

# Great Expectations Academy

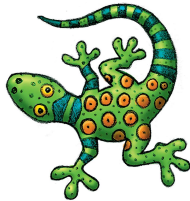
1466 West Camino Antigua

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

## Home of the Geckos



### Administration

Mark Phillips - Director

Jeanette Big - Director

Jeremy Topp - Principal

## Student/Parent Handbook

# 2024-2025

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## **SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

Great Expectations Academy is dedicated to the preparation of students to become competent, literate, productive citizens. It is a learning community of students and adults who value collegiality, trust and confidence, caring, humor and open communication. This mission will be accomplished through individualized accelerated learning, with high expectations for all.

## **ADMISSION POLICY**

Great Expectations Academy is an Arizona Charter School, chartered by the State of Arizona and open to all students in Arizona who qualify to attend public schools. Siblings of currently enrolled students and children of employees have first priority for placement each school year. Parents will be notified of enrollment period by letter and posting on the GEA website.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Great Expectations Academy is committed to a policy of non-discrimination in relation to race, religion, sex, age, national origin or handicap. This policy will prevail in all matters concerning staff, students, the public, educational programs and services and individuals doing business with the school.

## **SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION AND OFFICE PERSONNEL**

The school office hours are 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. The main office number is (520) 399-2121. The fax number is (520) 399-2123. A general email address is [www.info@geageckos.org](mailto:www.info@geageckos.org). The supporting staff is as follows: Claudia Adams, Registrar and Tabitha Alegria. Short biographies of administrators, teachers, office and supporting personnel can be found on the GEA website, [www.geageckos.org](http://www.geageckos.org).

## **MASCOT/SCHOOL COLORS**

The mascot of Great Expectations Academy is the Gecko. The school colors are lime green and indigo blue.

## **STUDENTS IN THE OFFICE**

Students are not allowed in the school office without a pass from the teacher or permission from Administration.

## **USE OF SCHOOL PHONES**

To minimize the number of disruptions to the classroom, students are not permitted to leave the class to use the office phones except in cases of emergency. Emergencies do not include forgotten homework, arranging play dates after school, etc. Students should know their schedule before being dropped off at school in the morning. All arrangements for transportation and after school activities should be finalized before school.

## **VOLUNTEERS and VISITORS**

Volunteer opportunities are available at various times during the school year. All volunteers must have a current Arizona Fingerprint Clearance Card, attend a volunteer training and be approved by the board. Volunteers will also need to read and sign the volunteer forms at the beginning of the school year. All Visitors and Volunteers must visit the school office to sign in before proceeding on campus. **Arizona law requires all Parents/Visitors & Volunteers to check in at the front office.** No person may enter onto school premises, including visits or audits to a classroom or other school activity, without approval by the Administration. Neither will any person be allowed to conduct or attempt to conduct any activity on the school premises that has not had prior approval by the Administration. Appropriate, respectful conduct with office staff, teachers, students and administrators, is always required. These precautions are all with the students' safety in mind. Anyone who is not a student or staff member of Great Expectations Academy, and is in violation of this policy, shall be reported to the office by staff members. The visitor may then be asked to comply with this procedure and/or may be asked to leave the property of the Academy. Failure to obey such instructions may subject a person to criminal proceedings applicable under law. To ensure open communication with our families, a parent/guardian may call the office, at any time, to schedule a conference or appointment with an administrator or staff member.

## **STUDENT/PARENT/TEACHER/ADMINISTRATIVE COMPACT**

### **STUDENT AGREEMENT**

*It is important that I work to the best of my ability. Therefore, I will strive to do the following:*

- Show respect and cooperate with all adults at the school.
- Come to class on time, prepared to work.
- Complete all assignments to the best of my ability.
- Respect the rights of others to learn without disruption.
- Show respect for people and property by not using profanity, stealing or vandalizing.
- Practice the rules in the Code of Student Conduct.
- Spend time at home on daily studying or reading.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT**

*I want my student to achieve. Therefore, I will encourage him/her by doing the following:*

- See that my student is punctual and attends school regularly and is on time.
- Communicate with my student's teacher on a regular basis.
- Support the school in developing positive behaviors.
- Stay aware of what my student is learning.
- Attend parent/guardian-teacher conferences and attend school functions.
- Provide a caring environment, including adequate food and rest, so my student is ready to learn.
- Provide a time and place for quiet study and reading at home.
- Help my student in any way possible to meet his/her responsibilities.

### **TEACHER AGREEMENT**

*It is important that students achieve. Therefore, I will strive to do the following:*

- Work to promote a learning environment that promotes academic achievement.
- Strive to create a partnership between teachers, parents/guardians and the community that facilitates learning.
- Utilize student test data when planning academic instruction.
- Encourage literacy at home and at school.
- Plan academic instruction that includes innovative technology to meet the needs of the students.
- Utilize differentiated instruction that embraces individual differences and learning styles.
- Provide students with opportunities to explore, recognize, and develop their individual differences.
- Encourage students and parents/guardians by providing information about student progress.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM AGREEMENT**

*We will work to see that Great Expectations Academy promotes student achievement. Therefore, we will strive to do the following:*

- Provide a school climate that allows for positive communication and a partnership between students, parents/guardians, and teachers.
- Support the teachers and provide them with professional development and resources that fosters high quality instruction.
- Provide a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning.
- Encourage students, staff and parents/guardians to keep this compact.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL HOURS OF STUDENTS**

The entrance gate of the school campus will open at **7:30 am**. Students **WILL NOT** be permitted to be on school grounds before **7:30 am**. There will be teachers and/or campus monitors to supervise the school grounds between 7:30 am and 8:00 am. Students must behave safely on the school campus and respect their peers and supervising adults.

