options in fifth and sixth grade and more in depth options in seventh and eighth grade so that students may discover new passions and develop into creative and balanced learners.

Middle School students who take Upper School-level courses must take additional higher level courses in Upper School to complete unit requirements in each subject area. Upper School classes require every student to take end of semester, cumulative exams.

#### **Fifth Grade**

All fifth grade students will take English 5, History 5, Math 5, and Science 5 as core classes. Core classes meet every day while electives like Art 5, CSTEAM/Spanish 5, Physical Education 5, and a fine arts elective will rotate every other day throughout the year. All fifth grade students will choose between Instrumental Beginner 5, or a combination of Drama 5 and Chorus 5 as their fine arts elective.

#### **Sixth Grade**

All sixth grade students will take English 6, History 6, Math 6, and Science 6 as core classes. Core classes meet every day while electives like Art 6, CSTEAM/Spanish 6, Physical Education 6, and a fine arts elective will rotate every other day throughout the year.. All fifth grade students will choose between Instrumental Intermediate 6, or a combination of Drama 6 and Chorus 6 as their fine arts elective.

#### **Seventh Grade**

All seventh grade students will take English 7, History 7, Science 7, and Math 7 or Math 7 Honors. A student's placement in a math class will be determined by their sixth grade math teacher at the end of sixth grade. Core classes meet every other day during this block schedule. In addition to their core classes, each seventh grade student will take a fine arts class, Language Acquisition, Physical Education 7, and CSTEAM7. Students will choose between Art 7, Chorus 7/8, Instrumental Advanced 7/8, and Drama 7/8 as their fine art elective. Electives will meet every other day, and switch at grading periods.

#### **Eighth Grade**

All eighth grade students will take English 8, History 8, Physical Science 8, Algebra 1 Honors or Pre-algebra, and French I or Spanish I as core classes. A student's placement in a math class will be determined by their seventh grade math teacher at the end of seventh grade. Core classes meet every other day during this block schedule. In addition to their core classes, each eighth grade student will take a fine arts class, and Physical Education 8. Students will choose between Art 7, Chorus 7/8, Instrumental

Advanced 7/8, and Drama 7/8 as their fine art elective. Electives will meet every other day, and switch at grading periods.

### **Assessment Examination Requirements**

To ensure that the school provides a quality academic program, a series of examinations are administered to students at various points in their academic career. The purposes of the examinations are to assess the school's academic programs, provide information and comparative data for ongoing curriculum review, and assess individual, class, and school performance as compared with appropriate normative groups.

Students in grades 5 - 8 are required to take the Comprehensive Testing Program V examination (CTP-V) published by the Educational Records Bureau. This instrument is a standard of independent schools nationwide and measures both aptitude and achievement.

### **Summer Reading Program**

Gaston Day School requires summer reading of all Middle School students. Students will be provided a list of designated books to read in preparation for the beginning of the school year. Summer reading books are assigned by all English courses and select additional courses in the Middle School.

### **Semester Assessments**

End-of-semester assessments are valuable tools for appropriate course placement, measurement of content mastery, and preparation for future high-stakes testing (AP, SAT/ACT, and college midterm and final examinations). Therefore, Gaston Day School requires cumulative end-of-semester assessments for each academic course in grades 7 and 8.

### **Middle School**

All students in grades 7 and 8 will be required to take cumulative end-of-semester assessments in the final days of classes each semester. These assessments will be weighted as 10% of the semester grade for each academic class unless the class provides High School credit in terms of content. For High School level classes, like Geometry Honors, French I, and Spanish I, the test will be weighted as 20% of the semester grade.

All students in grades 5 and 6 will use the 7-12 exam time for special projects, field trips, and other experiential learning opportunities that are extensions of the curriculum.

Middle School students will not attend school on the final day of Upper School exams.

### **Daily Homework and Major Assignments**

Middle and Upper School students should expect homework in each subject every night. All major assignments will be assigned in advance and will be posted in the classroom.

Homework will vary and will be appropriate for each grade level. Generally, time to complete homework will be one to two hours per night for Middle School students.

**Incomplete and Late Work**

It is the responsibility of the student to write down all assignments and to turn them in on the appropriate due date. Students that are not able to produce their homework when the teacher requests the assignment to be handed in will have their work considered late, and should not plan to leave the classroom to retrieve their homework if they come unprepared to class. In Middle School late homework receives a deduction of a set percentage for each day that it is late.

The maximum value allowed for late assignments will be as follows:

Days Late	Maximum Value of Homework Available	
	Grades 5 and 6	Grades 7 and 8
0	100%	100%
1	80%	70%
2	60%	50%
3	40%	0%
4	20%	0%
5	0%	0%

### C. GRADING SYSTEM

The academic standing of a student in the various courses is indicated as follows:

#### Passing Grades

Letter Grade	Grade Range	Grade Point Value
A+	100 – 97	4.330
A	96 – 93	4.000
A-	92 – 90	3.670
B+	89 – 87	3.330
B	86 – 83	3.000
B-	82 – 80	2.670
C+	79 – 77	2.330
C	76 – 73	2.000
C-	72 – 70	1.670
D+	69 – 67	1.330
D	66 – 63	1.000
D-	62 – 60	0.670
P (Passing)		
NA	NA	

#### Non-Passing Grades

**F (Failing) 59 - 0 0.000**

**W (Withdrew prior to drop/add)**

**WP (Withdrew passing)**

**WF (Withdrew failing)**

**INC (Incomplete)**

Honors courses are awarded an additional 0.5 quality point.

Pass/Fail grades may be used only for courses approved by the Head of Middle School.

A mark of "INC" is assigned, at the discretion of the teacher and the Head of Middle School, when due to extenuating circumstances such as illness, a student is unable to complete the work assigned in a course. It is understood that to receive a mark of "INC," all completed work in the course must be at the passing level or above. The mark of "INC" must be removed by the end of the following grading period. Failure to complete required work will result in a grade of "F."

### **Extra Credit**

When offered, extra credit must be academic in nature, directly relevant to the specific course/topics involved, and limited in its ability to dramatically impact overall class grades. Extra credit opportunities (1) are entirely optional; (2) are offered at a teacher's discretion; and (3) should never result in an overall course grade that fails to fairly and accurately reflect a student's level of content mastery in the context of his/her work ethic.

### **Progress Reports**

Academic progress reports are made available to families at the end of each semester. Interim grade reports are made available to parents of Middle School students once near the middle of each semester. Students having academic difficulty may receive communication from the teacher throughout the semester.

Progress reports contain semester averages for each course, a conduct grade in each class, and the number of absences the student has accumulated over the course of the semester.

Conduct grades are an important part of each grading period's progress report and an important indication of student behavior. Conduct grades will be used to determine continued participation in co-curricular activities including sports. Students with consistently and widespread poor conduct will not be considered for school or community awards or honors.

Please refer to the following for a better understanding of your student's conduct grades.

**1 = Excellent** Students who receive this mark rarely, if ever, have behavior that requires correction. Students earning this mark should have received no detentions or other classroom disciplinary consequences.

**2 = Satisfactory** Students who earn this mark are generally well-behaved and attentive in class. These students may occasionally need minimal re-direction or behavior warnings but they are overall good-natured and not intentionally disruptive. Students receiving this mark may have an occasional detention or other minor disciplinary procedure.

**3 = Needs Improvement** Students who earn this mark are generally productive and willing students but tend to be overly talkative and present regular challenges to classroom management. For the most part, however, these students are not purposefully disruptive. Students earning this mark should have received documented disciplinary action(s), including parental contact and/or detentions.

**4 = Unacceptable** Students who earn this mark are consistently disruptive and disrespectful. These students present a constant challenge, have a negative impact on the class, and are deliberate in their efforts. Students earning this mark should have received well-documented disciplinary actions, including frequent detentions and perhaps Saturday School.

### **Transcripts**

Official transcripts may be requested through the Registrar's Office. Parents must complete a "Request for Official Transcript" form and submit it to the Registrar. Please allow a minimum of 2 days for completion of transcript requests.

The school will withhold grades, transcripts, and diplomas for any student with unmet obligations to the school (i.e., financial obligations, academic/conduct obligations, missing textbooks and/or equipment, etc.).

### **OnCampus**

Gaston Day School utilizes the online "OnCampus" service to provide students and families with important academic information on-demand. Each student is assigned an online account, and parents have an additional account from which to monitor the student's progress and class responsibilities. All teachers in the Middle School are required to post test/major assessment dates, projects, papers and other major due dates on students' online calendars. After the first four weeks of each semester, each teacher is also responsible for providing the student's updated class grade online regularly. If a parent or student has any questions or concerns about class information provided on OnCampus, he/she should first consult with the teacher responsible for the page before following up with the Head of Middle School.

### **Parent Conferences**

Time is set aside in the fall for Parent/Teacher conferences. A notice will be sent from the Middle and Upper School Office informing parents of the opportunity to schedule conference time with teachers. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of this conference day. Additional conferences are scheduled as needed and may be requested by either teachers or parents.

### **Academic Progress Standards**

Students must make reasonable academic progress toward graduation. The Head of Middle School reserves the right to restrict or withdraw co-curricular or social privileges and to request the temporary or permanent withdrawal of any student who, in the judgment of the Head of Middle School, is not taking reasonable advantage of his/her educational opportunities.

Reasonable progress for students is outlined as follows:

#### **Middle School Students (Grades 5 - 8)**

Middle School students not passing one or more academic courses for the school year may be required to repeat that grade the following year. Middle School students not passing one or more academic courses for two consecutive years will be permanently withdrawn from the school.

Students not passing an academic course for the school year may be required to repeat the entire course the following year or take an equivalent course at an institution approved by the Head of Middle School.

### **Academic Suspension and Dismissal**

Middle School students who fail to adhere to all standards of academic progress will be placed on academic suspension. A conference will be set up with the Head of Middle School, the student, and his/her parents to discuss the student's academic performance and the parameters of a contract that will help the student develop acceptable academic habits. Failure to correct the academic suspension by meeting progress standards indicated above will result in dismissal from the school pending review by the Head of Middle School and the Head of Schools.

### **Academic Requirements for Participation in Co-curricular Activities**

Eligibility for co-curricular participation will be evaluated at the end of each of the four marking periods of the school year (Fall Interim in October, First Semester in January, Spring Interim in March, Second Semester in June). \*A student will be ineligible to participate in any co-curricular activities for the next marking period if he or she receives any of the following on his/her report card:

- 2 or more conduct grades of 3 or higher; or
- 2 or more course grades below a 70 for that marking period; or
- 1 or more failing grades in a course for that marking period

Grades in the June marking period determine eligibility for the first fall marking period.

\* = Upon the *very first* occurrence of any of these situations, the student will receive a one-time probation lasting one marking period. While on probation, students may participate in co-curricular activities. Students are allowed one probation during their academic career in the Middle School and one probation during their academic career in the Upper School. If a student completes six consecutive grading periods without receiving any of the grades listed above on his/her report card, that student may earn an additional probation period during their academic career in the Middle School.

\*As part of our COVID-19 Response, we understand that ineligibility from co-curricular activities may not be the most appropriate response under current circumstances. So, for the 20-21 school year, each student that receives one of the above markings on his/her report card will be individually assessed on a case-by-case basis. A conference will be set up with the Head of Middle School, the student, the student's parents, and the student's advisor to discuss the student's academic performance and the parameters of a contract that will help the student develop acceptable academic habits.

### **Grade Appeal Process**

If a student receives a semester grade he/she believes is unearned, and the student wishes to appeal the grade, he/she must proceed in the following manner:

1. Meet with the teacher and attempt to resolve the issues concerning the grade.

2. Present a detailed written appeal to the Head of Middle School. Appeals must be submitted to the Head of Middle School within 14 calendar days after the end of the semester.

Grade appeals will be considered for the following reasons:

1. The grade assigned was miscalculated according to the grading scale established for the course.
2. Grades were not assigned in accordance with the assignments, examinations, etc., as outlined in the course syllabus.
3. Students were not treated equally in terms of the manner in which grades were calculated for the course.

A decision concerning the grade appeal will be made as soon as possible, normally within 14 calendar days of submission to the Head of Middle School.

### **C. COURSE REGISTRATION**

Students in grades 4 through 7 will register electronically for electives each spring. Course selections in Middle School consist of a choice in art for all grades, and a choice of language for the seventh and eighth grades. Course schedules for the upcoming year will be sent to students in the summer.

Students in grade 8 will meet with the Director of College Placement each spring to develop or revise their course plan through graduation. A part of this process is pre-registration for the upcoming year. Students will complete pre-registration by April, and choices will be confirmed and approved by faculty and the Head of Upper School. Course schedules for the upcoming year will be sent to students in the summer.

#### **Course Placement Policy**

*A current teacher's recommended course placement for a student is the most important factor in determining a student's placement for the following year.* The teacher bases his/her recommendation on a knowledge of all aspects of a student's performance in class-- exams/tests/quizzes, homework, projects, participation, conduct, study habits and more. No one knows the student's potential for academic success at the next level better than the current teacher. The following guidelines are used to help teachers determine the appropriate course placement for each student. If students or parents have any questions or concerns about a teacher's course recommendation, they are encouraged to set up a meeting with the teacher.

**College Preparatory** classes are designed to prepare students for the content mastery and rigor of the next College Preparatory course in the department's sequence. Therefore, students who are currently successful in a College Preparatory course will be recommended for the next College Preparatory course in the sequence. Students with a strong A in a College Preparatory course may be recommended for the next class at an Honors-level based on many factors, including overall academic and co-curricular commitments and scores on various assessments (ERBs, PSAT, course examinations, etc).



**Honors** classes are designed to prepare students for the content mastery and rigor of the next Honors class in the department's sequence. Students who earn a grade of 85 or higher in an Honors-level course are best placed in the next Honors-level course in a department's sequence. Students with a grade of 80-84 in an Honors class may be successful in the next Honors-level class, though they may also benefit from moving to the next College Preparatory course in the sequence, based on a variety of circumstances evaluated by the instructor and Head of Middle School. Students with grades below an 80 in an Honors course typically are best served by placement in the next College Preparatory course in the sequence.

