



## **2023-2024 GSA Parent and Student Handbook**

**Gateway STEM Academy**  
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# Gateway Stem Academy Vision

Educating the children of today to become the global innovators and leaders of tomorrow.

## GSA Mission

The mission of Gateway STEM Academy is to be a K-8 Charter school that prepares a diverse community of students for academic success by providing an enriching and focused learning environment in science, technology, engineering and math. Our goal is to emphasize the use of technology and STEM learning for our students and to maximize individual potential to ensure students reach academic and career success. We will provide a high-quality academic environment in a 21st century school setting which creates and improves student learning, closes the achievement gap and partners directly with students and their families.

## GSA Core Values

Be a Gateway STEM Academy **S.T.A.R.!**

**Self-control.** *We know that hard work makes anything possible.*

**Teamwork.** *We collaborate with fellow students to achieve excellence.*

**Accountability.** *We do what's right, just because it's right. We admit when we make a mistake and work to correct it.*

**Respect.** *We are kind and supportive of ourselves and others.*

August 1st, 2023

Dear Gateway STEM Academy Parents,

Welcome to the Gateway STEM Academy family in beautiful Burnsville, MN! We are delighted to have you and your child join our dynamic community where we foster a culture of excellence, innovation, and cultural responsiveness.

Gateway STEM Academy is more than just a school; it is a place where students' curiosity is ignited, their potential is unlocked, and their cultural backgrounds are embraced. We understand the importance of equipping our students with the skills they need to thrive in a rapidly evolving world, which is why we have integrated STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) into our curriculum.

STEM education serves as the cornerstone of our approach to learning, as it empowers students to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and innovators. Through hands-on experiences, project-based learning, and collaborative activities, we aim to cultivate a deep passion for exploration and discovery within each student. By integrating STEM principles into our teaching practices, we prepare our students to succeed in a world that is increasingly driven by science, technology, and innovation.

But our commitment to excellence goes beyond STEM. At Gateway STEM Academy, we also place great importance on being culturally responsive. We recognize that our students come from diverse backgrounds, and we believe that embracing and celebrating this diversity enriches our educational community.

We value and respect each student's cultural heritage, and we actively incorporate diverse perspectives into our curriculum. By weaving cultural themes and experiences into our lessons, we create an inclusive learning environment that fosters mutual understanding, empathy, and respect. We want every student to feel seen, heard, and valued for who they are, as we believe that cultural responsiveness is the key to nurturing well-rounded individuals who are globally aware and appreciative of diversity.

We strongly encourage parent involvement in our STEM and cultural initiatives. Your partnership is invaluable in creating a holistic educational experience for your child. We invite you to join us for STEM-themed family events, cultural celebrations, and interactive workshops that showcase the incredible talents and achievements of our students. Together, we can inspire and support our young learners on their educational journey.

As parents and guardians, your insights and perspectives are vital to our success. We have an open-door policy and encourage you to actively engage with our dedicated faculty and staff. Your ideas, questions, and concerns are welcomed and valued, as we believe that collaborative partnerships between home and school are essential for student success.

Once again, welcome to Gateway STEM Academy! We are excited to embark on this transformative educational journey with you and your child. Together, let us cultivate a love for STEM, celebrate cultural diversity, and empower our students to become leaders and change-makers in our ever-evolving world.

Warm regards,

Ed Fellows

Gateway STEM Academy Executive Director

**Teachers, Administrators, and Staff:** We fully commit to Gateway STEM Academy in the following ways:

- We will arrive at Gateway STEM Academy each day at the time determined by our school leader and stay until the end of the work day, ensuring before we leave that our classrooms and lessons are prepared for our students' success on the following day.
- We will work harder and longer than others because we will do whatever it takes for our students to achieve excellence.
- We will dress professionally at all times in order to convey a seriousness of purpose and to create a learning environment characterized by maturity.
- We will make ourselves available to students and parents by phone, email, writing, and in person, and we will respond respectfully to any concerns they have.
- We will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom.
- We will prepare engaging and rigorous lessons with meaningful homework assignments and frequent assessments.
- We will use data from assessments and assignments to make sure every student succeeds.
- We will fulfill all of our school-wide obligations — including upholding hallway expectations and performing necessary coverage duties — in order to foster a cohesive, unified team dynamic.
- We will provide individual and small group tutoring to ensure our students succeed.