School hours for middle school students start at promptly 7:45 am. Middle school students arriving after 7:50 or later will need to go straight to the office and have a parent or guardian sign them in at the office for a tardy pass.

School hours for elementary students start at 8:00 am. The front gate will lock at exactly 8:05 am. At that point, the parent or guardian will need to sign the student in at the office for a tardy pass.

The end of the school day is 2:30 pm. Students will need to be picked up no later than 2:45 pm. The students participating in after school activities will need to be picked up no later than 3:45 pm unless otherwise indicated by the teacher in charge of the activity.

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES**

For the safety of our students, parents and all school personnel, the drop-off and pick-up guidelines must be followed.

### **Morning Drop-Off**

Parents or guardians may drop off their student at school using the driveway drop-off. The entrance for the driveway is on La Canada, slightly north of the school. The driveway will curve around to the front gate entrance of the school. The school office and front gate are the only permitted entrances for the students. The following are guidelines for the driveway drop-off:

- Parents should not get out of the car. If your child needs help getting out of the car (such as with backpacks, seatbelts or car seats), please pull out of the driveway line and park your vehicle in the parking lot.
- Do not leave your vehicle unattended in the driveway at any time.
- Your student is to exit the vehicle immediately after you pull up to the entrance. If for any reason your student is not ready to be dropped off, pull out of the driveway line and either go to the end of the drop off line of vehicles or park in the parking lot. This helps to keep the flow of vehicles moving and is courteous to the rest of the parents.
- Students are to exit the vehicle on the sidewalk side only. If there is anything keeping them from doing so (car seat, boxes, broken door, etc.), you will need to pull out of the line and park your vehicle in the parking lot.
- Follow the direction of the crosswalk monitor. There are students and parents walking on the crosswalk across the driveway also.
- Verbal abuse towards the crosswalk monitor will not be tolerated.

Parents or guardians may park their vehicle in a parking lot space and walk their student to the crosswalk. There will be a crosswalk monitor to direct the vehicles to stop so students and parents can cross the driveway safely. *Younger students and siblings should be accompanied at all times.* **Do not stop your vehicle in the middle of the parking lot to drop-off your student.** This not only jeopardizes the safety of parents and students but also creates traffic flow problems. Our concern and priority is the safety of everyone on campus, in our parking lots and driveway.

### **Dismissal Pick-Up**

Safety as well as efficiency can be accomplished by abiding the following guidelines for student dismissal. Please remember there are approximately 200 parents or guardians picking up their student at one time. We ask that everyone help with protecting our students.

Parents or guardians may pick up their student at school using our driveway pick-up or park their vehicle in the parking lot. School personnel will be at the crosswalk to call for your student when you arrive at school either way.

- Parents parking their vehicle in the parking lot will come to the crosswalk and wait for their student to be called.
- Parents are not to go to their child's classroom to pick them up. Teachers are part of the release procedure and need to give their attention to promptly sending students whose names are called out of the classroom.
- Parents, who choose to pick-up their student in the driveway, remain in your vehicle. If your child needs assistance to enter the vehicle (such as with backpacks, seatbelts or car seats), you must park in the parking lot.

If you need to visit the office to sign a student in as tardy or for any other reason, please park in the parking lot.

## **Early Dismissal**

Early dismissal time is at 11:30 am. Student must be picked up in the same manner on those days. There will not be a lunch period on early dismissal days.

## **Other – Dismissal**

Any student walking or riding his/her bike home will need to have a parent permission form on file **prior** to the actual day they walk or ride. Students who walk or bike ride home will be called as a group to meet at the ramada. School personnel will guide walkers and bike riders to the La Canada crosswalk. At the La Canada crosswalk, the walkers and riders will be led across the street by the crossing guard. Bike riders must walk his/her bike on campus and across La Canada. Bike riders must wear a helmet. All walkers and bikers must cross **ONLY** at the La Canada crosswalk. Walkers and bike riders must respect the crossing guard and fellow students.

## **PROCEDURE FOR ABANDONED STUDENTS**

All students remaining at school after 3:00 pm who are not enrolled in an afterschool program or afterschool activity will be sent to the office. If there is a half-day, all students remaining at school after 12:00 pm who are not enrolled in an afterschool program will be sent to the office. At this point, the office will begin attempts at contacting the parents. If the parents are unable to be reached or unable to pick up their student, all contact numbers and emergency numbers will be called. If all numbers have been exhausted, the police or Arizona Department of Child Safety **will** be contacted.

## **STUDENT RELEASE**

Students must remain on campus until the end of the last scheduled class and follow Dismissal Procedures. Any student found to be leaving campus will be subject to disciplinary consequences. No student will be removed from school grounds **or from any function during school hours**, except by the student's parents or legal guardians, or by a person who has legal authority to do so by the student's parent or legal guardian. Before releasing a student during the school day, the administration shall be responsible for the verification of the identity of the parent, legal guardian or authorized representative of the parent or legal guardian (e.g., a family member or family friend) seeking release of a student.

If any law enforcement personnel or other government agent (e.g., D.C.S.) requests the release of a student during school hours, school personnel shall require the production of the warrant, subpoena or legal document authorizing the student's removal from school and shall take reasonable steps to verify the identity of the law enforcement officer or government agent. School personnel may notify the parent(s) or guardian if permitted by the law enforcement officer or government agent of the intended relinquishment of the student or may, after inquiry by parent(s) or guardian and if permitted, explain to the parent(s) or guardian the nature of the relinquishment of custody by the school and the location of the student, if known.

## **STUDENT PICK-UP AND SIGN-OUT**

Any time a student is to be picked up from school prior to dismissal time, he or she must be signed out in the office **prior** to being released from class. In the case of field trips and special events, please see the teacher if the child will not be returning to school and you will be provided a form for the purpose of signing out the child. **Please note that attendance will be affected by an early departure.**

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance at school has been directly linked to academic success and creates positive attitudes toward responsibility that will carry over into adult life. Regular attendance by children of school age is also required by state law.