### **Conditional Placement**

Students who do not meet the criteria for placement in Honors classes may request conditional placement. Each student request will be reviewed individually and a decision will be made by the Head of Middle School based on the student's particular circumstances. In the event that conditional placement is approved, parents will need to sign a conditional placement agreement that acknowledges the following:

- Conditional placement will be reevaluated after the first 2 weeks of school in light of the student's performance in the class. If, at that time, the teacher or an administrator determines that the student is not making appropriate academic progress, a course change may be required.
- If a course change is required early in the school year, the student's overall schedule may be negatively impacted, as many classes will be full and options for alternate courses will be very limited.
- Schedule changes beyond the first 2 weeks of school are rarely possible, and will result in a "withdrawal" notation for the course on a student's transcript.
- If a student struggles during the year, outside tutoring and/or remediation may be necessary beyond what the teacher is expected to provide.

The integrity of our Honors program requires that we adhere to specific enrollment guidelines. The guidelines presented herein include both national and school-specific predictors of success.

### **Course Availability**

Gaston Day School reserves the right to place students in an alternate course or courses when first-choice requests cannot be honored or when the student's previous academic achievement and learning characteristics suggest a particular level of study. The school makes final placement decisions based on the student's mastery of basic skills, previous academic achievement and level of maturity.

### **Schedule Changes**

Gaston Day School makes every effort to provide class schedules that meet the needs of students. However, because of enrollment requirements and/or availability of faculty, Gaston Day School reserves the right to cancel classes. Students will be notified of any changes whenever possible and as soon as possible. As part of our COVID-19 Response, we have had to make significant changes to the schedule to allow for students to be grouped with cohorts and promote physical distancing. Some courses originally listed in the course catalog are no longer available, and it may be challenging to make changes to student's schedules for the 20-21 school year.

### **Procedures for Drop/Add and Course Withdrawal**

Students have a two-week period at the beginning of the semester to drop a course and register for another without the original course appearing on their transcripts. Students have until the end of the first interim to change the level of their course if the schedule change does not impact any of their other courses. The Head of Middle School must approve all schedule changes.

Students who withdraw from a course after the two-week period will have that course noted on their transcript with a "WP" (withdrawn passing) or "WF" (withdrawn failing) mark. Students withdrawing from a yearlong course at any point during the school year forfeit all credit for said course. Students changing only the level of their course will not have a withdrawn notation on their transcript.

### **D. LEARNING ACADEMY PROGRAMS**

The Learning Academy offers a student-centered atmosphere that provides remediation and academic support based on each student's individual strengths and weaknesses. The staff of the Learning Academy is comprised of qualified teachers and specialists devoted to supporting the academic environment and educational mission of Gaston Day School while meeting the individual needs of students in the academy. Gaston Day School strives to meet the needs of college-bound students with certified learning disabilities or those who might face challenges in achieving academic success in our curriculum. Therefore, as a condition of enrollment or reenrollment, a student may be required to seek assistance through the Learning Academy. An additional fee is required for each Learning Academy program.

#### **Programs and Services:**

- The *Coordinate Program* is designed to serve those with diagnosed specific learning disabilities and/or diagnosed attention related disorders. All students in the Coordinate Programs must have an educational evaluation no more than five years old on file with the Learning Academy. Coordinate classes are available for Middle School students with documented learning disabilities who require individualized mathematics and/or English instruction through the Learning Academy rather than attending traditional Middle School mathematics and English courses.
- *Single Course Tutoring* is designed to serve students in grades 5-12 enrolled in the Learning Academy who are experiencing difficulty in a single subject area. Single Course Tutoring is currently offered for college preparatory levels classes in math and English.
- The *Academic Coaching Program* is designed to tutor students in grades 5 – 8 in academic skills and concepts, test preparation, and organizational skills. Students work in small groups of no more than four students. The Academic Coach serves as a liaison with each student's teachers and parents to help keep track of assignments, tests, and grades.

## **E. AWARDS**

### **Academic Awards**

Academic awards are designed to recognize outstanding achievement in individual subject areas in the Middle School. Each student at Gaston Day School is encouraged, supported, and expected to perform to the full extent of his or her abilities and should be commended regularly for his or her efforts. It is the school's belief that awards should be given only for truly outstanding performance and that the few students meeting these high expectations should be recognized, rewarded, and held up as examples for others to follow. Therefore, to ensure the integrity of our academic awards program, all selections will be subject to the award areas and selection criteria indicated below:

End-of-year awards for students in grades 7-11:

1. Up to 4 awards per grade level will be given in each primary academic subject area (English, math, science, history, world languages) and four per division (Middle and Upper) in art, music, drama, and physical education.
2. Awards may be given in each grade level to recognize "Academic Excellence" (Arts awards will recognize "Excellence in Drama," "Excellence in Music," and "Excellence in Fine Art.") These will be awarded to those top students in honors or AP classes who consistently demonstrate outstanding academic achievement, intellectual curiosity, self-discipline, a positive attitude, and superior work ethic. Students academically eligible for this award must also be in good standing with no major disciplinary actions during the academic year in question and must be enrolled at Gaston Day School by the start of the second semester.
3. Awards may be given at each grade level to recognize "Outstanding Achievement." Candidates for these awards must demonstrate hard work, perseverance, and/or significant improvement or progress over the course of the year. Students academically eligible for this award must also be in good standing with no major disciplinary actions during the academic year in question and must be enrolled at Gaston Day School by the start of the second semester.

## VII. UPPER SCHOOL'S HANDBOOK: STUDENT LIFE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

### A. ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Regular classroom attendance is essential to a student's learning at any grade level. It is the responsibility of the student to attend all scheduled classes and activities. Absences for causes other than illness or emergency are therefore to be avoided with firm resolve. Parents can be most helpful by not asking for permission to schedule vacations beyond those times allotted in the school calendar. Parents are also encouraged to make every effort to arrange doctor, dental, and orthodontic appointments for students after the school day or during open campus.

Upper School students are expected to attend homeroom, clubs/meetings, and all classes for which they are registered. Attendance policies apply both when the campus is open with in-person learning and if the campus is closed with virtual learning. Parents should complete the [online student absence](#) form available on OnCampus to inform the school of all student absences. Class attendance records are completed each period of the day. A student's attendance record appears on all academic progress reports. **Students are allowed to miss a maximum of ten class periods in each class each year. Students missing more than fifteen class periods in a single year may lose course credit.** (School-related absences do not count toward absence limits.)

Students with more than ten absences will be assigned a Saturday School to avoid loss of course credit. Multiple Saturday Schools may be assigned—at the discretion of the Head of Upper School or Dean of Students—based on the number of absences in excess of the limit. Seniors exceeding these limits may be expected to serve an in-school suspension prior to graduation if Saturday School is not available. Specific instances related to COVID-19, of serious extended illness, or other extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Students must be present for at least two academic periods to be counted present for that school day.

Absences are categorized as follows:

#### **Excused**

Excused absences allow a student to make up all assignments for full credit (see make-up work section). All excused absences count toward the maximum absences allowed per class.

1. Personal illness
2. College Visit
3. Death in the family
4. Religious holidays
5. Physician's appointments
6. Pre-arranged absences (provided student has completed a Pre-arranged Absence Form one week prior to absence).

## **Unexcused**

Unexcused absences allow students to make up daily assignments, tests, and exams for 50% credit. All unexcused absences count toward the maximum absences allowed per class.

1. Truancy
2. Failure to bring a doctor's note or parent note (email to Wellness Coordinator at mfayssoux@gastoday.org from a parent is acceptable) explaining an absence within three days of return to school.

Notes, emails (mfayssoux@gastoday.org), or phone calls to the Wellness Coordinator from parents explaining absences will be accepted within the first three days of the student's return. Any student not following proper sign-out procedures will be considered truant.

## **Learning From Home**

Students will have the ability to attend class from home when they have a COVID-related absence that has been approved by the Wellness Coordinator. Parents are expected to complete the online COVID-related Absence Form to notify the school of the absence and request that their child be able to learn from home. Students that are attending class from home will be marked "Present-Learning From Home" on OnCampus upon attending their virtual class and should follow virtual learning classroom expectations. These absences from campus will not count toward a student's absence total for the year.

**All other students are expected to attend class on campus for the 21-22 school year unless participating in a Flex Start class.**

In order to avoid distractions, students that are learning from home should plan to attend class for the entire period. Partial periods, except those due to technical difficulties, will not be permitted when learning from home. Students must also follow the Student Behavior Expectations described in Section X of the Family Handbook.

## **Religious Holidays**

As a diverse community, Gaston Day School seeks to be respectful of all religions. To this end, we allow students to be absent on the day of a religious holiday. Additionally, in the case that students are up late honoring a religious event the night before a school day, students may opt to take the following day off. When a student takes a day off for religious reasons, he/she may participate in co-curricular events that same day. Students who choose to come to school, though, should be prepared for all classes and daily expectations.

## **Make-up Work for Personal Illness, Death in the Family, or Unexpected Absence**

Students should arrange with teachers to make up all work missed. The time limit for making up work is the total number of days missed plus one day. For example, a student absent for two days is expected to make up work within three days of his/her return. A student absent on the day a long term project or paper is due will be expected to turn in the assignment on the day he/she returns to school; if a student is absent from a class in which a long term project or paper is due but attends a class or classes on the same day, the long term project or paper must be submitted on/before 4:00 p.m. A student missing a test or quiz without missing any prior review will be expected to take the test or quiz on the day of

his/her return. As part of the COVID-19 Response, students with extended absences related to COVID-19 will be reviewed on an individual basis by the Head of Upper School.

### **Pre-Arranged Absences and Religious Holidays**

Students planning to be absent from school should complete all work possible prior to leaving or obtain assignments to complete during the absence. Students should be proactive in talking with teachers regarding assignments. It is the student's responsibility to consult with a teacher well in advance in the event that work cannot be completed before the absence. To help prepare for planned absences, students are encouraged to complete a Pre-arranged Absence Form.

### **Family Trips**

Family trips that necessitate absences of five or more school days may require the completion of an academic project in order for the absences to be excused. If required, the project will be assigned by the Head of Upper School based on the nature and duration of the trip and must be submitted within the first three days of the student's return.

### **School-Sponsored Activities and Medical Appointments**

Students who miss class for school-sponsored activities or medical appointments are expected to submit assignments and take quizzes and tests prior to leaving campus. Students must coordinate early assignments, quizzes, and tests with their teachers prior to departure.

### **Early Departure from School**

Students who become ill or must otherwise depart school early must report to the Front Office. Parents who come to pick up their students must complete the online student absence form to notify the school that the student will be dismissed early.

If a student must leave school early for an appointment, the parent should complete an early dismissal form through the online student absence attendance link prior to the start of the school day. The student will be given permission to leave by the teacher whose class they will leave early. Parents should plan to pick up students with an early dismissal from the Front Office. Failure to obtain permission to depart school early will be treated as truancy.

Students missing more than 35 minutes for a 90-minute class or 20 minutes for a 65-minute class due to an early departure will be counted absent for class that day.

### **Late Arrival to School**

If a student arrives late to school, he/she must sign in at the Front Office to complete a temperature check. Students arriving late due to doctors' appointments should submit a late arrival/early dismissal form. Students missing more than 35 minutes for a 90-minute class or 20 minutes for a 65-minute class due to an early departure will be counted absent for class that day.

### **Tardiness**

Any tardy is a disruption to class time and repeated tardies contribute to poor academic performance. It is the responsibility of each student to be on time for all classes. Students missing more than 35 minutes

for a 90-minute class or 20 minutes for a 65-minute class will be marked absent; if a student is on campus, he/she must report to class regardless of how much time remains. Recognizing that there are unavoidable reasons for arriving late to a class, each student is allowed three tardies per class per semester. Students who exceed this limit will be assigned a violation for each tardy over the limit of three.

### **Attendance Requirement for Participation in Co-curricular Activities**

Students who do not attend school on the same day as a co-curricular activity may not participate in the activity. Students must arrive at school by 10:40 a.m. in order to participate in co-curricular activities that day. Students missing school after 10:40 a.m. for a prescheduled doctor's appointment must present a doctor's note in order to participate in a co-curricular activity that day. Any other reason for an excused absence after 10:40 a.m. must pre-approved by the Director of Athletics or Head of Upper School in order to participate in co-curricular activities on the same day.

### **Lunch**

As part of the COVID-19 Response, all students should wash their hands at a sink prior to eating lunch. Students will eat lunch in the lower dining hall, Henry Center Lobby, PKW Lobby, US Art Patio, Gazebo, or Quad. Students eating indoors must maintain a 6 foot distance.

To remove unnecessary distractions, provide equal and fair opportunities to all of our students, and to limit unnecessary campus visitors, students are not permitted to bring lunch from local restaurants or fast food chains or to have parents or friends bring them lunch from off-campus establishments. Seniors are exempted from this rule, as they also have the privilege to leave campus for lunch. Seniors may not, however, bring lunch back for other students and may only bring lunch for themselves.

As part of the COVID-19 Response, group celebrations with shared food are not permitted at this time.

### **Break**

Students may choose to purchase a snack from Sparty's to eat prior to the start of class. Students may go to the Lower Dining Hall, PKW Lobby, US Art Patio, Gazebo, and Quad.

### **Upper School Open Campus Privilege**

Open Campus Privilege allows all 10th-12th grade students free access to specified areas of the campus during free periods and lunch periods. The 9th grade will be expected to attend open campus in the Henry Center Lobby. These approved areas are for 10th-12th grade:

- PKW Lobby, Henry Center Lobby, US Art Patio, Gazebo and Quad. Students found in unauthorized areas will risk the loss of this privilege for a specified amount of time. To ensure the safety and security of students, the Head of Upper School or Dean of Students may revoke a student's Open Campus Privileges without prior notice.

Upper School students without a first-period class may arrive at school on time for their second-period class. Likewise, an Upper School student without a fifth-period class (last period of the day) may leave campus for the day after the meetings period (provided he/she checks out properly). However, except

for students with senior privileges, students *may not* arrive and then depart campus during a free second or third period and then return during school hours. When students arrive on campus, the school assumes responsibility for the safety and security of its students; therefore, students may not leave campus without following early dismissal procedures. Excluding seniors, students who leave campus during an open period without following early dismissal procedures jeopardize the school's ability to maintain the safety and security of its students and are subject to disciplinary consequences, including but not limited to, the suspension of Open Campus and/or driving privileges.

Students arriving late to campus must complete the online sign-in form and check-in at the Front Office. Students leaving campus early after meetings period must complete the online sign-out form and check out at the Front Office.