**Students:** I fully commit to Gateway STEM Academy in the following ways:

- I will arrive to school each day, dressed appropriately, on time, and ready to learn.
- I will wear school appropriate clothing to create a sense of unity, professionalism, and discipline at my school.
- I will remain at school until dismissal.
- I will complete my homework every evening and to the best of my ability.
- I will attend required tutoring sessions as assigned and as necessary.
- I will share reports of my academic and behavioral progress with my family whenever I am asked.
- I will abide by the rules contained in this GSA Handbook.
- I will ask appropriately for clarification if I am confused about why something is important. I will remember that my teachers and my school want what is best for
- I will use discipline and be a STAR student to complete my homework, prepare for assessments, and arrive at school on time.
- I will engage in TEAMWORK with my peers and teachers to solve problems.

- I will show ACCOUNTABILITY by admitting when I have made a mistake and by not blaming other people for my actions.
- I will act with RESPECT towards my peers, my teachers, all community members, and all school property.
- I will not use a cellphone while at school.

*I am responsible for my own behavior and I will follow my teachers' directions while being a STAR student*

**Families:** We fully commit to Gateway STEM Academy in the following ways:

- Our family will ensure our student arrives at school on time or before the start of the scheduled school day Monday through Friday.
- We will pick our students up on time each day.
- We will make arrangements so that our child can remain at Gateway STEM Academy until he or she is dismissed.
- We will make arrangements so that our child can attend any and all required after school activities and provide documentation when necessary family affairs conflict with detention or school events.
- We will check homework and behavior logs nightly and always support our child to learn in the best way we know how. We will reach out to the school if we need help meeting this expectation.
- We will review all communication from the school and the teachers, check and assist with homework and review planners nightly, allow our children to call his or her teachers for help when necessary, and make sure that they read every night.
- We will call our child's teachers when we have a concern about our child's academic or behavioral performance or progress.
- We will make ourselves available to the school, attend as many school events as we are able, and be in close contact with our child's teachers.
- We will volunteer and contribute to and support the school in every way possible.
- We will provide the school with our most up-to-date contact information.
- We will allow our child to participate in field trips if he or she has earned them.
- We will ensure our child understands and follows the school's attendance, tardiness, and dress code policies.
- We will do whatever it takes if our student is struggling socially, emotionally, or academically, including, but not limited to, sitting in our child's classroom, picking up our child in an emergency, and getting outside medical care or evaluations.
- We will support Gateway STEM Academy in enforcing the school rules so as to protect the safety, interest, and rights of all individuals in the classroom. We, not the school, are responsible for the behavior and actions of our child.

*By working with Gateway STEM Academy, we are building a partnership that prepares my child for success in academics and citizenship.*

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

Arriving at school on time and dismissing from school when the day is complete are crucial to laying the foundation for academic success. Being on time also communicates important values. We expect all of our students to prioritize punctuality and adopt the belief that participating in the entire school day shows accountability, discipline, and respect. Students are always expected to arrive on time for school and for school events. A student will receive an appropriate consequence each time he or she is tardy. Repeated infractions will result in further consequences.

### **ARRIVAL DISMISSAL**

Instruction begins at **8:45 am**

Dismissal begins at **3:30 pm**

*Please note that students arriving after 8:45 am will be marked late and will not have time to eat a full breakfast.*

## **Daily Schedule**

Students will be having instruction throughout the day in the areas of reading, math, writing, science, and social studies. Each student will also be given 25 minutes for lunch and up to 15 minutes for recess in grades K-5. Please meet with your child's teachers to discuss the daily schedule.