Our school is funded based on each student's daily attendance and absentee rate. In order for our school to receive the funds necessary to operate, it is critical to keep absences to a minimum.

Students are allowed only 8 (eight) **excused** absences in a given semester. Absences shall only be excused for necessary and important reasons. Any absence not verified by parental or administrative authorization will be classified as unexcused.

*AZ state law defines an absence as excessive when the number of days is more than 10% of the 180 days required in the school year.* Any student that is absent a combined total of **18 days** (consecutive or nonconsecutive, excused or unexcused) is deemed truant and excessive.

**A student having 3 tardies also equals one absence.** Absentee letters will be mailed to parents/guardians when their student reaches 5 days, 10 days, and 15 days of absences. *Any student with a Unexcused/Truant absence rate of 10% or greater may be considered for retention under the provisions of A.R.S. 15-843.*

**In the event of a necessary absence, parents/guardians are asked to notify the school office by telephone no later than 9:00 am on the day of the absence (if not before).** If the school is not notified by 9:00 am, the parent or guardians will be contacted through a telephone broadcast service. (Information regarding the telephone broadcast service, School Reach can be found on pages 12-13.)

**REMEMBER, THE FIRST HOUR IS THE “GOLDEN HOUR” FOR THE CHANCE TO LOCATE A CHILD WHO GOES MISSING. This is also a safety issue! It is extremely important that we know where your child is if that child does not appear in class within the first hour.** For absences greater than one day in length, parents should notify the school for each day of the absence. In addition, a written absence excuse from the parent or medical provider is required upon the student’s return to school. No makeup work will be given until the written excuse has been received.

Absences will be classified according to the following guidelines:

### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Absences will be excused if they are due to illness, medical or dental appointments, bereavement, family emergencies, or observance of major religious holidays of the family’s faith. **Other absences will only be excused if pre-arranged by prior written request and are subject to approval by the Director.** Pre-arranged absences will only be approved up to the limit of absent days allowed per semester.

**Please note: If you must make medical or dental appointments for your child during a school day, please make every effort not to schedule them mid-day. An absence of one hour in the middle of the day can cost the school half a day’s funding.**

### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

An absence with the prior approval by the parent but for a reason other than those defined as Excused Absences.

### **TRUANCY**

Unexcused absences may be deemed as truant. Truancy is a violation of state and local attendance laws and is considered a serious offense. Continuous truancy may result in legal action against the parents or guardians. The Arizona Compulsory Attendance Law makes it the legal responsibility of parents to have their children in school on a regular basis.

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

Students are expected to make up all work missed for any classification of absence. Students will be given the number of school days equal to the number of days absent to make up work, not to exceed a total of five school days. For example, a student who is absent two days will have until the beginning of the class period on the third school day after returning to have all make-up work completed and turned in to the teacher. Any work not turned in at that time will receive a grade of zero. Any tests that were announced prior to the absence will be taken on the day the student returns to school. Unannounced or unscheduled tests will be made up following the same procedure as for other make-up work. Students who miss school days will be invited to attend our after school tutorial program.

### **TARDY TO CLASS**

Students will be considered tardy to class if they are not in their scheduled classroom at the start of class. All tardy students are required to be signed in at the office before proceeding to class. When your student is tardy, it disrupts the class and others. The first few minutes of class are very important as it sets the tone for your student’s day. This responsibility will enable your child to have a positive and successful day.

Students’ who have been tardy 2 times in 1 week, will be subject to discipline consequences. Further tardy occurrences will result in additional disciplinary action.

## **PERFECT ATTENDANCE**

Students will receive a Perfect Attendance Award for each quarter in which they meet the following guidelines:

- No absences for the quarter
- No tardies or early departures greater than 15 minutes
- No more than 5 tardies and/or early departures of less than 15 minutes in any quarter

In addition to the quarterly award, any student having perfect attendance for all for quarters will receive a Yearly Perfect Attendance Award. Students with Perfect Attendance will be eligible for prize drawings quarterly and yearly courtesy of the Gecko Parents Association.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

Student grade progress and assignments can be monitored through PowerSchool anytime during the school year.

## **RETENTION/PROMOTION POLICY**

Great Expectations Academy teachers are required to inform administrative staff of students whom they determine should be considered for retention. Teachers are responsible for demonstrating evidence of the student's academic performance and evidence of interventions to remediate the students' skills. Parents of low performing students will be contacted early in the process to inform them of the immediacy of their child's academic standing and interventions.

It is Great Expectations Academy policy when a student is considered for retention that a team be convened to discuss the relative academic, social, and emotional strengths and weaknesses of the student to determine the most appropriate educational placement for the upcoming school year. The retention team includes the parents, the current teacher(s), and a member of the G.E.A. administration. The team may also include special education specialists, relevant school personnel (i.e. counselor, health professional, and/or next grade level teacher), the student, and individuals accompanying the family at the parents' request. Consideration for midyear promotion will be determined through a similar process.

As the primary caregivers, G.E.A. views parents as the experts when it comes to their children. As such the parents have a responsibility to help determine the most appropriate course of action. The teacher and the pertinent staff and administrators represent expertise in the identification of educational and developmental hallmarks. Whenever possible the team will strive for a consensus, with each expert sharing applicable information for making an informed choice for or against retention. When consensus cannot be reached then it is incumbent upon each teacher member to state whether he or she agrees with or disagrees with the ultimate determination and the reason or reasons why they are doing so.

Parents may appeal a retention decision by informing the school board in writing. The parents then hold the burden of proof that the student can demonstrate mastery of the applicable grade level state standards. The school board is responsible for making the final determination to overturn the decision of the teacher or teachers' retention team.