### **Senior Privilege**

As role models for our school community, seniors have the responsibility to uphold and promote the Student Code of Conduct at all times. Teachers and administration recognize the unique needs of this group of students as they prepare to attend college. Therefore, seniors (with written parent permission) are allowed to leave campus during open periods/lunch periods each day. It is the student's responsibility to attend all scheduled classes, including club meetings, assemblies, and teacher appointments. Seniors desiring this privilege must have a signed parent consent form on record with the Dean of Students. Failure to meet either of these requirements will result in the forfeiture of this privilege. In the event of recurring or significant infractions, the Head of Upper School or Dean of Students may revoke this privilege without prior notice.

Seniors wishing to take advantage of these privileges must complete the online sign-in or sign-out form and check-in at the Front Office approximately ten minutes before the start of class or check out approximately ten minutes after the end of class.

Seniors may leave and return to campus only one time each school day.

### **B. HONOR CODE**

Gaston Day School students govern themselves according to an oath and Code of Honor. This Honor Code serves as the fundamental principle to which students adhere as members of the school community. When a breach of the Honor Code occurs, the entire school family is affected because the fundamentals of relating to each other have been violated. It is a rare privilege for a person to live, study, and work in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect; therefore, each student is expected to guard that privilege fervently.



## The Honor Code

***As a member of the Gaston Day School community, I am responsible for my thoughts, words, and actions.***

***To maintain personal integrity, I will not lie, steal, cheat, or plagiarize. I will do my best to promote an atmosphere of respect and responsibility throughout Gaston Day School.***

As part of their academic work, students sign an honor pledge indicating their compliance with the Honor Code.

***"On my honor, I pledge that I have upheld the School's Honor Code and that I have neither given nor received any information on this work, nor am I aware of any violation on the part of others."***

The following actions are violations of the Gaston Day School Honor Code, but are by no means all-inclusive:

- Lying is the deliberate deception by a student regarding any and all matters at Gaston Day.
- Stealing is the action of taking or borrowing another's property without willingly stated permission on each occasion.
- Cheating is intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials or information for any academic purpose. Examples of cheating may include: copying the work or homework of another; using notes when not permitted during an assignment, quiz, test, or examination; doing work for another student when the work is to be one's own; or knowingly providing information to another student during an assignment, quiz, test, or examination.
- Plagiarism is the act of stealing the ideas or words of another and presenting them as one's own. All work must be exclusively the student's and original for each class unless correct documentation is provided that clearly states the source or original use of the material. Whether a writer quotes, paraphrases, or summarizes, he/she must acknowledge and document all outside sources.
- The use of resources with the intent to alter, misuse, or damage another's property, whether tangible (such as a book, computer, etc.) or intangible (such as a password, account, data, etc.) is a violation of the Honor Code.

All students are charged with demonstrating knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct.

Allowing a violation of the Honor Code to go unchallenged weakens the effectiveness of the code. No student, therefore, should remain passive in the face of an infraction of the code. The school recommends the following courses of action to a student who has observed or has knowledge of a fellow student's violation of the Honor Code:

1. The student should first go directly to the accused offender and tell him/her what he/she has observed and allow the student to give an explanation. The observer should instruct the accused offender to speak with his/her advisor, Dean of Students or Head of Upper School.

2. If the accused offender does not speak with an appropriate faculty member or administrator, the observer should follow up with his/her own advisor, Dean of Students or Head of Upper School.

### **Upper School Honor Council**

Gaston Day School recognizes that our students have a vested interest in upholding the Honor Code. Students have important insights into situations involving Honor Code violations and should play an important role in the review and disciplinary process.

The Honor Council is composed of the four student senators from the Upper School classes and the Vice President of the Upper School Student Government. Additionally, the Dean of Students serves the Honor Council in an advisory capacity. Any member of the Honor Council found guilty of an Honor Code violation or serious discipline offense will be expected to resign from the Council.

A student involved in an Honor Code case should follow these simple procedures:

1. Discuss the matter immediately and completely with parents.
2. Do not discuss the case with other students, especially others who may be involved. Idle remarks can only spread rumors and will eventually work to hurt the student.
3. Be completely honest when speaking with the Council members. Remember that the Honor Council is composed of students. They run the meetings and their recommendations to the Dean of Students hold considerable weight in the decision-making process. It is most important that the students be candid at all times and enable the Council to understand everything relating to the case.

When the Honor Council is convened, the meeting begins by emphasizing the absolute need for confidentiality. Evidence in the case is presented, and, after the details of the case are clear to all members, the accused student is called before the Council, accompanied by his/her advisor if requested. The statements of confidentiality are repeated to the student. Council members then question the student, attempting to find the answers to four questions:

1. Did the student violate any part of the Honor Code?
2. If so, why?
3. If so, was the student aware he/she was violating the Honor Code when the action occurred?
4. How might the situation which caused the appearance before the Council be avoided in the future?

After the Council's questions have been answered, the student may comment on any matter regarding the accusation. The student's advisor may also speak either to clarify an issue or to express his/her understanding of the matter. The student and advisor are then dismissed. The Council then deliberates. If the student is considered not in violation of the Honor Code, the Council stands adjourned. If the student is judged to have violated the Honor Code, the Council recommends to the Dean of Students appropriate consequences. The Dean of Students makes the final decision about the consequences. All decisions are reviewable by the Head of Upper School and/or Head of School.

### **Consequences of Honor Code Violations**

Upper School students found guilty of an Honor Code violation may receive a suspension or permanent expulsion from the School. Other appropriate additional requirements may include additional community service or other reparation deemed appropriate by the Dean of Students and approved by the Head of Upper School or Head of School.

Students found guilty of Honor Code violations:

- Will be asked to resign from any school offices currently held
- Will be ineligible to run for office for a period of one year from the date of violation
- Will be placed on probation for membership in any honor society sponsored by Gaston Day School for one year from the date of violation
- Will be ineligible to receive any academic honor or be nominated or considered for any special recognition awarded by Gaston Day School for a period of one year and will be ineligible for certain honors for the remainder of his/her academic career

### **C. BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

Gaston Day School maintains a secure, moral, and nurturing atmosphere, one where virtues such as integrity and respect are of the highest importance. The school believes that systematic rules of behavior will enhance the growth and well-being of each student and provide an atmosphere conducive to education. When students fail to live by the school's expectations, they must be prepared to accept the consequences of their lack of responsibility. Disciplinary consequences may include, but are not limited to, the loss of school privileges, suspension of eligibility in school-sponsored co-curricular activities, detention, suspension, or expulsion.

Gaston Day seeks consistent application of its disciplinary policies. While each situation is judged on its own merits, every effort will be made to ensure that decisions are equitable. Policies are clearly stated in this handbook so that students are able to anticipate the disciplinary consequences of improper behavior.

Gaston Day believes that our students represent the school even when not directly involved in a school-sponsored or sanctioned event. We, therefore, seek to encourage students to exercise good citizenship and integrity at all times. When misconduct occurs on campus, on a school-sponsored event, or on a school bus, disciplinary consequences will be applied. In situations where the relationship between the misconduct and the school is less direct, Gaston Day will determine what discipline and counseling may apply, and in extreme cases, may include suspension or expulsion of the student.

Gaston Day seeks to honor the privacy of students and families involved in disciplinary cases. The need for privacy should, however, be balanced with the need for a factual release of information to the Gaston Day community in order to encourage respect for the integrity of the procedures and understanding of the actions taken.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

Gaston Day School has the right and responsibility to define and to enforce acceptable standards of student conduct. These behaviors are described below.

Gaston Day students are serious about academic preparation for college and maintain high standards of integrity, respect, and responsibility. The following behavior is expected of all Gaston Day School students during on- or off-campus activities:

1. Speak positively
2. Respect everyone
3. Behave responsibly
4. Respect others' property
5. Do your best
6. Honor commitments
7. Serve others
8. Forgive easily
9. Respect your mind and body
10. Speak honestly and respectfully

## **Harassment and Intolerance**

A Gaston Day School student will not engage in actions or possess items that dishonor or disrespect the race, gender, sexual identity, ethnic origin, or religion of others, or that incite discord among the same, either intentionally or unintentionally. Doing so constitutes the highest level of misconduct and will therefore result in serious disciplinary consequences. Gaston Day School will also seek to educate our school community through the classroom, assemblies, advising, and other avenues to be appreciative of differences and respectful and tolerant of all persons.

## **Bullying and Harassing Behavior Policy**

In accordance with the NC School Violence Prevention Act, Gaston Day School defines bullying or harassing behavior as a repeated pattern of written, electronic, or verbal communication, or any physical act or any threatening communication that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, with the intention to hurt another person physically or mentally.

Bullying or harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by an actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

- No student or school employee shall be subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by school employees or students.
- No person shall engage in any act of reprisal or retaliation against a victim, witness, or a person with reliable information about an act of bullying or harassing behavior.

- A school employee who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall report the incident to the appropriate school official.
- A student or school volunteer who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall report the incident to the appropriate school official.

Bullying is not tolerated at Gaston Day School. Bullying involves repeated and intentional physical, verbal, and/or emotional harm to another person. It is important to differentiate between *teasing* and *bullying*, as teasing is not bullying. Teasing is done with the intention to be playful or funny and its primary purpose is not to harm, nor is it of an ongoing nature.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to, the repeated and intentional act of:

- Hurting someone physically by hitting, kicking, tripping, pushing, etc.
- Stealing or damaging another person's belongings
- Teasing someone in a hurtful way or playing cruel practical jokes
- Using insults
- Touching, showing, or talking about body parts in a sexual way
- Gossiping or spreading cruel rumors about someone
- Excluding others on purpose or trying to get other students not to play with someone
- Threatening or intimidating acts, either verbal or non-verbal (i.e. malicious notes, email, cyber-bullying)

Gaston Day School teachers are dedicated to creating and maintaining a positive, safe and nurturing environment. Teachers continue to work through bullying issues each year with students. Through the Advisory Program in Upper School, students and teachers work toward a cohesive, respectful environment. We recognize that bullying and aggressive behavior rarely occur in the view of an adult. We encourage students to immediately report to a teacher or staff member any act of aggression or bullying. If you suspect your child is being bullied or reports to you that he/she is being bullied, please notify the Dean of Students or Head of Upper School as soon as possible. The appropriate administrator will interview your child to get more information about the situation. If there is any evidence of bullying (i.e. notes, emails), please submit copies.

### **Social Media**

Gaston Day School allows the educational use of social media on campus. Social media includes, but is not limited to, discussion forums, blogs, wikis, social networks, podcasts, image and video sharing, social bookmarking, and gaming.

Gaston Day School respects the right of each student's family to determine what constitutes appropriate at-home online behavior in relation to social media and to monitor such behavior at the discretion of the parent(s). However, a student who violates the Bullying or Harassing Behavior Policy through the use of social media will be subject to the Student Code of Conduct expectations expressed in the Family Handbook.

As such, a Gaston Day student is responsible for his or her words, actions, images, and deeds posted to social media sites or any other electronic communication when it is in violation of the Honor Code and therefore may NOT under any circumstance:

- Post, share or endorse electronic words or images that bully, harass, impersonate, or demean a student, teacher, or school official.
- Post or share electronic words or images that contain profanity, nudity, drugs, alcohol, or other illicit or illegal activities.
- Create or share images, audio, or video taken from inside a school bathroom or locker room.
- Post, share or endorse electronic words or images that threaten the safety of students, teachers, or school officials.
- Post, share or endorse electronic words or images that are offensive to others or embarrass the school.
- Create or share audio or video without the consent of the subject.

### **Weapons**

Students bringing on campus any item that may be perceived as a weapon (i.e., knife, gun, Taser, pepper spray, etc.) will be subject to severe disciplinary actions, including but not limited to suspension or expulsion.

### **Alcohol, Drugs, and Other Substances**

Abuse of alcohol, drugs, and other substances is a societal problem of great concern to Gaston Day School. Students confront issues of drug and alcohol use and chemical dependency at an early age, and students at Gaston Day School are not immune to these challenges.

The first interest of Gaston Day School in this area is one of education and guidance. Students are systematically made aware of the dangers of alcohol, drugs, and other forms of drug use.

The use of alcohol under the age of 21 is illegal in the United States. The use of illicit drugs is forbidden regardless of age. Furthermore, the use of these substances interferes with the intellectual, social, and physical development of young people. Gaston Day School fully endorses these legal and ethical sanctions against the use of alcohol by those under 21, against the use of illegal drugs, and against the abuse of other substances.

A Gaston Day School student who abuses substances, misuses legal drugs, or uses or possesses illegal drugs or alcohol on school property or at a school-sponsored event can expect to be suspended or expelled. A student who comes to school or to a school-sponsored event under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any abused substance may also expect suspension or expulsion.

Tobacco, e-cigarettes, and vaporizers are prohibited on campus at all times. A Gaston Day School student who uses or possesses tobacco, e-cigarettes, or vaporizers on school property or at a school-sponsored event can expect to be suspended or expelled.

Furthermore, the use of alcohol, drugs, or other substances is a problem of such magnitude in our society that families should expect the school to be concerned when a student at any time is abusing these substances. School staff will first be concerned with the safety of all involved and the full disclosure and discussion of the incident with all parents. Depending on the nature of the incident, its legal disposition, the danger posed to others, and the impact on the school, the staff may require one or more of the following for the student as a condition for continued enrollment: a professional assessment of drug or alcohol dependence; counseling; removal of the student from all co-curricular participation for a significant period of time; forfeiture of any elected or appointed position of leadership; Saturday School, community service; or other appropriate actions.

### **Search Policy**

The Gaston Day School administration reserves the right to search students, their property, lockers or similar spaces when there is a reasonable suspicion that a breach of the Student Life and Code of Conduct is or has occurred on school premises or at school-sanctioned events. Whenever there is reasonable suspicion for such a search, the student's permission will be requested. Students have the right to reject the request for a search, but consequences may include but are not limited to, sequestering or locking the item (such as a backpack or locker) or immediate suspension and/or expulsion, as appropriate.

### **D. UPPER SCHOOL DRESS CODE**

Parents' cooperation is essential in helping the school enforce a dress code that reflects our community values and minimizes distractions. With a wide range of acceptable dress in the greater community, the school chooses to adhere to a dress code that favors more modest attire. Fashion is unpredictable and constantly changing; therefore, this dress code may not fully address every new trend. In areas where the dress code is silent or unclear, faculty and staff will interpret and enforce the intended "spirit" of the dress code with administrators' oversight. The school reserves the right to clarify or to modify this dress code throughout the school year. Any changes will be shared promptly, and in writing, with the Gaston Day community through email or direct mail.