## **Transportation**

Gateway STEM Academy will help to ensure safe transportation as per state and/or city regulations. All requests or concerns regarding transportation must be submitted in writing to our Director of Operations.

### **DROP-OFF at Gateway STEM Academy:**

Doors open for students at 8:00 a.m. After 8:45 a.m., students will be considered late.

Do not leave your child unattended outside the school prior to 8:30 a.m.

### **PICK-UP at Gateway STEM Academy:**

Regular dismissal is at 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please arrive early so that students are dismissed on time, allowing teachers an opportunity to prepare for the next school day. All escorts picking up students must be on the approved escort list provided by the family prior to the school year, and ID will be checked the first time any escort picks up a student. If you are picking up a student who is not yours, please make sure you are authorized to pick up that student. Siblings of students must be in at least the fourth grade to pick up siblings in grades K-2.

### **BUS PICK-UP**

Parents must arrange for any child riding the bus to be picked up promptly at the stop. Parents who fail to pick up their child from the bus stop are putting their child in danger. Failure by a family to pick up



their child at the bus stop will be considered neglect and will, after collaborative attempts to resolve the issue, result in the notification of appropriate authorities.

### **CHANGES TO STUDENT TRANSPORTATION**

Please contact the school *at least one hour prior to dismissal* if you have made changes to your student's transportation. The Receptionist will communicate any transportation changes to classroom teachers.

### **School Closings**

Gateway STEM Academy generally follows the same calendar for weather-related emergencies as the Burnsville School District 191. Families should plan to check local television and radio stations for up to date information.

### **Food and Meals**

Gateway STEM Academy participates in the National School Lunch Program, which provides free or reduced-price lunches to eligible students. Applications and eligibility criteria are provided to all parents, and applications are required to be completed by all families every year. A healthy breakfast and snack is available each day for GSA students. Students must adhere to the school rules regarding appropriate time and place to eat any food items not provided by the school. Lunch is available for students five days a week. Lunch menus and pricing will be sent home in the student's Communication Folder and also posted on the school website. Students whose families meet the eligibility requirements and complete the requisite paperwork will receive free or reduced price lunch.

*Parents are responsible for informing the school of any allergies that their scholars may have prior to the school year*

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Attendance is vital for the educational well-being of individual students and the school community. Parents and guardians are expected to ensure that their child attends school every day and are strongly discouraged from scheduling appointments for their children during the school hours. **If your child must be absent due to illness or an emergency, please contact the school with as much advance notice as possible, and no later than 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence.** Arrangements should be made to pick up homework. In order for the absence to be verified, you must both afford the school as much advance notice as possible and also provide documentation within five (5) days of the absence explaining the nature of the sickness or emergency (e.g. a doctor's note or a detailed letter including the date(s) and reason for the absence). Undocumented absences are never acceptable. Excessive undocumented absences in a year may lead to retention or a referral as a habitual truant. A record of all absences and absence notes will be maintained by the school and consulted if retention becomes a possibility. Excessive absences, even when documented and verified, will result in parents and guardians being asked to meet with school officials.

## **Attendance – Tardiness and Early Dismissal**

Arriving at school on time and remaining for the full school day are key to each student's success — at school and in life. At Gateway STEM Academy, learning begins the moment students walk in the door and continues to dismissal. Students who are late or leave before the close of the school day miss essential instruction, disrupt the learning of other students, and risk falling behind on our curriculum.

### **Definition of Tardiness**

Our doors open at 8:35 a.m. each morning. Students must arrive between 8:35 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. Students arriving after 8:45 a.m. are considered tardy. In cases when a school bus arrives late, those students riding the bus are not considered tardy.

### **Educational Neglect**

Habitual absence significantly harms a student's educational progress. Gateway STEM Academy is required to file a report with the Minnesota Department of Education when a parent or guardian fails to ensure his or her student's prompt and regular attendance in school or keeps a student out of school for impermissible reasons to the detriment of the student's education. Gateway STEM Academy reserves the right to notify the appropriate authorities about parents who exhibit a pattern of leaving their student at school after dismissal.