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Please notify the office **IMMEDIATELY** of any change of address or telephone number. If there is an emergency, the school needs to be able to contact the parents/guardians of the student.



## **ILLNESS AND INJURIES**

The School Aides CANNOT DIAGNOSE a student but can tell parents what they observe and determine if the student is well enough to remain in school. Parents/Guardians will be contacted for students who are too ill to remain at school to request the student to be picked up. If your student is sent home from school with a fever or vomiting, they will not be allowed to return to school the following day.

If your child shows signs of illness, do not send them to school. **Students who are ill with any communicable disease MUST BE FREE OF FEVER AND SYMPTOMS FOR 24 HOURS before returning to school.**

## **GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ILLNESS/INJURY AT SCHOOL**

The following are general guidelines that the school will use to determine if a student is too sick to stay in school.

- Fever 100.0 or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- “Pink” eye (with tearing or drainage)
- Pain that does not subside after 15 minutes rest
- Sore throat (with swelling and/or white spots)
- Multiple cold symptoms (runny nose, watering eyes, sore throat, persistent cough)
- Colored discharge from nose
- Flu symptoms (aching with fever)
- Head lice or nits (eggs). Students that have head lice and nits will not be allowed in school until all the head lice and/or nits are completely gone. When returning to school, the student will need to be examined by the Student Health Aide **before** being released to class.
- Rash or other undiagnosed skin condition that may potentially be contagious
- Other symptoms as determined by the School Health Aide that may interfere with the child’s ability to remain in school
- Any physical injury that would distract the students learning environment
- If a student experiences an extraordinary injury (head injury, face injury, etc.) the parents will be contacted to be asked for guidance as to what to do next, or a request will be made that the student be picked up from school. A suggestion may be made that a student be taken to the doctor for further evaluation.

## **ADMINISTERING MEDICATION TO STUDENTS**

Prescription medications are allowed on campus ONLY if there is a doctor’s prescription on file. **Students are NOT allowed to carry medication with them during the day.** ANY medication sent to school, whether prescription or non-prescription, must be in the original package and brought to the office by the parent. A “Request for Giving Medications” Form must be completed and on file before the medication will be given. **Any student for whom it is medically necessary to carry an inhaler must provide a statement to that effect from their physician.** Middle School Students and students who do not have such a physician’s statement will be required to keep their inhalers in the office medicine cabinet.

Only designated employees can administer medication to students. Unless authorized, no employee should give any type of over the counter medication including cough drops to a student. If a student needs some type of over the counter medication and the parent/guardian has signed permission for such, the Aide can administer at their own discretion.

## **IMMUNIZATION POLICY**

State law requires that all students have the required immunizations. A.R.S. 15-803 states that any student who has not provided an immunization history or received needed immunizations shall not be allowed to attend school. Parents will be notified if a child needs additional immunizations in order to attend school.

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY**

A student's dress or appearance shall not present health or safety problems or cause disruption to the learning environment.

### **Dresses**

- May not be sleeveless. Sundresses or spaghetti straps may be worn with a T-shirt underneath.
- Must be no shorter than the tips of the fingers when arms are down at sides.
- Shorts are required under dresses for students who use climbing equipment on playground.

### **Pants**

- No pajama pants unless given a pajama day.
- Must fit correctly at the waist.
- Must not expose the midriff.
- Any holes in pants must not be above the fingertip level.

### **Shirts**

- Must have sleeves (cap sleeves are fine).
- Must not expose the midriff (with arms up or down) and no plunging necklines.
- Must not have inappropriate logos or graphics.
- Undergarments must not be visible.

### **Shorts and Skirts**

- Must fit correctly at the waist.
- Must be no shorter than the tips of the fingers when arms are down at sides.
- Shorts are required under skirts for students who use climbing equipment on the playground.

### **Shoes**

- Must be worn at all times and must be appropriate for playground activities.
- No flip-flops; sandals must have a back-strap.
- Tennis shoes must be worn for P.E.
- Crocs must be in "sport mode" with backstrap over the heel.
- No slippers (not even on pajama day).

### **Hats**

- May not be worn inside.
- Must be worn correctly.

### **Accessories**

- Must meet safety requirements as determined by the Director.
- Belts, if worn, must be appropriate in size and worn through belt loops.
- Cosmetics are allowed only for middle school students, who may wear light makeup appropriate for school.

## **LUNCHTIME POLICIES**

Students are given 30 minutes for lunch. Students are expected to play in the designated playground area for the first 15 minutes before going to the lunchroom to eat for the remaining 15 minutes. Lunch monitors will be supervising the students during recess and lunch. Students will be required to provide their own lunch. (Elementary grades are also to bring a healthy snack daily for recess time.) Please send non-perishable food items (or include a cold pack) or foods that do not require heating, as we cannot provide refrigeration or a microwave for the student's lunch. **Please send utensils if needed.** Sodas are not allowed at school. **For health and safety reasons, students may not trade or share lunch items.** During lunch periods where there are strong winds, rain, or excessive heat, at the administration's discretion, students will eat in their classrooms.

- Students can raise his/her hand if help is needed to open something.
- Students will remain seated while they are eating.
- If a student needs to use the bathroom, two (2) students are allowed in the bathroom at one time.
- When students are finished eating, they must pick up and throw away any garbage. Recycling is encouraged.
- When students are finished eating, they must stay seated (with the exception of throwing away garbage); he/she may not walk around until the lunch period is over.
- A lunch monitor will give a whistle blow when students can go back to class.

## **ITEMS NOT ALLOWED ON SCHOOL CAMPUS**

**Students are not allowed to bring toys or other items that reflect violence.** This includes play guns, knives, handcuffs, etc. Student may not bring pocketknives to school.

Students are not to bring toys or collectable cards to school.