#### **General Dress and Appearance Guidelines**

Students are required to be neatly and properly dressed at all times during the school day. This dress code applies to all students on campus at any time during any school day (including students on campus but not attending a class, temporarily on campus running errands, departing for a trip, etc.)

#### **Presentable Daily Wear**

- Students must wear clean and size-appropriate shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters, t-shirts, and jackets.
- Designs must contain appropriate language/images.
- Necklines should not expose cleavage.

- Shirts must completely cover the torso during normal daily activity.
- No undergarments may be visible at any time. An undershirt may not be worn as a substitute for a shirt.
- Midriff tops, tank tops, and spaghetti straps are unacceptable. Sleeveless tops should have at least three finger-width straps.
- Pants/jeans must be size-appropriate, neat and presentable.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be no shorter than mid-thigh.
- Shorts must be no longer than the bottom of the kneecap.
- Leggings are acceptable if worn underneath a size-appropriate skirt, dress, or shorts.
- Clothing that is frayed, torn, or slit is unacceptable.
- Athletic pants and warm-up suits are permitted. No athletic shorts are permitted.
- Tennis shoes, casual shoes, and athletic sandals are acceptable.
- No hats or caps are to be worn inside any building on campus.
- Jewelry and accessories are acceptable as long as they are conservative.
- Piercings (other than the ear) are unacceptable.

### **Dress Down Attire For Students**

On certain designated occasions, students have an option for a relaxed dress code. On any of these occasions, the “spirit” of the daily dress code applies. The faculty/administrator organizing an event will provide specific guidelines for relaxed attire; students should ask questions and seek any clarification for special dress guidelines in advance of the event. If a student is uncertain or confused about relaxed attire guidelines for a special occasion, he/she is expected to follow the standard daily dress code.

Students may be given a dress down pass throughout the school year for various reasons, such as event prizes or recognition for outstanding behavior. Dress down passes should be signed by the issuing teacher/administrator and given to the student to use any non-high dress day during that school year.

### **Dress Code Violations**

Students not following the dress code at any point during the school day will be assigned a violation. Repeated dress code infractions may lead to additional disciplinary consequences.

### **Business Dress Day Options**

As part of the COVID-19 Response, all high dress days for the 2021-22 school year have been suspended. We recognize that many of the events typically requiring high dress will not be possible in their traditional format. We will resume High Dress for the 2022-23 school year. For the 2021-22 school year we will have a Dress Day option which will follow a business casual dress code. This can be used for class presentations, field trips, and/or special events.

### **Acceptable Business Dress Day**

- Pants in solid colors black, navy blue, khaki, or grey (no shorts, denim, or corduroy material)
- Dresses and/or skirts need to be mid-thigh; If wearing a dress or skirt, tights (navy or black only), skin-tone pantyhose, navy or black ankle or knee socks, or bare legs (no leggings or leg warmers)
- Belts, socks, traditional or bow ties should be GDS or solid (no pattern)



- Dress shoes (black, brown, or navy) are defined as closed-toe shoes with a back and in good condition; sandals (including Crocs and Birkenstocks), boots and canvas shoes are not acceptable; Sperrys are acceptable if they are brown, black or navy; heels may be no higher than two inches
- Accessories must be conservative (no colorful belts, scarves, necklaces, or pins)

### **PE Dress Code and Uniform**

Students enrolled in Physical Education are required to comply with the following PE Uniform expectations:

- Students must wear any t-shirt with appropriate language/images.
- Students must wear gym shorts/sweatpants of appropriate size/length.
- Students must wear socks.
- Students must wear appropriate athletic shoes.

### **Game Day Dress**

As a matter of team and school pride and morale, athletic teams and other co-curricular groups may dress in a uniform manner on designated days. The group appearance may range from business dress day to team t-shirts. Students are not permitted to wear their game uniforms to school.

## **E. DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES**

Teachers are the primary disciplinarians for our students. When students act in ways that are disrespectful or disruptive, disciplinary procedures will be followed by teachers. Any questions about a discipline incident should first respectfully be addressed to the assigning teacher. A disciplinary consequence may be appealed to the Dean of Students and/or Head of Upper School, and then ultimately to the Head of School. Following any appeal(s), a disciplinary decision is final and obligatory. Continued enrollment at Gaston Day School will be contingent upon all disciplinary obligations being completed satisfactorily and in a timely manner. Parents may not refuse disciplinary measures for their children without jeopardizing their continued enrollment.

Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures that are described in the Family Handbook. These expectations are defined and reinforced throughout the school year by classroom teachers and the Dean of Students. For all reported violations, the Dean of Students will determine the appropriate consequence. Consequences are determined to match the severity of the violation as well as to educate students on behavioral expectations. For that reason, student consequences are based on a point system to help ensure the appropriate consequence is determined for each violation.

According to the point system, violations are divided into three levels in order to differentiate the severity of the student's behavior: yellow, orange, and red. Yellow violations are worth 1 point and are reported for minor infractions, such as chewing gum, unapproved cell phone use, or failing to adhere to the dress code. Orange violations are worth 3 points and are reported for more serious infractions, such as exceeding three tardies in a class during one semester, misbehaving during a safety drill, or failing to

follow parking lot procedures. Red violations are the most serious infractions and are addressed immediately by the Dean of Students.

It is the discretion of the teacher to determine the level of the violation for a student infraction. Based on the level of the violation and the number of points a student has received during the current school year, the Dean of Students will issue one of the following consequences:

- 1-3 Points: Break Detention, served 10:15-10:35
- 4-10 Points: After-school Detention, served on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 – 4:30 pm

**Detentions** are considered a time of reflection, and students are required to leave all electronic devices, books, magazines, notebooks, etc. at the front of the room and sit silently at an assigned seat. Students are not permitted to complete homework or sleep during this time. Students are allowed to participate in co-curricular activities on the day they serve the school detention once the detention has been served. Students may be required to complete a reflection, write a letter of apology, or other task assigned by the Dean of Students.

Issuing teachers will notify students of a violation directly. The Dean of Students will notify students and parents of school detentions through OnCampus. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate his/her schedule and other obligations to serve the assigned detention promptly. Once assigned a school detention, a student must serve it within the next two scheduled detention offerings. For example, a student assigned detention on Monday must serve it on Tuesday or Thursday; a student assigned detention on Wednesday must serve it on either Thursday or the following Tuesday.

It is entirely the responsibility of the student to discuss any scheduling conflicts with the Dean of Students well in advance. Students arriving more than ten minutes late to an assigned detention or failing to serve an assigned detention will be required to make up the detention as well as be assigned an additional detention.

For students accumulating 10 points or being reported for any red level violation, a conference will be set up with the Dean of Students, the student, and his/her parents to discuss the consequences and the parameters of a contract that will help the student develop acceptable school habits. In these situations, other consequences, described below, may be assigned by the Dean of Students.

Students who are in serious violation of the Student Code of Conduct or who have repeatedly been assigned disciplinary consequences will be asked to separate themselves from their peers for one school day. Students will attend school and work independently in a designated location under the supervision of the Dean of Students. Students who are In-School Suspended must make up all work missed. All work completed during an **In-School Suspension** will receive 50% credit with the exception of tests, which will receive 100% credit. Additionally, students who are In-School Suspended may not attend or participate in any co-curricular activities that day.

Students who are in serious violation of the Student Code of Conduct or who have repeatedly been assigned disciplinary consequences will be asked to separate themselves from the school for an

extended period of time (1-day minimum). Students who are Out-of-School Suspended must make up all work missed. All work completed during an **Out-of-School Suspension** will receive 50% credit with the exception of tests, which will receive 100% credit. Additionally, students who are Out-of-School Suspended may not attend or participate in any co-curricular activities for the duration of the suspension.

Students who, in the judgment of the Dean of Students, Head of Upper School, and the Head of School, pose an irrevocable and serious detrimental threat to the well-being of the Gaston Day School community, may be **expelled** from the school. Students may be expelled or dismissed for breaches of the Honor Code, for the possession or use of drugs, for the possession or use of alcoholic beverages, for violation of a probationary status, for repeated and flagrant attendance or code of conduct violations, or for other behavior deemed socially unacceptable. The school will notify parents as soon as possible about the incident and the specific process being used to deal with the situation. The Board of Trustees chooses not to involve itself with disciplinary matters and directs that any appeal be made to the Head of School. An expelled or dismissed student may be permitted to apply for readmission at some subsequent date, depending on the transgression and follow-up care.

**Saturday School** is a consequence for attendance infractions. Sessions will be offered as needed throughout the school year from 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at a cost of \$25.00 per student per Saturday. Families with students requiring Saturday School will be billed through the Finance Office. Students attending Saturday School will complete current or missing class assignments or other work deemed appropriate by their teachers and the Head of Upper School or Dean of Students. Students arriving unprepared will be assigned a research project to complete.

In addition to the above consequences, the Dean of Students or Head of Upper School may assign letters of apology, essays on related topics, school clean-up/work project, loss of school privileges, community service, or other consequences deemed to be logical and appropriate for a particular infraction.

### **College Applications**

Gaston Day School supports the National Association of College Admission Counselors “A Statement of Principles and Good Practice.” As such, the Director of College Counseling will, when appropriate, require that a student truthfully and accurately report suspensions, expulsions, and other serious Honor Code and disciplinary violations to colleges and universities. When requested, the Director of College Counseling must also provide information about such incidents to colleges and universities.

## **F. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL GROWTH AND SCHOOL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

At Gaston Day School we strive to provide opportunities for our students to grow academically and socially. Citizenship, respect/responsibility, and accountability are important community values that we strive to recognize school-wide. The following programs allow students to foster habits and dispositions that lead to responsible adulthood.

### **Character Development Programs**

Gaston Day School has designed a character education program to prepare our students to successfully handle the complexities of society and to enhance their self-confidence, motivation and self-esteem. We see these programs as a partnership between parents, students, and school. Discussing social issues, contemplating decisions and dealing with consequences enable our students to develop life-long skills that result in ethical behavior. In taking the time to encourage “healthy habits,” our school, community, and greater society become enriched.

### **Sunship Earth and the Peer Mentoring Program**

The Gaston Day School Peer Mentoring Program begins with the Sunship Earth Experience. During several days in the fall semester, selected juniors and seniors accompany the fourth-grade class to the mountains. The Upper School students lead the fourth graders in activities that encourage each student to contemplate the relationship between the environment and the human race. During this time, our Upper School students forge relationships with the Lower School students. This relationship develops into a mentoring program when the Sunship Earth Experience ends. Each eleventh and twelfth-grade student continues to meet and work with their fourth-grade mentee throughout the school year.

As part of the COVID-19 Response, it will not be possible for students to participate in Sunship Earth. The Peer Mentoring Program will be modified for the 21-22 school year.

### **Student Government**

Gaston Day School students are actively involved in school life and leadership through elected student government offices. The Middle and Upper Schools have separate student government organizations. Their function is to provide a representative voice to school administration and faculty, serve as advocates for the student body, plan and implement school functions for the betterment of the school and enjoyment of the student body, and reach out into the greater community as student leaders. Both student government organizations meet regularly throughout the school year.

Upper School Student Government officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary) and grade senators are elected in the spring of each year and may meet over the summer to plan for the upcoming year. The Vice President of Student Government and grade senators serve on the Honor Council. Homeroom representatives are elected in the fall of each year.

Candidates for Upper School Student Government must have a minimum cumulative weighted GPA of 3.0, endorsement by two teachers, and no honor code violations or major disciplinary infractions within the last calendar year. Members of student government are expected to lead by example. Student Government members who violate Gaston Day School’s Student Code of Conduct or Honor Code may be asked to resign from their position.

### **Senior Class Officers**

In the fall, seniors elect the following officers: President and Vice-President. These officers plan and organize important events that are hallmarks of the senior year, including planning for a class gift to the school which the Senior Class President will present at the graduation ceremony. Candidates for class

officers must have a minimum cumulative, weighted GPA of 3.0, endorsement by two teachers, and no honor code violations or major disciplinary infractions within the last calendar year.

### **Blue Key Society**

The Blue Key society is a group of students who have been selected to play a major role in the success of the Admissions Office and the school by serving as ambassadors and tour guides to visitors. These students represent the school at open houses and other school-related events both on and off-campus.

### **Clubs**

Gaston Day School offers Upper School students the opportunity for leadership and involvement in a variety of clubs. Involvement in clubs is optional but recommended for all students. To encourage participation, most clubs meet during the clubs/meetings period during the school day. Some clubs require a greater commitment and may also meet before or after school, during lunch, break, or other common times. All students are expected to participate in a club for each of the three groups: blue, white, and gold.

Clubs are student-driven and can be formed by any student by expressing interest to the Dean of Students. Clubs must be supported by a faculty advisor and have a minimum of five members. Clubs will be evaluated at the beginning of each school year by the Dean of Students, and a presentation to all Upper School students will be made about offerings for the upcoming school year. In an effort to provide all clubs adequate meeting times throughout the year, clubs are divided into three groups: blue, white, and gold. Students are able to join one club from each of the three groups.

### **Community Service**

Community service is an important component of the educational mission at Gaston Day School. Involvement in service activities enables students to learn about the needs of individuals and our community while instilling a sense of personal responsibility and commitment to others.

Students must complete a minimum of 25 hours of community service each year they are enrolled as Upper School students at Gaston Day School. Such service must meet the following requirements:

- The activity must be voluntary and unpaid, not a disciplinary/legal consequence or class obligation.
- The activity must have as its primary purpose the betterment of some person or group other than the student or the student's family.
- Career shadowing/internships do not constitute community service.
- Any single activity resulting in more than 25 hours of service must be approved in advance by a student's advisor.
- Reported service hours should only include the time spent *working*. Hours spent traveling, sleeping, eating, etc., should not be reported.

Verification of service must be submitted using the designated online form. Advisors will monitor student progress throughout the year. Opportunities for participation in service projects abound

through school clubs/organizations, the network of Gaston Day School families, and local business/community organizations. All Upper School students are required to serve at least 5 of their required hours in service to Gaston Day School and at least 5 of their required hours in service to a community need not affiliated with Gaston Day School. Students not meeting the community service requirement will have their failure to meet the obligation clearly documented on their official transcript.

Students struggling to meet the community service requirement are encouraged to reach out to their advisor or Dean of Students for ideas on how to earn hours in a safe environment. Exceptions to the requirements above may be made if we must close the campus and return to virtual learning.