### **Dress Code**

A dress code helps create a sense of unity, professionalism, and discipline for the students and for the school. All Gateway STEM Academy students must come to school every day wearing school appropriate clothes. The Gateway STEM Academy expectations for school appropriate clothes always includes sleeved shirts, appropriate length pants/shorts and socks/shoes. Glasses must be worn by students who need glasses. Jewelry is limited to simple earrings and watches. Necklaces must be worn underneath the shirt. We strongly advise not having fake fingernails or colored nail polish, and reserve the right to not allow students to enter class if such items cause a distraction to learning.

In the case that an "bathroom accident" occurs for our youngest students, we strongly recommend families keep a spare pair of clean pants and underwear in the child's book bag. The school does not have clothing that can be borrowed by students.

### **Gateway STEM Academy Dress Code**

1. Sleeved shirts and blouses (short- or long-sleeved)—shirt neatly
2. Appropriate length pants, shorts, skirt, or dress
3. All hair styling and coloring must not be distracting to the learning environment
4. No excessive jewelry,

## **Student Supplies**

Gateway STEM Academy makes every effort to equip students with the supplies they need for the start of the year. A suggested school supply list for each grade level is posted on the website and copies are available at the school. In order to prepare students to complete nightly homework, **families should provide a non-distracting place to study and have the following supplies at home:**

- Paper
- Pencils
- Pencil sharpener
- Eraser
- Ruler
- Crayons, and colored pencils
- Highlight
- Glue sticks
- Scissors

Students may be asked to replace any supplies that become worn down or depleted throughout the year. Students must also maintain their binders, folders and other organizational supplies with high standards of neatness and cleanliness. Gateway STEM Academy expects its students to show respect for their belongings, whether they were purchased by their family or by the school.

Students must be prepared each day with the required supplies including homework and handouts, appropriate writing utensils, and independent reading books. Failure to be prepared with materials will result in appropriate consequences.

## **Emergency Evacuation and Drills**

Gateway STEM Academy will practice emergency evacuation and response drills on a regular basis and will work to maintain and update our emergency response plan on an annual basis. This will include response to threats of fire, tornado, bomb, and intruder.

## **What is a STEM School**

STEM Education is an approach to teaching and lifelong learning that emphasizes the natural interconnectedness of the four separate STEM disciplines. The common element of problem solving is emphasized across all STEM disciplines allowing students to *discover, explore, and apply* critical thinking skills as they learn.

The key features of STEM Education are:

- Real-world applications
- Problem solving and critical thinking
- Integration of content

**What does STEM look like at different stages of learning?** *Early Learning* Exploration of the natural world using all five senses, being curious and asking questions, being comfortable using “math” to understand and compare (number sense, counting, matching shapes, making patterns).

*Elementary and Middle School STEM* Exploring real-world problems with hands-on activities: identify a real-world problem that students can relate to, ask questions, research possible solutions, design or engineer a solution, collect data to test and compare solutions, make connections to careers that explore the topic.

### **A Great STEM Lesson will:**

- Focus on real-world issues
- Apply rigorous math and science
- Immerse students in hands-on, open-ended exploration guided by the engineering design process
- Allow multiple “right” answers
- Involve students in productive teamwork

## **Student Expectations and Rights**

### **Personal Belongings**

Gateway STEM Academy is a rigorous instructional setting. Therefore, personal belongings that distract from the safe, respectful, and fast-paced instructional environment are not permitted. Examples of items not allowed in Gateway STEM Academy include:

- gum, candy, chips, or soda of any kind;
- permanent markers of any kind;
- real, toy, or model weapons including pocket knives, water guns;
- excessive amounts of cash;
- any illegal substance;
- toys including stuffed animals, dolls, fidget spinners or other toys **not** necessary for school work;
- materials (e.g. songs, papers, lyrics, art, or notes) that contain inappropriate or offensive language, images or suggestions; and
- fireworks, sparklers, poppers, snappers, fountains, bottle rockets, and any other explosive devices.