Students are not to bring sodas, lollipops with sticks, powdered candy, pixie sticks or gum for health and safety reasons. These items are also not allowed for class parties.

Electronic games, personal musical devices, or any items (electronic or not) which may cause a disruption to the learning environment are not allowed at school. The school **IS NOT** responsible for the loss or damage of any electronic device that is brought to school.

## **CELL PHONE POLICY**

**Cell phones or other communication devices are not allowed at school for students in Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grades.** If your student needs to carry a cell phone for safety or other reasons, a permission form must be filled out and signed by the parent/guardian and the student will be required to check the phone in and out of the office each day. The school **IS NOT** responsible for the loss or damage of any cell phone that is brought to school and not checked in/out of the school office.

Middle school students are allowed to bring a cell phone to school but it **MUST** remain turned off and in the student's backpack during the day. Any misuse of this policy, or disruption of class, will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Cell Phone Policy signed by students (elementary and middle school) and parents/guardians.

- |                          |                                                                                             |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> offense: | Confiscation until the end of the school day                                                |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> offense: | Confiscation and parent notification to pick up phone from office                           |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> offense: | Confiscation, parent notification to pick up phone, and revocation of cell phone permission |

## **FERPA NOTICE**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. Further information on FERPA is available in the school office for your review.

## **CHILD CUSTODY**

The definition of parent is found in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) implementing regulation under 34 CFR 99.3. *“Parent” means a parent of a student and includes a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a guardian.* If student lives with one custodial parent as the result of a divorce or lives with anyone else, i.e. grandparents, aunt, uncle, sibling, friends or other relatives; it is the custodial parents or guardian’s responsibility to provide the school with evidence of the court injunction, in writing, to show legal guardianship. If an adoption has taken place, it is reflected with an amended birth certificate, and student lives with adoptive parents as listed on the amended birth certificate, that is sufficient.

## **PLAYGROUND GUIDELINES**

- Students will show respect to all adults, other students, and all property. Students are expected to respect their environment and public property.
- Students will use appropriate language at all times and be considerate of others feelings. No mean or hurtful statements will be allowed (making fun of another persons’ name, appearance, abilities, etc.). No profanity or dirty language will be allowed.
- No games will be closed. Students are expected to let any student join into a game and share equipment. There may be times where the student will need to have a partner join with them to keep the teams even or perhaps a game that has been closed by a monitor or teacher because there is no space for more students to join.
- Students will keep their hands, feet, and objects to themselves. Fighting, hitting, pushing, tripping, tackling, shoving or play fighting is not allowed.
- Throwing sticks, rocks or other objects is prohibited.
- Students may not dig holes in the dirt/sand or rocks. Climbing on the big rocks or brick wall is not allowed.
- No eating in the playground area. Snacks or lunch may be eaten under the ramada unless directed elsewhere by a lunch monitor or teacher.
- Students must remain in designated playground areas unless directed by a teacher or monitor. If a ball goes over the fence, notify a teacher or monitor on the playground.
- Student must stay out of bushes and trees.
- Students are not allowed to play in the bathrooms. Only two (2) students are allowed in the bathrooms at a time.
- Contact sports are not allowed.
- Dodge ball is not a playground game students are allowed to play.
- Take turns. No one can “hold” a place for a friend. There are no “cuts”.
- No walking or running through other student’s games.
- Listen for the whistle. Follow directions of teachers or monitors immediately and with good manners.
- Students should pick up his/her belongings after recess when walking back to class.
- Put playground toys (basketballs, kickballs, etc.) away on your way back to class.
- During recess times where there are strong winds or rain, at the Administration’s discretion, students will stay in their classrooms.
- Students involved in serious physical altercations or defying monitors’ cues will be sent to the Principal’s Office.

## **CLIMBING EQUIPMENT / MONKEY BARS**

- No ‘chicken fighting’.
- Don’t touch or push anyone else.
- No jumping off of any climbing equipment; please climb down correctly.  
No sitting on top of the monkey bars.
- If there is more than one student crossing on the bars, a line must be formed.
- No tag on or around the equipment.

## **BULLYING, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, EXTORTION**

Great Expectations Academy strives to be an environment that will be absent of all threat. We create an atmosphere in and out of the classroom where thoughtful people work together and strive to make all students feel honored and important. Bullying, harassment, intimidation, and extortion will not be tolerated.

**Bullying** is not a mutual conflict, disagreement, or altercation between peers. In instances of bullying, there is a clearly defined victim and bully. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, physical intimidation, physical abuse, threats, name calling, social isolation, gossiping, and spreading rumors.

A student shall not verbally or physically harass any student, school employee or other person. **Harassment** includes making statements that may reasonably be perceived to be insulting, demeaning, intimidating and /or threatening or sexual in nature, to the recipient of the statement. **Intimidation** includes the use of threats, written, spoken, or physical, to express an intent to inflict fear or physical injury to another person. Threatening other students or extorting money or property from them is also prohibited.

Forms to report bullying are available in the front office. Students or employees making false reports of incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying will face disciplinary action.

School employees must report all incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying to the appropriate school official in writing. Employees who fail to report suspected incidents will face disciplinary action. Students who are victims of such acts are asked and encouraged to report it to teachers or someone in the office so that action can be taken. This is the only way to ensure that such acts may be dealt with properly.

Students who are physically harmed as the result of incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying, will be assessed by the health aid, if necessary, to determine if they require on campus or emergency medical services or counseling. Law enforcement may be called as well.

The school may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant reporter, students, or others pending completion of an investigation of bullying. Upon completion of the investigation, the school will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, or remediation. The school is not authorized to disclose to a victim private educational or personnel data regarding an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of the school. All staff will maintain confidentiality of the incident and all parties involved. An appeal of the investigation may be made to the Director or Governing Board of Great Expectations Academy in writing.