### **Spartan Strong Volunteer Service Award**

Students at Gaston Day School are encouraged to extend themselves and actively serve as volunteers in the larger community. The Spartan Strong Volunteer Service Award recognizes Upper School students completing 100 or more hours within a one-year period. These awards are presented at the Middle and Upper School Awards Ceremony and Senior Awards Ceremony each spring.

### **College Counseling Opportunities**

The Office of College Counseling provides ongoing workshops and programs for students in grades nine through twelve in the following areas: course selection and registration, navigating SCOIR, exploring college options, summer enrichment opportunities, interview preparation, college information sessions, financial aid workshops, college application, and essay assistance workshops, etc.

The end result of the Gaston Day School experience is college exploration, application, and admission. Juniors, seniors, and their families are encouraged to arrange multiple college visits during their final years in the Upper School. These visits should be coordinated around school breaks whenever possible. Absences earned due to college visits are excused but do count towards the maximum of ten absences allowed per year for any student.

### **Advisory Programs**

The primary purpose of the Gaston Day School Advisory Programs is to provide every student with an adult role model who will:

- (1) supervise academic progress,
- (2) monitor social development and behavior,
- (3) alert school and/or parents when serious academic or personal concerns arise,
- (4) maintain community service records,
- (5) provide an attentive, responsible audience for students' questions and concerns.

Upper School students are assigned an advisor from a team of designated faculty for each grade. Advisory groups meet once or twice a rotation to cover topics decided upon by the grade-level advisory team and grade-level deans, with student input, as well. Advisors provide adult guidance in the academic, social, and emotional life of each Gaston Day student. All students are expected to participate in advisory in person when on campus and attendance will be taken.

### **Jr/Sr Retreat**

The Junior-Senior Retreat provides a unique opportunity to address important eleventh and twelfth-grade issues, participate in team-building activities, and develop leadership skills. This annual tradition consists of a two-day overnight trip that typically takes place the first Sunday to Monday after school begins in August. The retreat is coordinated by Grade Level Deans and the Dean of Students and is required for all 11th and 12th-grade students. As part of the COVID-19 Response, it will be optional for students to participate in the Jr/Sr Retreat during the 21-22 school year.

### **Junior Service Day**

During the spring semester, all 11th-grade students will participate in a half-day of service contributing their time to a local organization in need. The students will work together as a grade to research, plan, and execute all elements of the service activity, including contacting organizations, arranging transportation, and gathering supplies. Advisors will support the planning stages of the service day and will chaperone all activities.

### **9th/10th Leadership Retreat**

The purpose of this retreat is to help prepare the underclassmen at Gaston Day School for leadership opportunities they will take on in the future at the School. During this half-day event, Gaston Day partners with an outside organization to provide meaningful workshops and simulations that will help students understand what it means to be a leader and the characteristics that are needed to be successful in this role. The retreat is coordinated by Grade Level Deans and the Dean of Students and is required for all 9th and 10th-grade students.

### **Disney World Senior Class Trip**

This optional trip is offered annually to students in the senior class. Due to the demands of the senior year such as college applications, visitations and interviews, and rigorous coursework, this trip will be scheduled to interfere with as little class time as possible. In order to guarantee travel accommodations, a minimum of ten students must submit their trip deposit on/before a designated due date as determined by the senior trip coordinator.

### **Field Trips**

Experiential education provides both an extension of classroom learning and an opportunity for students and teachers to spend time getting to know each other outside the confines of a normal classroom setting. Students will often participate in field trips for their individual classes coordinated by the course instructor.

### **Experiential Education**

Several local and international opportunities are available to Gaston Day students during the summer and provide a hands-on link to the classroom curriculum. Many of these opportunities will be posted to grade-level community pages on OnCampus. Upper School students should begin investigating with the Office of College Counseling in the fall to explore what opportunities are available the following summer.

## **VIII. UPPER SCHOOLS' HANDBOOK: ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **A. REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

The requirements for graduation from Gaston Day School are designed to prepare students for success in a competitive college environment. The requirements apply to students in grades 9 - 12. Middle School students who take Upper School-level courses must take additional higher-level courses in Upper School to complete unit requirements in each subject area. To graduate from Gaston Day School, a student must successfully complete a minimum of 24 credits with a minimum 2.0 cumulative grade point average, including the required courses in each discipline.

Gaston Day School's award of a diploma is conditional upon completion of all required coursework with appropriate GPA, the satisfaction of all financial obligations, and compliance with school policies.

Advisors, counselors, faculty, and administrators will make every effort to inform students concerning the requirements for graduation, but students themselves are ultimately responsible for being acquainted with regulations and procedures as stated in the Family Handbook and other official school publications. For these reasons, it is important for students to be familiar with these publications and to remain informed throughout their education. Below is an outline of the credits required for graduation by Gaston Day School.

#### **English (4.0 credits)**

Students must successfully complete at least four English courses to graduate. All Gaston Day students must enroll in English 9, English 10 and two higher-level English classes to graduate.

#### **Mathematics (4.0 credits)**

Students must successfully complete at least four mathematics courses to graduate. All Gaston Day students must enroll in Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and one or more higher-level math classes to graduate.

#### **Sciences (3.0 credits)**

Students must successfully complete at least three science classes to graduate. All Gaston Day students must enroll in Biology, Chemistry, and one or more higher-level science class to graduate.

#### **Social Studies (3.0 credits)**

Students must successfully complete at least three social studies classes to graduate. All Gaston Day students must enroll in World History, United States History, as well as Government and Economics to graduate.



**World Languages (Successful completion through Level III)**

Students must successfully complete through Level III in French or Spanish to graduate.

**Fine Arts (2.0 credits)**

Students must successfully complete at least two fine arts classes to graduate.

**Physical Education (1.0 credit)**

Students must successfully complete Health and Physical Education to graduate.

**Senior Project (0.25 credit)**

Students in grade 12 are required to complete a 40-hour project/internship to graduate.

Gaston Day School students must also complete a community service requirement of 25 hours per year in grades 9-12. At least 5 of the required hours must be completed in service to Gaston Day School, with at least 5 of the required hours completed in service to a community need not affiliated with the school. Students not meeting the community service requirement will have their failure to meet the obligation clearly documented on their official transcript.

**Assessment Examination Requirements**

To ensure that the school provides a quality academic program, a series of examinations are administered to students at various points in their academic careers. The purposes of the examinations are to assess the school's academic programs, provide information and comparative data for ongoing curriculum review, and assess individual, class, and school performance as compared with appropriate normative groups.

1. Students in grades 9 , 10, and 11 are required to take the PSAT examination in October each year.
2. Students in grade 11 are required to take the ACT District Testing offered at Gaston Day.

**Summer Reading Program**

Gaston Day School requires summer reading of all Upper School students. Students will be provided a list of designated books to read in preparation for the beginning of the school year. Summer reading books are assigned by all English courses and select additional courses in the Middle and Upper Schools. Advanced Placement courses may require additional reading and/or summer work as a prerequisite to the course.

**Exams**

End-of-semester exams are valuable tools for appropriate course placement, measurement of content mastery, and preparation for future high-stakes testing (AP, SAT/ACT, and college midterm and final examinations). Therefore, Gaston Day School requires cumulative end-of-semester exams for each academic course. With approval from the Head of Upper School, a cumulative project may be assigned in lieu of an examination.

All students in grades 9-12 at Gaston Day School are required to take end-of-semester examinations for each academic class during designated Upper School exam days each semester after classes have concluded. These examinations will be weighted as 20% of the semester grade for all academic classes. Upper School examinations are scheduled for 1 hour 30 minutes.

Seniors who have an average of 90 or higher for the year and eight or fewer absences are exempt from the final semester exam for that course (except in English, where students complete a mandatory research paper in lieu of an exam). Seniors who have an average of 85 or higher in an Honors course for the year and eight or fewer absences are exempt from the final semester exam for that course (except in English, where students complete a mandatory research paper in lieu of an exam). AP students with an average of 80 or higher for the year, who complete a course's AP exam in May, and have eight or fewer absences are exempt from that course's final semester exam as well. School-related absences or students learning from home do not count toward absences.

### **Daily Homework and Major Assignments**

Upper School students should expect homework in each subject every night. All major assignments will be assigned in advance and will be posted on OnCampus. Homework will vary and will be appropriate for each grade level. Generally, time to complete homework for Upper School students should be about 2 to 4 hours per night. Students in multiple Advanced Placement and Honors courses may at times experience homework in excess of these published amounts. If your child is consistently spending more or less time than the general expectations above, please communicate with his or her teachers.

### **Incomplete and Late Work**

It is the responsibility of the student to keep track of all assignments and to turn them in on the appropriate due date. Homework/assignment policies will be included on each teacher's syllabus and explained to students at the beginning of the year. Policies and expectations may vary by teacher and department. It is expected that policies stated in a course syllabus will not change during the school year. However, if compelling needs arise to adjust a syllabus during the year, parents and students will be notified in writing.

### **Soft Skills**

All students have the opportunity to learn soft skills through collaborative assignments, project-based learning activities, and real-world examples. Our soft skills curriculum is made up of 22 skills, and each course provides students with multiple opportunities to learn about a skill, understand what it looks like in a specific scenario, and then practice it on an assigned task. Students are provided with feedback on their performance and reflect on their development of soft skills at annual student-led conferences.

## B. GRADING SYSTEM

The academic standing of a student in the various courses is indicated as follows:

### Passing Grades

Letter Grade	Grade Range	Grade Point Value
A+	100 – 97	4.330
A	96 – 93	4.000
A-	92 – 90	3.670
B+	89 – 87	3.330
B	86 – 83	3.000
B-	82 – 80	2.670
C+	79 – 77	2.330
C	76 – 73	2.000
C-	72 – 70	1.670
D+	69 – 67	1.330
D	66 – 63	1.000
D-	62 – 60	0.670
P (Passing)		
NA	NA	

### Non-Passing Grades

F (Failing) 59 - 0 0.000

W (Withdrew prior to drop/add)

WP (Withdrew passing)

WF (Withdrew failing)

INC (Incomplete)

Advanced Placement courses are awarded an additional 1.0 quality point. Honors courses are awarded an additional 0.5 quality point.

Pass/Fail grades may be used only for courses approved by the Head of Upper School.

A mark of "INC" is assigned, at the discretion of the teacher and the Head of Upper School, when due to extenuating circumstances such as illness, a student is unable to complete the work assigned in a course. It is understood that to receive a mark of "INC," all completed work in the course must be at the passing level or above. The mark of "INC" must be removed by the end of the following grading period. Failure to complete required work will result in a grade of "F."

### **Extra Credit**

When offered, extra credit must be academic in nature, directly relevant to the specific course/topics involved, and limited in its ability to dramatically impact overall class grades. Extra credit opportunities (1) are entirely optional; (2) are offered at a teacher's discretion; and (3) should never result in an overall course grade that fails to fairly and accurately reflect a student's level of content mastery in the context of his/her work ethic.

### **Senior Projects/Internship**

Seniors will be required to complete a Senior Project/Internship under the direction of an advisor. Senior Projects will receive a pass/fail grade, which will be reflected on a student's final transcript but will not be calculated into their GPA.

### **Progress Reports**

Academic progress reports are made available to families at the end of each semester. Interim grade reports are made available to families in the middle of each semester. Students having academic difficulty may receive communication from the teacher throughout the semester.

Progress reports are posted to OnCampus and contain semester averages for each course, a conduct grade in each class, and the number of absences the student has accumulated over the course of the semester.

Conduct grades are an important part of each grading period's progress report and an important indication of student behavior. Conduct grades will be used to determine continued participation in co-curricular activities including sports, continued participation in Upper School open campus, and will also factor into decisions regarding admission and continued participation in Honor Societies. Students with consistent and widespread poor conduct will not be considered for school or community awards or honors.

Please refer to the following for a better understanding of your student's conduct grades.

**1 = Excellent** Students who receive this mark rarely, if ever, have behavior that requires correction. Students earning this mark should have received no detentions or other classroom disciplinary consequences.

**2 = Satisfactory** Students who earn this mark are generally well-behaved and attentive in class. These students may occasionally need minimal re-direction or behavior warnings but they are overall

good-natured and not intentionally disruptive. Students receiving this mark may have an occasional detention or other minor disciplinary procedure.

**3 = Needs Improvement** Students who earn this mark are generally productive and willing students but tend to be overly talkative and present regular challenges to classroom management. For the most part, however, these students are not purposefully disruptive. Students earning this mark should have received documented disciplinary action(s), including parental contact and/or detentions.

**4 = Unacceptable** Students who earn this mark are consistently disruptive and disrespectful. These students present a constant challenge, have a negative impact on the class, and are deliberate in their efforts. Students earning this mark should have received well-documented disciplinary actions, including frequent detentions and perhaps Saturday School.

### **Transcripts**

Official transcripts may be requested through the Registrar's Office. Parents must complete a "Request for Official Transcript" form and submit it to the Registrar. Please allow a minimum of 2 days for the completion of transcript requests.

The school will withhold grades, transcripts, and diplomas for any student with unmet obligations to the school (i.e., financial obligations, academic/conduct obligations, missing textbooks and/or equipment, etc.).

### **OnCampus**

Gaston Day School utilizes the online "OnCampus" service to provide students and families with important academic information on-demand. Each student is assigned an online account, and parents have an additional account from which to monitor the student's progress and class responsibilities. All teachers in the Upper School are required to post test/major assessment dates, projects, papers, and other major due dates on students' online calendars. After the first two weeks of each semester, each teacher is also responsible for providing the student's updated class grade online regularly. If a parent or student has any questions or concerns about class information provided on OnCampus, he/she should first consult with the teacher responsible for the page before following up with the Head of Upper School.

### **Parent Conferences**

Time is set aside in the fall for Parent/Teacher conferences. A notice will be sent informing parents of the opportunity to schedule conference times with teachers. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of these conference days during the first and second semesters. Additional conferences are scheduled as needed and may be requested by either teachers or parents.

### **Academic Progress Standards**

Students must make reasonable academic progress toward graduation. The Head of Upper School reserves the right to restrict or withdraw co-curricular or social privileges and to request the temporary

or permanent withdrawal of any student who, in the judgment of the Head of Upper School, is not taking reasonable advantage of his/her educational opportunities.