Any of the items in the list above may be confiscated at the discretion of the school administration and not returned until a parent or guardian meets with the school leadership.

**Note:** Cell phones, portable gaming systems, smartwatches, and other non-instructional electronic devices must be turned off and put away before entering the school property, unless explicit permission has been given by the school leader. Any electronic equipment used without permission may be confiscated.

Students may bring cellphones to school for safety reasons, but phones may never be turned on or used in the school building without explicit permission and supervision from a GSA staff member. Failure to comply with this expectation may result in confiscation or another consequence. Cell phones are not permitted on field trips. School staff are not responsible for the damage and loss of any electronic devices that have not been confiscated by a school administrator.

### **Student-Family Contact During the Day**

Except in the case of an emergency, students will not be able to receive messages from parents or to transmit messages to parents during the school day. Students will only be given permission to use the school phone in cases of emergency or at the school's discretion.

### **Search of Student Belongings**

Gateway STEM Academy must maintain a safe and orderly environment for all our students and staff. In order to do so, the school reserves the right to search any and all persons or belongings on school property

for illicit material. Such searches can be either random or with reasonable suspicion and may include a student's person, backpack pockets, lockers, cell phones, other belongings, etc.

### **Book Borrowing at Gateway STEM Academy**

Gateway STEM Academy is extremely proud of how much our students love books. We are also proud of our book collections. In order for the collections to be maintained, they must be respected. Students must be accountable for any books they have borrowed and must return them in a timely manner and in the same condition as when borrowed. Damage to books may result in loss of book borrowing privileges, financial responsibility for the book, or community service.

### **Computer/Internet/Email Acceptable Use Policy**

This policy outlines guidelines for responsible use of Gateway STEM Academy's Information Technology, and is designed to protect Gateway STEM Academy's information and students from the possible consequences of inappropriate use of Gateway STEM Academy's Information Technology. The term "Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology" as used herein includes, but is not limited to, Gateway STEM Academy computers (desktop and laptop), networks (wired and wireless), telecommunications devices (fixed and wireless), facsimile machines, photocopiers, printers, software, storage media (disks, CDs, USB drives), and other technologies that may be provided to Users by the Gateway STEM Academy for use in the course of Gateway STEM Academy business. The guidelines provided in this policy apply to all Gateway STEM Academy employees, or any other persons who are provided with access to Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology in the course of providing services of any kind to Gateway STEM Academy ("Users").

Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology provides critical support to Gateway STEM Academy and its students in the achievement of the Gateway STEM Academy's mission, and all Users of Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology are expected to use it responsibly and in compliance with Gateway STEM Academy policies and applicable law.

### **Privacy and Monitoring**

Users should have no expectation of privacy while using Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology. All communications sent, received, transmitted or stored on Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology are the property of Gateway STEM Academy. In order to implement the Gateway STEM Academy information security program effectively and enforce Gateway STEM Academy policies, Gateway STEM Academy must have the ability to monitor the use of Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology. Gateway STEM Academy may monitor any activity on Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology and Users should use Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology accordingly. Authorized Gateway STEM Academy staff may disclose, monitor, access, review, copy, store, move, edit, delete, or otherwise manipulate any electronic information residing on Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology as is necessary to allow for the proper functioning

of Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology, compliance with Gateway STEM Academy policies and applicable law, or for any other appropriate purpose.

### ***Prohibited Activity***

Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology shall not be used to engage in illegal, threatening, discriminatory, defamatory, slanderous, obscene, or harassing activity, including cyberbullying. “Cyberbullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted by the use of any electronic device, including, but not limited to, a computer, telephone, cellular telephone, text messaging device and personal digital assistant. Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology may not be used to solicit for any reason, or for sending mass emails (“spamming”).

### ***Intellectual Property and Licensing***

Users of Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology must not infringe on intellectual property rights, copyrights, trademarks, or other licensing restrictions. Users must not illegally copy software, data, or other information without the express permission of its owner. Users who have questions about the licensing arrangement for any Democracy Pre Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology should direct questions to the Information Technology department.