The school will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment.

The school will provide education and information to students and employees regarding bullying, including information regarding this school policy prohibiting bullying. The school will annually provide access to the policy in this handbook through the school website.

## **SELF-DEFENSE**

Students should keep their hands to themselves at all times. Fighting will not be tolerated at Great Expectations Academy. This includes hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, biting, etc. In a case where a student is being bothered, these are the steps for the student to follow. In an assertive voice, tell the offender "NO! LEAVE ME ALONE!" The next step would be to walk away

from the person who is bothering them. If it is absolutely necessary for protection, the student can push away from the offender with their open hands. The student will then need to go to an adult immediately to tell them about the problem.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Physical education classes are planned to teach students about physical fitness and athletic activities. In order to be successful, students must participate. If they are excused from participation in P.E., they are expected to sit outside with their class. **Please make sure your child wears tennis shoes, wears appropriate clothing, and has a water bottle on P.E. days.**

## **LIBRARY**

The Great Expectations Academy library is used to support the curriculum in the classrooms, to collaborate with staff to provide opportunities for students to become effective users of information, and, most importantly, to promote a lifelong love of reading. We encourage students to check out books from the school library on a regular basis and invite parents to check out books also.

It is a privilege to check out books from the library. Students are expected to handle books with care at school and home. Please try to keep books clean and dry and away from food, drinks, pets and younger children. We ask that you do not try to attempt to repair a book that is ripped or damaged. The library has special supplies for that. Thank you for your help in keeping our books well read and well taken care of!

**CHECKOUT:** Following is a list of how many book(s) each grade can check out during their library time.

Kindergarten – 1<sup>st</sup> Grades can check out 1(one) book for 1 (one) week

2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grades can check out 2 (two) books for 2 (two) weeks

**LOST/DAMAGED BOOKS:** If a student has a lost or damaged book, the student/parent/guardian will be responsible for replacing the book. The student/parent/guardian can either pay for the library book or replace it with a book in good condition of equal or greater value. If a student has damaged or lost a book from a classroom set, they will have to pay for the book. No book trade-in will be accepted, since the school will have to replace the book to keep the set intact.

The GEA library accepts donations of books throughout the school year. If you have any questions regarding donations, please contact the school office.

## **COMPUTER USE POLICY**

Computer hardware and software are for the benefit of all students. No student may purposefully tamper with either the hardware or the software so that it is inaccessible to other students. Computers are in the school for educational purposes. Abuse and/or misuse of computers including loading private software, checking personal or accessing other students email/accounts, viewing obscene or vulgar materials, profane statements or other inappropriate material, entertainment, games, listening to music, chat rooms, any social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, etc.) or anything not school related is prohibited. **It is not the responsibility of the school if a student chooses to violate the Computer Use Policy and disciplinary actions will be taken.**

### **Ethical Use of Computer Technology**

**User** – A user is defined as any staff person or student at Great Expectations Academy.

**Computing Systems** – Any computer or computer peripheral owned by Great Expectations Academy or used on the premises of Great Expectations Academy.

**Network** – Any networked systems on the premises of Great Expectations Academy or networks accessed via Great Expectations Academy computer.

### **User Responsibilities**

**Privacy** – Users are not permitted to intentionally seek information on or obtain copies of data or files belonging to another person unless authorized by that person.

**Passwords** – Users are not permitted to seek passwords or use passwords belonging to another person unless authorized by that person. Users must take precautions to secure access of their personal password from others. **Security** – Users are not permitted to attempt to infiltrate or knowingly infiltrate a computer system or network or alter the software components of a computing system or network or import files, which will jeopardize the security of the computing system or the network. Users are not permitted to load software on computers without permission of a teacher or administrator.

**Integrity** – Users are not permitted to use a computing system or network to threaten and/or harass others or develop software programs that harass other. Users are not permitted to use a computing system or network to gain access to pornography, obscenity or otherwise inappropriate data files or communicate pornography, obscenity or otherwise inappropriate data files. Users are to practice “safe” computing in keeping computers free of virus or other files dangerous to the integrity of the computer or network system. Users are not permitted to use a computing system or network in a destructive or malicious manner.

**Non-Instructional Use** – Users are not permitted to use a computing system or network for commercial or for-profit purposes, personal or private business, product advertisement, or political lobbying.

**Recreational Games** – Users are not permitted to use a computing system or network for recreational games unless expressly approved.

### **Computer Violation Consequences**

- Parents/guardians will be contacted
- Administrative disciplinary action can be taken
- You may have to pay for a computer technician to undo tampering
- Student may be banned from using a school computer for a prescribed time or the remainder of the year

### **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

To ensure the safety of students and staff, emergency drills will be conducted on a monthly basis. Students must proceed quickly and quietly to the designated exits and remain with their teacher until instructed to return to the building or follow teacher instruction for lockdowns.

In the event there is bad weather, and school is in session and early dismissal is necessary, parents will be contacted through our automated broadcast service.

### **EDUCATION FOR ARIZONA’S HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT**

The McKinney-Vento Act identifies homeless students as “Children who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence” due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason. This includes preschool age children, school age children, and youth living on their own (unaccompanied youth -not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian).

Children and youth on their own may qualify for assistance under the McKinney-Vento Act, if they or their family lives in any of the following situations:

- Temporarily sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.
- Living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to lack of adequate accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters, such as group homes, runaway shelters and domestic violence shelters.
- Awaiting foster care placement.
- Living in cars, parks, public places, abandoned buildings, or similar settings.
- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Living in housing that is substandard or inadequate.
- Students in homeless situations must have the opportunity to meet the same high academic achievement standards as all students. This is why it is so critical that homeless children and youth receive all the educational services for which they are eligible.
- Be given access to the same public education provided to other children, including preschool education.
- Continue in their school of origin or school of residence, *if feasible*.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.
- Receive transportation, *if feasible*, to the school of origin.
- Automatic enrollment in the National Free and Reduced Lunch Program.
- *Based on need*: Receive services including Head Start Programs, Title I, English Language Learner, and Special Education.