Upper School students must earn a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) indicated below:

<b>Class Standing</b>	<b>Courses Completed</b>	<b>Minimum Cumulative GPA</b>
Freshman	0 – 6	1.675
Sophomore	7 - 12	2.000
Junior	13 - 18	2.000
Senior	19 - 24	2.000

An Upper School student who fails to maintain the minimum GPA as indicated above for two consecutive years must meet with the Head of Upper School and will be required to withdraw from the school. Students not passing an academic course for the school year will be required to repeat the entire course the following year or take an equivalent course at an institution approved by the Head of Upper School.

#### **Academic Suspension and Dismissal**

Middle and Upper School students who fail to adhere to all standards of academic progress will be placed on academic suspension. A conference will be set up with the Head of Upper School, the student, the student's parents, and the student's advisor to discuss the student's academic performance and the parameters of a contract that will help the student develop acceptable academic habits. Failure to correct the academic suspension by meeting progress standards indicated above will result in dismissal from the school pending review by the Head of Upper School and the Head of School.

#### **Academic Requirements for Participation in Co-curricular Activities and Open Campus Privilege**

Eligibility for co-curricular participation and open campus privilege will be evaluated at the end of each of the eight marking periods of the school year. \*A student will be ineligible to participate in any co-curricular activities and open campus for the next marking period if he or she receives any of the following on his/her report card:

- 2 or more conduct grades of 3 or higher; or
- 2 or more course grades below a 70 for that marking period; or
- 1 or more failing grades in a course for that marking period

Grades in the June marking period determine eligibility for the first fall marking period.

\*Upon the *very first* occurrence of any of these situations, the student will receive a one-time probation lasting one marking period. While on probation, students may participate in co-curricular activities and

open campus. Students are allowed one probation during their academic career in the Upper School. If a student completes six consecutive grading periods without receiving any of the grades listed above on his/her report card, that student may earn an additional probation period during their academic career in the Upper School.

### **Grade Appeal Process**

If a student receives a semester grade he/she believes is unearned, and the student wishes to appeal the grade, he/she must proceed in the following manner:

1. Meet with the teacher and attempt to resolve the issues concerning the grade.
2. Present a detailed written appeal to the Head of Upper School. Appeals must be submitted to the Head of Upper School within 14 calendar days after the end of the semester.

Grade appeals will be considered for the following reasons:

1. The grade assigned was miscalculated according to the grading scale established for the course.
2. Grades were not assigned in accordance with the assignments, examinations, etc., as outlined in the course syllabus.
3. Students were not treated equally in terms of the manner in which grades were calculated for the course.

A decision concerning the grade appeal will be made as soon as possible, normally within 14 calendar days of submission to the Head of Upper School.

## **C. COURSE REGISTRATION**

Students in grades 8 through 11 will have the opportunity to meet with the Director of College Counseling each spring to develop or revise their course plan through graduation. A part of this process is pre-registration for the upcoming year. Students will complete pre-registration by March, and choices will be confirmed and approved by faculty and the Head of Upper School. Course schedules for the upcoming year will be made available to students on OnCampus in the summer.

### **Course Loads**

Students must be enrolled in six classes to be considered full-time students at Gaston Day School.

### **Course Placement Policy**

*A current teacher's recommended course placement for a student is the most important factor in determining a student's placement for the following year.* The teacher bases his/her recommendation on a knowledge of all aspects of a student's performance in class-- exams/tests/quizzes, homework, projects, participation, conduct, study habits and more. No one knows the student's potential for academic success at the next level better than the current teacher. The following guidelines are used to help teachers determine the appropriate course placement for each student. If students or parents have any questions or concerns about a teacher's course recommendation, they are encouraged to set up a meeting with the teacher.

The Director of College Counseling will meet yearly with each student to review and discuss the recommendations of the teachers in building each student's schedule. The Director of College Counseling will ensure that the student's schedule reflects appropriate academic rigor with the student's overall academic and co-curricular commitments, academic performance, and previous standardized test scores. The Director of College Counseling works with each student to ensure he/she will meet all graduation requirements and is on track for college success.

**College Preparatory** classes are designed to prepare students for the content mastery and rigor of the next College Preparatory course in the department's sequence. Therefore, students who are currently successful in a College Preparatory course will be recommended for the next College Preparatory course in the sequence. Students with a strong A in a College Preparatory course may be recommended for the next class at an Honors-level based on many factors, including overall academic and co-curricular commitments and scores on various assessments (ERBs, PSAT, course examinations, etc). College Preparatory courses are not expected to prepare students for an Advanced Placement curriculum.

**Honors** classes are designed to prepare students for the content mastery and rigor of the next Honors class in the department's sequence. Students who earn a grade of 85 or higher in an Honors-level course are best placed in the next Honors-level course in a department's sequence. Students who excel at the Honors level (typically determined by earning a grade of A) may be recommended for an AP course in sequence based on many factors, including overall academic and co-curricular commitments and scores on various assessments (ERBs, PSAT, course examinations, etc). Students with a grade of 80-84 in an Honors class may be successful in the next Honors-level class, though they may also benefit from moving to the next College Preparatory course in the sequence, based on a variety of circumstances evaluated by the instructor and the Director of College Placement. Students with grades below an 80 in an Honors course typically are best served by placement in the next College Preparatory course in the sequence.

**Advanced Placement (AP)** classes are designed for students who have excelled (typically demonstrated by earning an A) in an Honors curriculum. In departments with multiple AP courses in a sequence, successful completion of the previous AP course with a grade of 85 or higher typically indicates a likelihood of success in the next AP-level course in the sequence. Students in an AP course who earn a grade of 80-84 may be successful in the next AP-level class, though they may also benefit from moving to an Honors course, based on a variety of circumstances evaluated by the instructor and Director of College Placement. Students with grades below an 80 in an AP course typically are best served by placement in the next non-AP course in the sequence.

Students desiring to enroll in one or more AP courses may indicate their desire to do so during preliminary registration. Preliminary registration does not ensure automatic placement. All placement is subject to review of the above-stated criteria and final approval by the Head of Upper School. Gaston Day School limits the number of AP courses a student may take to one AP class in tenth grade and three AP classes in eleventh and twelfth grades. Gaston Day School regards three AP classes in eleventh and twelfth grades as the most rigorous course of study. Any student wishing to enroll in additional AP classes must receive approval from the Head of Upper School.



Students desiring to enroll in an online AP class must have a minimum average of 90% in the prospective department's Honors curriculum and must receive approval from their current teacher.

Students enrolled in an AP course are required to take the AP exam in the respective subjects.

### **Conditional Placement**

Students who do not meet the criteria for placement in Honors or AP classes may request conditional placement. Each student will be reviewed individually and a decision will be made by the Head of Upper School based on the student's particular circumstances. In the event that conditional placement is approved, parents will need to sign a conditional placement agreement that acknowledges the following:

- Conditional placement will be re-evaluated after the first 2 weeks of school in light of the student's performance in the class. If at that time, the teacher or an administrator determines that the student is not making appropriate academic progress, a course change may be required.
- If a course change is required early in the school year, the student's overall schedule may be negatively impacted, as many classes will be full and options for alternate courses will be very limited.
- In courses where Honors and College Preparatory sections are offered concurrently, the student may be required to take the class for College Preparatory credit if his/her grade is below an 80.
- Schedule changes beyond the first 2 weeks of school are rarely possible and will result in a "withdrawal" notation for the course on a student's transcript.
- If a student struggles during the year, outside tutoring and/or remediation may be necessary beyond what the teacher is expected to provide.

The integrity of our Honors and AP programs requires that we adhere to specific enrollment guidelines. The guidelines presented herein include both national and school-specific predictors of success. Previous enrollment in AP or Honors courses does not guarantee future enrollment.

### **Course Availability**

Gaston Day School reserves the right to place students in an alternate course or courses when first-choice requests cannot be honored or when the student's previous academic achievement and learning characteristics suggest a particular level of study. The school makes final placement decisions based on the student's mastery of basic skills, previous academic achievement, and level of maturity.

### **Schedule Changes**

Gaston Day School makes every effort to provide class schedules that meet the needs of students. However, because of enrollment requirements and/or availability of faculty, Gaston Day School reserves the right to cancel classes. Students will be notified of any changes whenever possible and as soon as possible.

### **Procedures for Drop/Add and Course Withdrawal**

Students have a two-week period at the beginning of the first semester to drop a course and register for another without the original course appearing on their transcripts. Students may drop a course and not register for another as long as they will still be enrolled for six total courses for the year. Students have

until the end of the first interim (approximately 4 weeks) to change the level of their course if they are enrolled in a course that is currently offered as a split section or if the schedule change does not impact any of their other courses. The Director of College Counseling or Head of Upper School must approve all schedule changes.

Students who withdraw from a course after the two-week period will have that course noted on their transcript with a "WP" (withdrawn passing) or "WF" (withdrawn failing) mark. Students withdrawing from a yearlong course at any point during the school year forfeit all credit for said course. Students changing only the level of their course will not have a withdrawn notation on their transcript.

### **Coursework at Other Institutions**

Online and dual enrollment courses are available to students who have exhausted curricular offerings in a particular subject area or who want to pursue a new subject area not offered at Gaston Day School. A student desiring to take elective coursework at another school must have his/her course approved in advance by the Head of Upper School.

While a student is enrolled at Gaston Day School, **no more than three elective credits** will be accepted toward the graduation requirements, and courses through another institution are not accepted for core credits required for graduation. Coursework taken at another institution will appear on the student's official Gaston Day School transcript, subject to approval by the Head of Upper Schools; however, coursework taken at another institution does *not* count towards a student's Gaston Day School GPA. Student-athletes attempting to meet NCAA eligibility requirements are strongly encouraged to consult with the Director of Athletics before attempting additional elective coursework.

### **Online Learning/Distance Education**

A growing number of colleges and universities are utilizing online coursework, distance education, and other "e-learning" options. Gaston Day School's college-preparatory mission requires that the school encourages and facilitates the exposure of our students to these e-learning opportunities. Upper School students are encouraged to consider pursuing online coursework in lieu of traditional elective credits once they have met the core graduation requirements for each department.

In considering online elective course options, students and families should be mindful of many factors:

- The online course grade will not count towards a student's Gaston Day School GPA. It will be printed on a student's official GDS transcript, though many colleges will require an original official transcript from the offering institution.
- While a student is enrolled at Gaston Day School, online courses through another institution are not accepted for core credits required for graduation.
- No more than three elective credits will be accepted toward the graduation requirements.
- Most online courses charge tuition, textbook, and/or lab fees for each course. These fees are not covered in Gaston Day School tuition, so there will be an extra cost for an online course.
- Online courses require that students be self-directed, independent learners. These courses are "self-contained" with their own internal avenues for help/support, so there will not be a Gaston Day School faculty member designated to offer tutoring or academic support.

- Most online courses offer extremely flexible timeframes for completion, allowing students the freedom to work at their own pace. For students enrolled in classes through FuelEd of Educere, the school monitors students' online progress to ensure modules and tests are being completed in a timely manner. However, for courses completed through other institutions, the school does not have the ability to monitor progress. For these online courses, the responsibility for ensuring acceptable progress towards course completion rests with the student and parents.
- Some online offerings are semester-long courses and not full-year courses. In order to earn credit towards graduation, a student must enroll in a full-year course or else take multiple online courses to count as one full-year course.

Students enrolled in an online course will report to a designated classroom for the first eight weeks of school during an open period. After that time, students that show progression towards course completion at a pace determined by the school will earn the privilege of open campus during that period. Students that do not show progression towards course completion at a pace determined by the school will be required to continue to report to a designated area during an open period. Students that fall significantly behind may lose additional campus privileges until they show progression towards course completion at a pace determined by the school.

### **Dual Enrollment (DE) and Career and College Promise Courses (CCP)**

Students may enroll in DE and CCP classes during the fall semester of the junior year of high school. In considering these course options, students and families should be mindful of many factors:

- The DE and CCP course grade will not count towards a student's Gaston Day School GPA. It will be printed on a student's official GDS transcript, though many colleges will require an original official transcript from the offering institution.
- DE and CCP courses are not accepted for core credits required for graduation. No more than three elective credits will be accepted toward the graduation requirements.
- CCP courses must be selected from the College Transfer Pathways (CTP) offerings. All courses must receive approval from the Head of Upper School prior to enrolling.
- Students who participate in DE or CCP are responsible for assuming all costs associated with the program, including registration fees, tuition, lab fees, and textbooks.
- Students enrolled in DE or CCP courses must demonstrate college readiness and maturity to successfully complete the classes independently. Responsibility for ensuring acceptable progress towards course completion rests with the student and parents. Gaston Day School faculty will not be available as a resource for tutoring or academic support.

### **Independent Study**

Independent Study courses are limited and may be available to a student when either a scheduling conflict (e.g., two courses being offered at the same time) or the unavailability of a course during the year prevents the student from completing a graduation requirement. Independent Study courses require significant individual work and self-discipline, and they are limited to students with a 3.0 or above GPA. A student is limited to a maximum of three Independent Study courses during his/her

academic career. Independent Study courses may not be taken to repeat a course in which a student has received a low grade. Not all courses are available by Independent Study.

#### **Procedures**

1. A student must submit a written proposal for Independent Study to the Head of Upper School.
2. A student's request must be recommended by (a) the student's advisor; (b) the Department Chair; (c) the supervising faculty member; and approved by (d) the Head of Upper School.
3. A student has two weeks from the time the Independent Study course begins to withdraw from the course without penalty.
4. Graduating seniors must complete all work for Independent Study courses two weeks prior to the date of graduation.

#### **D. LEARNING ACADEMY PROGRAMS**

The Learning Academy offers a student-centered atmosphere that provides remediation and academic support based on each student's individual strengths and weaknesses. The staff of the Learning Academy is composed of qualified teachers and specialists devoted to supporting the academic environment and educational mission of Gaston Day School while meeting the individual needs of students in the academy. Gaston Day School strives to meet the needs of college-bound students with certified learning disabilities or those who might face challenges in achieving academic success in our curriculum. Therefore, as a condition of enrollment or re-enrollment, a student may be required to seek assistance through the Learning Academy. An additional fee is required for each Learning Academy program.