### ***Software Installation***

Only software approved by Gateway STEM Academy may be installed on Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology. Users who wish to have software installed on Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology should direct requests to the Information Technology department and should not install any software on Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology without express permission. Malicious Code and Viruses Users may not knowingly create, execute, forward, or introduce any malicious computer code (e.g., viruses, Trojans, worms) into Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology. Gateway STEM Academy provides software tools that are designed to assist in the protection of Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology from malicious code, but Users still must be alert and take appropriate steps to limit the risk of malicious code attacks. Users may not disable any anti-virus or any other security software. If a User suspects a malicious code attack, he or she should contact the Information Technology team immediately.

### ***Use of E-mail and Instant Messaging***

Technology and Electronic Communications Electronic communications such as e-mail and instant messages (collectively, “Electronic Messaging”) must be treated carefully. These electronic messages can be misdirected or misinterpreted causing damage to Gateway STEM Academy, its employees, students, and others. Gateway STEM Academy e-mail and instant messaging technology do not provide

data privacy while in transit over other, non- Gateway STEM Academy networks. Users are not to use Electronic Messaging, other than those that are internal to Gateway STEM Academy, to send or receive sensitive information that requires privacy protections. Users should consider the following guidance when using Electronic Messaging:

- demonstrate the same respect when using Electronic Messaging as you use communicating verbally or in a more formal written document such as a memorandum or letter;
- do not forward chain or “spam” messages;
- keep personal messages to a minimum, and be mindful of the fact that even personal messages from Gateway STEM Academy accounts may be viewed as statements authorized or made by or on behalf of Gateway STEM Academy, particularly when Gateway STEM Academy’s name or a User’s title appears in the message’s return address or in its closing; and
- do not send hateful, angry, or otherwise inappropriate messages.

### ***Protection of Credentials***

Users should exercise their best efforts to protect their Gateway STEM Academy passwords from disclosure and prevent unauthorized access to Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology. Accounts and passwords are for individual use only.

### ***Enforcement***

Appropriate action may be taken against a User if it is found that the User violated this policy. Discipline may range in severity as provided elsewhere in this Student & Family Handbook. Further, if appropriate, a User’s privileges regarding and access to Gateway STEM Academy Information Technology may be revoked or limited without notice at the sole discretion of Gateway STEM Academy.

## **Internet Content Filtering Policy**

### ***Undesirable Materials***

Gateway STEM Academy will take all possible precautions to restrict access to undesirable materials including, but not limited to, installing content filtering software/hardware solutions on its network or using an Internet provider that uses content filtering software on its equipment to screen all Internet websites by URL and/or by keyword search. However, students must also accept responsibility for restricting their own access to these materials. Students who gain access to undesirable Internet materials must report these materials to their teacher immediately.

### ***Security***

Students must not allow others to use their network accounts. Designated school officials may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect files stored on school servers to be private. Gateway STEM Academy has the right, but not the duty, to inspect, review, or retain electronic communication created, sent, displayed,



received or stored on and over Gateway STEM Academy's Computer Information Systems (CIS) and to monitor, record, check, track, log, access or otherwise inspect its CIS. Passwords and message delete functions do not restrict Gateway STEM Academy's ability or right to access such communications or information. Gateway STEM Academy further reserves the right to allocate file server space as it deems appropriate.

STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE NO EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY IN ANYTHING THEY CREATE, STORE, SEND, RECEIVE, OR DISPLAY ON OR OVER GATEWAY STEM ACADEMY'S CIS, INCLUDING THEIR PERSONAL FILES OR ANY OF THEIR USE OF THESE SYSTEMS, OR WHILE PRESENT ON GATEWAY STEM ACADEMY GROUNDS.

Gateway STEM Academy reserves the right to access, view, record, check, receive, monitor, track, log, store, and otherwise inspect and utilize any or all Gateway STEM Academy CIS, and to monitor and allocate filespace. Users of Gateway STEM Academy's CIS who transmit or receive communications and information shall be deemed to have consented to having the content of any such communications accessed, viewed, recorded, checked, received, monitored, tracked, logged, stored, and otherwise inspected or utilized by Gateway STEM Academy.