## **THE MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION ACT**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act is a federal law aimed at providing homeless children and youth with an equal opportunity to succeed in school. It was originally authorized in 1987 by the Reagan administration and reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The intent of the law is to break the cycle of poverty and to address the problems that homeless students face in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in schools. The McKinney-Vento law applies to all public and charter schools.

The major provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act are:

- Each school district must designate a liaison for homeless students.
- Homeless students can stay at their school of origin (the school they attended when they were permanently housed/last enrolled) or their school of residence the entire time they are homeless and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing.
- Schools must immediately enroll homeless children and youth regardless of missing documentation.
- Schools must provide homeless students transportation to and from their school of origin, if feasible.
- Homeless children and youth are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status.

Much is being done to help homeless children and youth maintain a stable educational environment and have a successful school experience.

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

There are times during the school year that students may be involved in activities in which there will be media coverage. Media includes, but is not limited to, school newsletters, videos, local and state newspapers, school and community publications, radio and television, teacher training, and the school website. A permission form for media release must be signed by the parents/guardians which is included in the Student Enrollment Package.

## **VIDEO SURVEILLANCE**

To promote the safety of Great Expectations Academy employees, students, volunteers and visitors, as well as the security of its facilities, Great Expectation Academy may conduct video surveillance of any portion of its premises at any time. Surveillance cameras may be installed in situations where the security of either property or people would be enhanced, including, but not limited to, inside and outside of buildings and on school buses. Surveillance cameras will not be used in locations where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, as defined by law.

Video and/or audio recordings may be used as evidence in any disciplinary action, administrative or criminal proceeding, and may become a part of a student's education record or an employee's personnel file. All recordings of illegal activities of employees, students or others will be forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement authority. Great Expectations Academy will comply with all requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prior to releasing any recordings to parents or guardians of students involved in disciplinary matters. Surveillance camera video recordings will be kept for a limited period, to be determined by record retention policy.

All secret tape or video recordings by employees or students at school, or at school sponsored events is strictly prohibited.

## **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

School Administrators have the authority to search a student or a student's personal property when reasonable suspicion exists that prohibited, illegal, stolen, or dangerous articles are contained on a student or in a student's personal property. School Administrators may seize any illegal or unauthorized articles discovered in the search. Unauthorized articles may be defined as any items unauthorized by the school. If illegal substances or objects are found in a search, law enforcement officers shall be notified.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Items which are found on school campus will be kept in the office Lost and Found. Any items not claimed by the end of each month will be donated to the White Elephant Shop, a local secondhand store. The Administration discourages the wearing of expensive jewelry and bringing any expensive item or toys to school. This includes large sums of money. The cost for any lost or stolen items will be the responsibility of the student/parent/guardian.



## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips will be scheduled by teachers at various times during the school year. Students must obtain written permission from their parents before they may participate in the field trips. Parents will be required to sign a liability waiver on all field trips and/or activities off school campus. All policies and regulations of the school are in effect while students are being transported and while attending the field trip activity off campus. Students who are being transported on the school bus must return to school on the school bus.

## **FIELD TRIP DRIVERS AND CHAPERONES**

As a chaperone of a field trip, a parent's primary responsibility is the supervision of the students in the class. **All Chaperones are required to have an Arizona State fingerprint card.** Chaperones will be required to sign a liability waiver on all field trips and/or activities off school campus. All policies and regulations of the school apply to chaperones. Bringing siblings, especially younger children, may prohibit parents/chaperones from giving their full attention to the Great Expectations Academy students. Therefore, **siblings are not allowed to attend field trips.**

## **FUNDRAISING**

Fundraising activities on school campus may only be conducted by students and/or parents with the prior authorization of the Administration. Community-wide or off-campus fund raising activities require the authorization of the Governing Board. In any situation, students are not allowed to solicit door to door without parental supervision.

## **RETURNED CHECK POLICY**

Our school truly appreciates the tremendous financial support that is given by our parents through fundraising and donations. At the same time, it is understood that occasionally parents/guardians run into circumstances that result in a returned check.

If a check written to the school for the purpose of school fees, fundraisers, donations, field trips, etc. and is returned unpaid by your bank for insufficient funds or any other reason, a written notification from the school will be mailed to you of the returned check. A \$20.00 return check fee will be charged for each returned check. The check writer will need to submit payment for the outstanding amount plus the return check fee either by cash, cashier's check or money order and mail to Great Expectations Academy, 1466 West Camino Antigua, Sahuarita, AZ 85629, to the Business Manager's attention. Great Expectations Academy reserves the right to refuse to accept personal checks from persons who have previously written bad checks.

**MANDATED REPORTERS:** All employees at Great Expectations are by law mandatory reporters concerning suspected child abuse and neglect. Any person who reasonably believes that a minor is or has been the victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense or neglect that appears to have been inflicted on the minor by other than accidental means or that is not explained by the available medical history as being accidental in nature, or who reasonably believes that there has been a denial or deprivation of necessary medical treatment or surgical care or nourishment with the intent to cause or allow the death of an infant who is protected under A.R.S §36-2281, shall immediately report or cause reports to be made of this information to a peace officer or to Child Protective Services in the Department of Economic Security, except if the report concerns a person who does not have care, custody or control of the minor, the report shall be made to a peace officer only. For more information about our Sexual Abuse Policy, please request a copy of the policy. To report any concerns, speak with the Principal or Director.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL**

When it becomes necessary for a student to withdraw from school, all books, equipment and other property of the school must be returned. The registrar will be responsible for seeing that the student receives a grade from their teacher and that all matters pertaining to the school are cleared prior to the school issuing a formal withdrawal report. Student records will not be mailed until all financial obligations have been settled and the parents have signed an official withdrawal slip.