#### **Programs and Services for Upper School Students:**

- *Single Course Tutoring* is designed to serve students in grades 9 - 12 enrolled in the Learning Academy who are experiencing difficulty in a single subject area. Single Course Tutoring is currently offered for college preparatory levels classes in math and English.
- *Student Services* is designed for students in grades 9 - 12. Students receive assistance in test preparation, organizational and study skills. Students in this program report to the Student Services instructor during designated study halls. The Student Services instructor acts as a liaison with each student's teachers and parents to help keep track of major upcoming assignments and tests, closely monitors the student's classwork and grades, and helps the student with organization, time management, study skills, and academic strategies for success.

#### **E. AWARDS, HONORS, AND CEREMONIES**

## **Commencement Exercises**

Gaston Day School offers commencement in the spring of each year. Graduation represents a milestone in the lives of seniors and a momentous occasion for graduates, their families, and the Gaston Day School faculty, staff, and administration. All seniors eligible for graduation are expected to participate in the graduation ceremony.

## **Academic Recognition**

Gaston Day School does not rank students. Academic excellence is the primary objective at Gaston Day School. Outstanding academic performance is recognized for Upper School students by the following designations:

- The senior with the highest grade point average will be selected as Valedictorian provided he/she meets the additional criteria outlined herein. The senior with the second-highest grade point average will be selected as Salutatorian provided he/she meets the additional criteria outlined herein. To be eligible for these honors, students must have attended and earned course credits from Gaston Day School for the entirety of their 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup>-grade years, have no Honor Code violation or major disciplinary infraction during those years and be present at commencement activities. Preliminary calculation of grade point averages will occur at the end of the first semester during senior year. If finalists have attended Gaston Day School for a different number of academic years, the 9<sup>th</sup>-grade year will be eliminated from the calculation of grade point averages to determine final recipients. If rankings are well defined at the end of the first semester during senior year, recipients will be named subject to confirmation of final senior grades. If rankings are not well-defined, finalists will be notified and confirmation of selections will be announced only after the calculation of final senior grades. The Salutatorian and Valedictorian will speak at Graduation.
- Junior Marshals, selected on the basis of academic standing, will assist with the commencement exercises. The four 11<sup>th</sup> graders with the highest grade point averages will be asked to serve as Junior Marshals provided they meet the additional criteria outlined herein. To be eligible for this honor, students must have attended Gaston Day School for the entirety of their 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>-grade years, have no Honor Code violation or major disciplinary infraction during those years and be present at commencement activities. Grade point averages will be calculated at the end of the fall semester and students will be notified in early spring.
- Sophomore ushers will be selected on the basis of academic standing to serve as ushers at the commencement exercises. The four 10<sup>th</sup> graders with the highest grade point averages will be asked to serve as ushers provided they meet the additional criteria outlined herein. To be eligible for this honor, students must have attended Gaston Day School for the entirety of their 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade years, have no Honor Code violation or major disciplinary infraction during those years and be present at commencement activities. Grade point averages will be calculated at the end of the fall semester and students will be notified in early spring.
- Freshmen will be selected on the basis of academic standing to serve as flag bearers at the commencement exercises. The two 9<sup>th</sup> graders with the highest grade point averages will be asked to serve as flag bearers provided they meet the additional criteria outlined herein. To be eligible for this honor, students must have attended Gaston Day School for the entirety of their

9th-grade year, have no Honor Code violation or major disciplinary infraction during that year, and be present at commencement activities. Grade point averages will be calculated at the end of the fall semester and students will be notified in early spring.

### **Honor Societies**

Over the past few years, Gaston Day has made intentional changes in the Upper School that we believe help our students better maintain balance with their academic demands, co-curricular interests, and personal relationships. One of the traditions recently changed is our honor society system. Beginning with the Class of 2023, our plan is to focus on strengthening the impact of our National Honor Society by limiting eligible students to membership in it alone. We will continue to offer membership for eligible students for the National Honor Society, as well as eight additional honor societies in different subject areas, to current juniors and seniors. The only other honor society that will continue to be offered is the International Thespian Society. Gaston Day will continue to offer this opportunity because it is one of the only ways for students to be recognized in the theatre while multiple opportunities exist in the other subject areas.

Strengthening our chapter of the National Honor Society will make the student experience richer, more meaningful, and truer to the society's requirements. Members will have a designated meeting time during the school day for members to meet virtually, elect officers, and plan events throughout the school year. With this shift to one honor society, we will continue to recognize students for their academic accomplishments while building student engagement in our chapter of NHS and providing students with more opportunities for leadership and service within the school and community.

Only school-approved/school-sponsored societies are recognized at official awards ceremonies or commencement exercises. A student must complete and earn course credits for a minimum of two semesters at Gaston Day School to be eligible for induction into an honor society. Gaston Day School does not transfer honor society memberships earned at other institutions.

National Honor Society – Grades 10-12

International Thespian Society – Grades 9-12

- The minimum academic requirement for the National Honor Society is a 3.70 cumulative GPA in all Gaston Day coursework.
- The International Thespian Society is open to Upper School students and membership is gained by earning 10 points in various aspects of production. The points vary by the size of the role or the technical responsibility. Students need to exhibit excellence and versatility in all areas of theatre and must have outstanding citizenship.

(The societies listed below are only eligible for current seniors)

French Honor Society

Mu Alpha Theta National Mathematics Society

National Art Honor Society

National English Honor Society

Spanish Honor Society

Science National Honor Society

Tri-M Music Honor Society

- The minimum academic requirement for the French Honor Society is an A average in the student's current French course and an A- average in all French courses. Students must be in the second semester French III or above.
- The minimum academic requirement for Mu Alpha Theta Honor Society is an A average for all Upper School mathematics courses. Students must currently be enrolled in Honors Algebra II or a more advanced honors or AP math course.
- The minimum academic requirement for the National Art Honor Society is an A average in Art coursework and B- in all Gaston Day coursework. Students must be enrolled in Art III or higher and exhibit excellence in scholarship, service, and character.
- The minimum academic requirements for the National English Honor Society is a B average or higher in AP English coursework or an A average in English honors coursework for two consecutive semesters.
- The minimum academic requirement for the National Science Honor Society is a 3.5 cumulative GPA in all honors science classes and an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0. Students must have been enrolled in all Honors or AP level courses and must have successfully completed at least one AP level course.
- The minimum academic requirement for the Spanish Honor Society is an A average in the student's current Spanish course and an A- or higher in all Spanish courses. Students must be in the second semester Spanish III or above.
- Membership in Tri-M Honor Society is open to Upper School students who are currently enrolled in band or chorus, have successfully completed Band II or Chorus II, have maintained an 84% or higher in band or chorus, and have maintained an overall cumulative GPA of 2.5.

Meeting the minimum academic requirements is not the sole factor for acceptance into an honor society. Students that meet the minimum academic requirements for membership in an honor society will receive a letter from that chapter's advisor at the end of the first semester notifying them that they are scholastically eligible for membership. Students meeting academic requirements and wishing to become a member of an honor society will submit an application showing they meet the additional requirements for that particular honor society which go beyond the academic requirements, such as character, leadership, service, etc. A faculty council will review the applications and notify students of their selections. Honor society inductions occur during the spring of each school year.

Character and integrity are also requirements for all candidates and members of these honor societies. Candidates for induction must have no Honor Code violation or major disciplinary infraction within the last calendar year. Current members who are found guilty of an Honor Code violation or major disciplinary infraction will be placed on probation and required to complete an appropriate number of community service hours within the following semester in order to be reinstated. Any second offense will result in permanent expulsion.

The academic credentials of honor society members will be reviewed at the end of first semester and at the end of the school year. Members who fall below the minimum GPA requirements will be put on probation for the following semester. If, at the end of that semester, the student's GPA meets the minimum requirements, the probationary status will be removed. If, however, at the end of the semester, the student's GPA does not meet the minimum GPA requirement, that student will permanently lose their status as an honor society member in accordance with the guidelines of the honor societies. For the purpose of determining status as related to honor societies, a cumulative weighted GPA will be calculated. Students must meet or exceed the minimum requirements on their own achievement. Gaston Day School will not "round up" fractional units.

Many honor societies have additional requirements that must be met by active members throughout the school year and will be reviewed each semester. Members who fail to meet these additional requirements will be put on probation for the following semester. If the student meets the additional requirements the next semester, the probationary status will be removed. If, however, at the end of that semester, the student does not meet the additional requirements, that student will permanently lose their status as an honor society member in accordance with the guidelines of the honor societies.

### **Academic Awards**

Academic awards are designed to recognize outstanding achievement in individual subject areas in the Upper School. Each student at Gaston Day School is encouraged, supported, and expected to perform to the full extent of his or her abilities and should be commended regularly for his or her efforts. It is the school's belief that awards should be given only for truly outstanding performance and that the few students meeting these high expectations should be recognized, rewarded, and held up as examples for others to follow. Therefore, to ensure the integrity of our academic awards program, all selections will be subject to the award areas and selection criteria indicated below:

End-of-year awards for students in grades 9-11:

1. Up to 4 awards per grade level will be given in each primary academic subject area (English, math, science, history, foreign language) and four per division in art, music, drama, and physical education.
2. Awards may be given in each grade level to recognize "Academic Excellence" (Arts awards will recognize "Excellence in Drama," "Excellence in Music," and "Excellence in Fine Art.") These will be awarded to those top students in honors or AP classes who consistently demonstrate outstanding academic achievement, intellectual curiosity, self-discipline, a positive attitude, and superior work ethic. Students academically eligible for this award must also be in good standing with no major disciplinary actions during the academic year in question and must be enrolled at Gaston Day School by the start of the second semester.
3. Awards may be given at each grade level to recognize "Outstanding Achievement." Candidates for these awards must demonstrate hard work, perseverance, and/or significant improvement or progress over the course of the year. Students in all level courses are eligible to receive this award. Students academically eligible for this award must also be in good standing with no



major disciplinary actions during the academic year in question and must be enrolled at Gaston Day School by the start of the second semester.

### **Junior Recognition and Senior Awards**

It has become a tradition at Gaston Day to recognize and honor graduating seniors and share in the ceremonial “passing of the torch” to the current junior class. Seniors are recognized for community awards and achievements, and college scholarships and college plans are announced. Departmental awards are given to outstanding seniors. Selections will be made in late April by departmental vote and any GPA calculations will be made based on GPAs at the end of the first semester. A significant drop in grades or close competition between students may require the consideration of interims. Awards may be given in the following areas: English, Science, Social Studies, Math, World Languages, Art, Choral Music, Band, and Drama. Selection criteria vary slightly across disciplines; however, all recipients will be students who consistently demonstrate exceptional skills in the subject area, individuals who are self-disciplined, possess an intense curiosity and willingness to explore ideas, and persons of high integrity. Senior Award recipients will also consistently seek and excel in challenging coursework in the department conferring the award.

### **Additional Senior Awards**

The following awards are given in honor of outstanding members of the Gaston Day School Community whose contributions and spirit have enabled Gaston Day School to become the fine institution it is today.

**Fahringer Award** – The Ray Fahringer Award is presented to a senior who has demonstrated hard work, excellence, creative and analytical thinking, and a working knowledge of scientific methodology. These qualities were very much a part of Mr. Fahringer’s life as a physics teacher, mechanical engineer, and musician. Candidates for this award should exhibit high integrity, be enrolled in the most challenging science curriculum, be among the top achievers in the senior class, have acquired some recognition outside of the Gaston Day community for their scientific expertise, and have demonstrated competency/excellence on standardized testing such as the SAT I or SAT II. The recipient of this award will be selected by the Science Department with approval by the Head of Upper School. This award is given at Senior Recognition.

**Vann Matthews Spirit Award** – The Vann Matthews Spirit Award is presented to a senior who has demonstrated exceptional school spirit and active involvement in the school community while at Gaston Day School. The recipient should exhibit high integrity, good sportsmanship, and be a leader among peers. The recipient of this award will be selected by the Scholarship Committee with approval by the Head of Upper School. This award is given at graduation.

**Alumni Association Award** – The Alumni Association Award is presented to a senior who has demonstrated qualities and characteristics which Gaston Day School strives to instill in its graduates. The recipient should demonstrate hard work, give of himself/herself through service to the community, actively participate in school life, and support Gaston Day School in the future. The recipient of this award will be selected by the Scholarship Committee with approval by the Head of Upper School. This award is given at graduation.

**Julie Rankin Civils Award for Service** – The Julie Rankin Civils Award for Service is presented to the senior who, in the eyes of the faculty and administration, best exemplifies the Gaston Day School community values of Service and Generosity. The quantity and quality of the student’s service to the school and community during his/her Upper School career, and particularly his/her senior year, should be substantial. The recipient of this award will be selected by the Scholarship Committee with approval by the Head of Upper School. This award is given at graduation.

**J. B. Davis Headmaster’s Award** – The J. B. Davis Headmaster’s Award is presented to the senior who in the eyes of the faculty and the Head of School has demonstrated unusual dedication to Gaston Day School through his or her attitude, hard work, friendliness, and sportsmanship. The recipient of this award will be selected by the Head of School. This award is given at graduation.

#### **Academic Stoles and Pins**

For commencement exercises, members of National Honor Society will wear blue stoles designating their membership in NHS. Students who are members of other school-approved/school-sponsored honor societies, as well as students earning a variety of other Gaston Day academic or athletic recognitions, may wear lapel pins only. Seniors may not alter or decorate their graduation cap and gown in any way or wear additional articles not directly related to approved academic merit.

## **IX. TECHNOLOGY CODE OF CONDUCT**

Gaston Day School strives to integrate technology appropriately throughout the curriculum. The technology systems and internet access available at Gaston Day School are intended for educational purposes only. The use of school technology is a privilege. Violation of the intended purpose will result in disciplinary action, including detention, suspension, or expulsion. The school may restrict or terminate user access, without prior notice, if such action is deemed necessary under the expectations expressed in the Technology Responsible Use Policy or Student Code of Conduct.

All Gaston Day School technology users may NOT under any circumstance:

- Make any hardware modifications to school computers, load any other operating systems, repartition the hard drive, or change any settings on the hard drive.
- Install registry cleaners and/or batch files to stop computer device services.
- Make changes to the operating system, screen saver, laptop image, install software or attach devices such as a keyboard with the consent of the Director of Technology.
- Load movie, music, or video files onto the hard drive of a school computer or to the network drive.
- Make attempts to circumvent the internet filter, including proxy servers.
- Print personal documents, pictures, or any materials not required for legitimate educational purposes.

All electronic communications may be retained by the school and shared with authorities as required by local, state, or federal regulations.