### *Email*

Only school-approved email will be allowed on school premises. Students must receive explicit permission from their teacher to engage in any other email activity.

### *Downloading*

Downloading from the Internet without approval from a member of the GSA staff is not allowed.

## **Social Media Policy**

When used inappropriately, social media can transform from a powerful educational tool that allows students to connect, communicate, and access a wealth of informational resources into the source of serious long-term consequences. College admissions officers and prospective employers will not hesitate to use any social media missteps — even those made when a student is quite young — when considering an individual's candidacy for admission or employment. For Gateway STEM Academy students to succeed in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship in a hypercompetitive environment, it is imperative that they maintain digital footprints as impressive as their academic records of achievement.

In recognition of both the educational purpose that social media can serve and the necessity of certain restrictions, this policy is designed to foster the responsible and appropriate use of social media at Gateway STEM Academy. GSA defines "social media" as "any method of communication in cyberspace." For the purposes of this policy, this includes, but is not limited to, any website, program or application that involves Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, and the sharing or posting of

photographs, pictures or videos and the rating or tagging of the same. This includes, but is certainly not limited to, the following examples: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Wikipedia, Skype, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo, Bebo, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Musical.ly and other platforms not explicitly listed or yet to be invented.

This social media policy applies any time students are on school grounds, using school property, under the supervision of school authority, or using social media anywhere in a manner that endangers a student's or staff member's physical or emotional safety, security, or well-being and materially and substantially interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school. Such activity may include, but is not limited to, threats, ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, drug or alcohol related content, content of a sexual nature, and content involving violence. Students are responsible for their own behavior when communicating with social media and will be held accountable for the content of the communications that they transmit or post. Students may not disrupt the school's learning atmosphere, educational programs, or activities, and may not violate the rights of others. What would be considered inappropriate in the school or classroom is inappropriate online. This policy does not apply to a student's private use of social media that in no way involves or impacts upon Gateway STEM Academy, staff, or other students, though Gateway STEM Academy strongly encourages all students to make intelligent and safe choices when using social media.

Gateway STEM Academy expressly reserves the right both to monitor student use of social media while present on Gateway STEM Academy grounds, regardless of whether such use is done using Gateway STEM Academy resources or the students own personal resources, and to monitor and inspect any device brought onto school grounds for compliance with this policy.

Social media may only be used with the explicit permission of a GSA staff member and for educationally related purposes while on Gateway STEM Academy grounds. Social media is not to be used, at any time when on school grounds or when participating in a school activity, to fraternize with any other individual or to communicate non-educational messages or information. In accordance with Gateway STEM Academy's Code of Conduct, students are prohibited from posting or publishing any insensitive or inappropriate information or content on any social media and from viewing any insensitive or inappropriate social media content. Should a student at any time post, publish, or view such social media content, he or she must notify a teacher or administrator immediately. Immediately reporting the posting, publishing or viewing of such inappropriate content will be given significant weight in considering the level of discipline issued.

Students are prohibited from communicating with teachers, administrators, staff members, or contracted school workers via social media. The only permissible electronic method of email communication with a Gateway STEM Academy employee or contractor is through emailing the teacher or administrator at their Gateway STEM Academy email account.

Students are prohibited from impersonating or assuming the identity of any other individual while using social media. Students are prohibited from posting or publishing any information about themselves or another individual that is confidential or of a private nature. This includes posting information such as last names, school names, addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, other contact information, or any other information a scholar might reasonably expect another individual to want to keep private.

Students are prohibited from using any device capable of capturing video, pictures, or audio to record or take pictures of any other individual without their express consent and permission. Students are not allowed to “tag” an individual in a picture or recording without their express consent and permission. Students must immediately comply with any request that infringing materials be removed from any social media platform.