Note: The Great Expectations Academy community (including, students, staff, families, and school board) is mandated to follow all local, state, and federal laws and regulations (which are applicable even if they are not mentioned in this handbook).

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

**REFERRAL TO DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE:** The Director, Principal or a Teacher may elect to refer discipline matters of a serious or continuing nature to the discipline committee. The committee may consist of a parent, a member of the Governing Board, a teacher, and the Director. This committee will meet with the student and the parents, with the student's teacher in attendance. A plan of action for behavioral modification will be drawn up, including what further steps will be taken if the plan is not successful in solving the problem.

**CONFISCATION:** The Director, Principal or Teacher may elect to confiscate items or contraband and not return them to the student.

**DETENTION:** The Director, Principal or Teacher may elect to offer detention as an alternative to, or in addition to other disciplinary action. Detention may include restriction from regular lunch time and / or recess activity. After school detention may be implemented with prior parental notification.

**DOCUMENTED PARENTAL CONFERENCE / NOTIFICATION:** The Director, Principal or Teacher may contact a parent or guardian by telephone, personal contact, letter or certified letter. A conference may be conducted between the student, parent, appropriate school personnel and any other individuals concerned.

**EMERGENCY SUSPENSION:** The Director/Principal may elect to immediately remove a student from school who poses a threat to himself or others.

**OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION:** The Director/Principal or Disciplinary Committee may elect to remove a student from school for a determined amount of time.

**LONG TERM SUSPENSION:** For suspensions longer than 10 days, notice must be sent no later than three school days following the imposition of a short-term suspension pending long term suspension. The formal long-term suspension hearing shall be held within ten school days of the date of the short-term suspension became effective. The hearing will be closed to the public (except for the student and his/her representatives and the school's hearing committee and representatives) and will follow due process guidelines. Decisions made regarding suspension length will be implemented. Students and parents have the right to appeal the decision.

**LONG TERM SUSPENSION APPEALS:** Students may appeal their disciplinary hearing decisions regarding long term suspensions (for longer than 10 days) to Great Expectations Academy's Governing Board. The basis for the appeal shall be specified in written notice of appeal (addressed to Great Expectations Academy Governing Board) within 5 days of suspension or expulsion event. The hearing will be closed to the general public and will follow due process guidelines.

**EXPULSION:** After completion of a formal long-term suspension hearing which results in a decision to suspend, the Director may submit a recommendation for expulsion to the school governing board. Expulsion Hearing information will be mailed to the guardian within 5 days of the initial suspension hearing. The Great Expectations Academy Governing Board will schedule the expulsion hearing so that it may be resolved during the long-term suspension, but not earlier than five (5) working days from the date that the written notice of the hearing is sent to the student and parent. The hearing will be closed to the general public and will follow due process guidelines. *Disciplinary issues involving weapons, serious verbal threats of violence, violent behavior towards student, staff or property, and inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature are among possible cause for dismissal. (see Arizona Revised Statutes §15-841(H) §15-841(G))*

**During hearing and appeals the student is entitled to:**

1. The right to representation by the parent or legal counsel.
2. The right of the parent to be present at all proceedings involving their child.
3. The right of the student, parent, or representative to reasonable access to non-privileged evidence and the student's records at least two days prior to the hearing. (This right may be exercised at any reasonable time during regular school hours after first making arrangements with the principal or designee)
4. The right to be free from any requirements to present evidence against himself or herself
5. The right to present favorable evidence and witnesses
6. The right to question adverse evidence and witnesses presented at the proceeding
7. The right to have the testimony presented preserved at the student's own expense
8. The right to have an interpreter present if one is necessary

See IDEA for additional guidance on Special Education procedural safeguards.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT NOTIFICATION:** The Director/Principal may need or be required to refer the offense to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

**REPRIMAND:** A school official may elect to talk to the student and try to reach an agreement regarding how the student should behave.

**RESTITUTION:** The Director/Principal may elect to have the student and / or his parents pay for the cost of repair or replacement of damaged, vandalized, stolen or borrowed property.

**SOCIAL DISCIPLINARY PROBATION:** Any student involved in a violation of the Discipline Policy of Great Expectations Academy may be placed on disciplinary probation in addition to or in place of suspension from school. The student on disciplinary probation may be denied attendance and or participation in extra-curricular activities. The student may be assigned to report to a specified staff member who will monitor the student during this probationary period.

**TEMPORARY EXCLUSION FROM CLASS:** If a student's conduct in class disrupts the educational process or if the student persists in willful misconduct, a teacher may exclude the student from class for a portion of the school day. In such cases, the teacher shall direct the student to report immediately to the designee. The teacher shall inform the student of the reason(s) for the exclusion and, if practical and if requested by the student, the teacher shall allow the student to explain his/her version of the events.

**BEHAVIOR PLAN:** If a student engages in repeated infractions, they may be placed on a discipline plan. The plan will include the problem behaviors, targets for corrected behavior and a timeline to review, update or forego the plan.

Depending on the nature of the violation, student discipline may be progressive. GEA will consider relevant factors in determining an appropriate consequence. The following consequences could be imposed alone or in combination: Verbal warning, written notification to parents, separation from other students, suspension of privileges, restitution, exclusion from a particular class, activity, or event, community service, suspension, or expulsion.

**The administration reserves the right to interpret how it will address the varied situations that may arise during the school year. Discipline measures are chosen on a case-by-case basis, as appropriate to the situation. The discipline decisions shall not be based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin, ancestry, or any other unlawful reason. \*A list of discipline categories of conduct and definitions of violations is available on the GEA website.**