### **Software Copyright**

1. The only software, other than users' projects, to be used on systems in the school's labs or classrooms are those products for which the school owns a valid license or the school may legally use.
2. Licensed and copyrighted software is not generally available for borrowing and may only be used at other sites with approval from the Director of Technology.
3. Copyrighted software shall not be downloaded from the Internet or further transmitted in any form without compliance with all terms of a preauthorized licensing agreement. Infringement or violation of U.S. or international copyright laws or restrictions will not be tolerated.
4. Any attempts to circumvent the licensing controls or the copying of software from the network without the Director of Technology's permission is prohibited.

### **Hardware**

1. Report equipment problems immediately to the instructor or the Director of Technology.
2. Leave workstations and peripherals in their designated places.
3. Keep work areas neat and clean and free from food, drink, and chewing gum.

### **Internet Responsibilities**

1. Electronic communications (email) is to be restricted to appropriate communications. It is the user's responsibility to maintain the integrity of the private electronic mail system. The user has the responsibility to report all violations of security.
2. All email received and sent must not contain pornographic material, profane language, inappropriate information, or text-encoded files that are potentially dangerous to the integrity of the hardware on the school premises.
3. Sending email to a general audience, such as chain mail and forwards, is forbidden.
4. Users should not reveal personal information in correspondences with unknown parties.
5. Computer games, other than those directly supporting curriculum, are not to be accessed on campus.

### **Student Email**

Gaston Day School assigns school email addresses to all students and provides internet access to all Middle and Upper School students. Like all technology resources on campus, email and internet usage are tools for educating students and facilitating the operation of the school. All students and school employees must be mindful that all communication is a reflection of the school as a whole. Students are strictly forbidden from using their school email account as contacts on social media networking sites. Gaston Day School retains the right to monitor network use and school email accounts; students should have no expectation of privacy when using the school networks, systems, or electronic communication resources.

### **Respect for School Devices**

Users should respect the rights of others using the mobile labs and network.

1. Use assigned device, if required by teacher or technology department.
2. Be considerate when using scarce resources, such as scanners, printers, and paper.
3. Always log off the device when finished.
4. Avoid deliberately attempting to disrupt system performance or interfering with the work of other users.
5. Leave device in good condition for the next class or user.

### **Personal Technology**

In general, cell phones should not be visible in any classroom, and phones intentionally or repeatedly used in class will be confiscated. In Lower School, cell phones and smart watches are not permitted on campus, with the exception of students that ride the bus. In Middle School, cell phones and smart watches should be powered off and kept in the student's backpack from 8:00 am to 3:15 pm each school day. In Upper School, students are permitted to use their cell phones between classes and during open campus and lunch. Cell phones should be kept in backpacks during class. Cell phones should never connect to the GDS network. Violations of this policy are subject to disciplinary consequences.

### **BYOC and BYOD Programs**

In order to prepare for the possibility of virtual learning, all 3rd through 12th grades students are expected to provide their own device. Information on these devices can be found in the BYOC and BYOD policies for each division. Students should plan to take these items home daily. Furthermore, it is expected that all students have access to a reliable wifi connection at home with a minimum of 1.5 Mbps for 1:1 HD streaming. If required to move to virtual learning, students will be expected to access lessons online, attend synchronous classes, and submit digital assignments. Additional information about these programs can be found on the BYOD Policy and BYOC Policy handouts posted on OnCampus. All students and parents are expected to sign a responsible use form at the beginning of each school year.

### **Upper School BYOD Device Requirements**

We understand that students have different needs and preferences, and we want them to use the device that is most comfortable for them. Therefore, students are able to choose the device that they want to use at school and should bring this device fully charged to school daily. Student cell phones are not considered an approved device and must remain in the designated holder during all classes. Given that there are certain technical requirements needed to be successful in the Upper School, students are required to have a device with the following features:

- Wireless internet access
- Keyboard
- Minimum 13" screen
- Minimum i3 processor
- Camera and microphone
- Must be able to install and run software (chromebooks, iPads, and other tablets that cannot install and run software will not be permitted)

### **Lower and Middle School BYOC Device Requirements**

Students in grades 3 through 8 are expected to have a Chromebook and students in Middle School should bring this device to school fully charged every day. Student cell phones are not considered an approved device and should not be used during classes. Given that there are certain technical requirements needed to be successful in the Middle School, students are required to have a Chromebook with the following features:

- Wireless internet access
- Keyboard
- Minimum 11" screen
- Camera and microphone
- Chrome Operating System (OS) (iPads and tablets are not permitted)

This year, students entering 7th or 8th grade may consider purchasing a laptop should they plan to continue on with the device upon entering the Upper School. 7th and 8th grade students that choose to use a laptop instead of a Chromebook should follow the BYOD device requirements.

### **Device Registration**

Students must register their device with the technology department at the beginning of the school year in order to obtain wifi access and the appropriate school filters. Students will be required to submit the

brand, model, serial number, and wifi/mac address through OnCampus forms to complete the registration process.

### **Technology Code of Conduct Violations**

When any student's online behavior is determined by administrators to violate the law or to threaten the safety of the school, the school will notify the student's parents and take all appropriate actions—referring the matter to law enforcement officials, requiring psychological counseling for the student and/or dismissing the student from the school. Violations are subject to disciplinary consequences, including but not limited to, detention, suspension or loss of honors or school privileges, suspension or ineligibility from leadership positions, honor societies, clubs, teams, organizations, suspension, or expulsion.

## X. POLICIES FOR VIRTUAL LEARNING

At Gaston Day School, our concern is always for the well-being of all of our students and employees. As a school serving more than 500 students and employing 80+ employees, we have an obligation to ensure we are preparing and planning for any emergency that could create large-scale impact to the breadth of community members and campus operations. As part of our COVID-19 Response, this means exploring alternative instructional delivery methods. This document addresses how we, at Gaston Day, will shift to a virtual learning platform if campus is closed or provide instruction if a student is learning from home. As a caring and creative community of educators, this document covers how we might support students' well-being and academic progress when virtual learning is necessary.

### Key Terminology for Virtual Learning

Though much of teaching and learning online is the same as in the shared physical classroom, there are a few key terms that will help you navigate the shift.

- **Virtual Learning:** Online learning completed in a location other than the school campus and typically completed using a computer, tablet, or phone.
- **Virtual Class:** This is the online equivalent of a traditional class using a computer to gather in a 'classroom' with your teacher. Since the classroom is online, all students can be in different physical locations but still be together in the classroom.
- **Asynchronous:** Class interactions happen via Learning Management System without real-time interaction. Students engage in class materials and complete work at their own pace, typically within a given timeframe, often using discussion boards to drive peer-to-peer engagement.
- **Synchronous:** Class interactions happen in real time, at the same time. Students may virtually attend class together via video conference, livestream, or chat. Most online courses are a blend of synchronous contact and asynchronous study/work.
- **Screeencast:** A digital video recording of your computer screen, usually including audio narration. Screeencasts are a form of instructional video.
- **Video Conference:** A virtual meeting in which participants in different locations are able to communicate with each other with audio and video.
- **Learning Management System (LMS):** An online application used to deliver, document, track and report student learning.

### Essential Applications

Below is a list of applications that students need to be familiar with to successfully transition to virtual learning. We will leverage a combination of OnCampus, Google Suite, and Screeencastify to support students and keep the learning moving. Teachers will go over these applications with students at the beginning of the school year.

- **OnCampus:** All students should already be familiar with OnCampus through regular use of the system throughout the school year. Teachers will be expected to continue to use OnCampus to post all assignments, track attendance, and record grades. Teachers are encouraged to use more of the OnCampus features, such as announcements, topics, rubrics, etc. in a virtual learning environment.
- **Google Calendar:** Students should be familiar with how to access and create events on Google Calendar. This will be used to access virtual classes and teacher help time appointment slots.
- **Google Hangouts Meet:** Google Meet allows teachers to host virtual classes that students can attend as a video conference in which both students and teachers are able to share their computer screens and use the chat box. Students are also able to create their own Hangout Meet video conference and invite other students to attend. This feature allows students to participate in group work both during and outside of class, continue the peer tutoring program, and maintain connections with others while social distancing. Because of the many positive benefits of Google Meet during virtual learning, the school has temporarily turned on the Google Meet feature for all users within our domain. All students should be familiar with how to set up and participate in a Google Hangouts Meet call. Students should be familiar with features such as using the chat box and presenting by sharing a computer screen.
- **Screencastify:** Students should add the Screencastify plugin to their Chrome browser. This tool allows users to create instructional videos by recording your screen with audio narration (ie: tutorial, virtual lecture, feedback on work). Videos from screencastify autosave in Google Drive.
- **Flipgrid:**
- **Doctopus** is a google sheets add-on that distributes information from google drive. It gives teachers the ability to share resources, monitor student progress, and manage grading and feedback for student projects within Google Drive. All teachers will set up Doctopus at the beginning of the year to help themselves and their students to organize their Google Drive content and workflow.
- **EdPuzzle** is a tool that allows teachers to embed a variety of question styles into video based lessons to gauge student comprehension. Teachers may create their own video based lessons or select from an extensive library of videos from you tube, khan academy, etc.
- **Flipgrid** is a video based discussion tool where teachers can create grids to manage class conversations. Students have a variety of tools, such as white boards, to create their own content as well as a variety of tools to provide feedback to each other.

### Schedule

When campus is open, teachers and students will follow the normal daily schedule to attend all classes. Throughout the year, if any individual students are asked to stay home from campus, they should continue to follow the normal daily schedule.

In the event of a campus closure due to COVID, or cohort group quarantine, students will follow their regular schedule until further notice.

### Virtual Classes



Students will attend virtual classes by accessing events located on their Google Calendar or on their OnCampus course Bulletin Board. At the start of each class, students should click on the meeting link and then on “Join Hangouts Meet.”

Students should plan to attend all scheduled classes, advisory, meetings, coaching, and student services. When shifting to a modified schedule, students do not need to attend study halls.

Teachers are encouraged to record class sessions and may be available to share these recordings with students that are absent or having technical difficulties.

### **Attendance**

Teachers will take attendance during the beginning of each virtual class period just as they would during a regular school day on campus. Attendance will be taken in advisory. Students must follow the attendance policies that are described in the Student Code of Conduct section of the Family Handbook.

Absences to virtual classes will be applied toward attendance totals for the year. Students learning from home do not count toward absence totals. Class attendance records are completed each period of the day. A student's attendance record appears on all academic progress reports. Students are allowed to miss a maximum of ten class periods in each class each year. Students missing more than fifteen class periods in a single year may lose course credit. Parents should complete the online student absence form to inform the school of all student absences.

### **Assessments**

Assessments with online students require careful planning. Traditional assessments in a virtual environment can put students in a tricky position where a quick Google search makes cheating both easy and tempting. The teachers will work to create a learning environment that sets students up for success rather than for a moral dilemma. It is likely that students will be asked to complete other types of assessments. Project based learning, with multiple checkpoints along the way, is a great fit for virtual learning. Teachers may also create collaborative tests using Google Docs, individually assign assessments in OnCampus, build tests in Google Forms (with randomized test questions, one take only, and limited time windows for taking).

The teachers in the Learning Academy will provide a system for accommodations just as they would if we were on campus. Proctors may use Google Hangouts Meet to administer an assessment and can include read alouds and scribing as necessary.

### **Student Behavior Expectations and Discipline**

All policies that are listed in the Student Code of Conduct in the Family Handbook still apply in virtual learning. Teachers will set new expectations for student behavior in a virtual classroom. If those expectations are broken, teachers may issue violations.

The following behavior expectations apply when students are learning virtually:

- Have access to reliable wifi.
- Designate a quiet space at home to attend class, preferably with a chair and table or desk.
- Have your computer fully charged or plugged in; have all materials with you.
- Make sure TV and music are turned off; use earbuds/headphones if helpful.
- Make sure the lights are on and that you are visible.
- Turn off or put away your cell phone and smartwatch to prevent distractions.
- Join each class at the scheduled time and attend for the entire period; partial periods, except those due to technical difficulties, are not permitted.
- Come to class dressed and groomed appropriately.
- Participate fully in class; eating, bathroom breaks, etc. should be handled during the breaks built into the schedule; participating in gaming, social media, YouTube or any other distractions during class sessions is prohibited.
- Be respectful to others; misbehavior or disruptions to the class will not be tolerated.

The following guidelines should be followed for virtual classes and meetings:

- The meeting ID is for class/group members only and should not be shared with others.
- Taking and/or sharing pictures and videos of teachers or classmates during Hangout/Meet is prohibited.
- All images used for your profile image or video background or other public displays must be appropriate.
- Students must use their official name as their username in order to be admitted into their classes and get credit for attending class.
- If a student must call into a class due to technical difficulties, they should state their name upon entry to the class.
- If a student has a camera technical issue or concern, parents should contact the Dean of Students or Head of Upper School.

### **Responsible Use Policy**

All regulations and school rules apply to use of the internet while logged into a gastoday.org account. This includes the following forms that are signed at the beginning of each school year: RUP, GAFE & Student Code of Conduct in the Family Handbook.

While using Google Meet, students will be respectful in their screen sharing, videos, and chat comments. Inappropriate behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to, cyber-bullying, inappropriate language, insults, nudity, spam, racist, sexist or discriminatory remarks or any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, pornographic, harassing, abusive or considered to be harmful to minors. Students are expected to respect others in the school community and on the Internet. Students are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette.

Students should respect the privacy of others when using Google Meet or other forms of electronic communication. Students should not reveal personal identifying information or information that is private or confidential, such as the home address or telephone number, or social security number of

themselves or fellow students. This includes but is not limited to names, addresses, or pictures. Students should not forward or post personal communications without the author's prior consent.

Parents should be aware of the possibility that a student could obtain access to inappropriate material while engaged in independent use of the Internet on Google Meet. Student's activity may require additional monitoring while participating in independent use of the Internet on Google Meet. Parents have the responsibility to make reasonable efforts to supervise student's use of the Internet on Google Meet.

While we always strive to provide the most efficient, safe, and appropriate resources, the technological complexity of this mission makes guarantees impossible. While using the Google Meet, users recognize that GDS will not be held responsible for unfiltered content that may be viewed or downloaded on Gaston Day equipment or gastonday.org accounts that have been provided to individuals for use outside of the Gaston Day network.

Access to and use of a Google account is considered a privilege. Gaston Day School reserves the right to terminate access and use of their Google Account when there is reason to believe that violations of law or school policies have occurred.