The use of social media is a privilege, not a right, and the violation of any provision of this policy will result in the restriction of a student's social media access at Gateway STEM Academy and/or the imposition of additional appropriate consequences, and in some cases, subject to state and/or federal law.

Students should always be mindful of the fact that material posted or published online will be public for a very long time and may perhaps become a permanent part of their record. Students should be sensitive to others, should avoid posting or publishing anything distasteful, and should not post or publish anything they would not be willing to say to an individual in person.

## **Education Records**

Federal and state laws provide parents or guardians and eligible scholars (those who are age 18 or older) with rights of confidentiality, access, and amendment relating to their education records. Copies of the regulations detailing these rights are available from the school. The following is a general overview:

*Review and Amendment:* A parent or eligible student has the right to inspect and review his or her own educational records and to seek amendment if the parent or eligible student believes them to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.

*Confidentiality:* Confidential Records include grades, evaluations, disciplinary actions, and health records. Release of student records generally requires written consent of the parent or eligible student. However, the regulations provide certain exceptions. For example, staff members and employees of the district have access to records as needed to perform their duties. Student records will also be sent to schools as required by Minnesota law and regulation. *Please note that at Gateway STEM Academy student work and results are prominently displayed in classrooms and in the community as part of our educational program.*

## **BUS RULES and DISCIPLINE**

### *General Bus Rules*

1. Obey the bus driver at all times.
2. Do not approach the bus until the bus has come to a complete stop.
3. Be courteous and respectful to others in both words and actions.
4. Do not distract drivers with noise, actions, or behaviors.
5. Remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion.
6. Keep bus aisles free from obstructions.
7. Possession of illegal and unlawful substances and objects, and other substances and objects forbidden by school rules are forbidden on the bus.
8. Respect the property of others.
9. Remain silent at the railroad crossings.
10. No food or drink of any kind may be consumed while on the bus without authorization.
11. The use of electronic devices is restricted at the request of authorized parties.

### **General Bus Discipline**

Based on the severity of an infraction relating to bus rules, students may lose the privilege to ride the bus, including the expulsion of a student's right to ride the bus. The school has the right and authority to further extend consequences to the school, extracurricular, and co- curricular settings.

## Attendance

Students must be in attendance in order to achieve academic success. To that end, GSA has strict policies regarding absences, late arrivals and early dismissals for appointments. Gateway STEM Academy strongly encourages all doctors' appointments to be scheduled outside of school hours, as every late arrival, early dismissal, and absence will have a detrimental effect on a student's academic progress. If a student has a doctor's appointment for which he or she must leave the school early, the parent or guardian must notify the school with as much advance notice as possible (no less than 24 hours) and provide proper and adequate documentation to the school upon the student's return.

Students may not miss a full day of school for a doctor's appointment. **In the event that a doctor's appointment cannot be scheduled after school or on an early dismissal day, students must come to school prior to and following all appointments.** Excessive absences will be considered a violation of the Commitment to Excellence.

## Medication While at School

Without written approval from the licensed healthcare practitioner and parental consent on the Medication Administration form, students are not permitted to self-administer medication. Parents must ensure that all medications are transferred into the custody of either the school nurse or a trained school employee along with an Authorization to Dispense Medication form. If a student requires medication of any kind, including both prescription and over-the-counter medication (such as, but not limited to: asthma inhalers, prescription drugs, insulin, Sudafed, Benadryl and generic equivalents, Tylenol and generic equivalents, Advil and generic equivalents, aspirin, stomach remedies):

- Parents must submit a Medication Administration form including authorization from a licensed healthcare practitioner.
- Prescription medications must be given to the nurse or to a trained school employee by a parent or responsible person in the original container with the prescription label.
- Over-the-counter medications must be given in the original sealed container or box. The school cannot accept partially used or opened over-the-counter medications.

(Over the-counter medications can have adverse effects and are therefore subject to the same restrictions as prescription medications.)

If school personnel find any student in possession of medication, such medication shall be promptly delivered to the receptionist, and the student's parent will be contacted to retrieve it or transfer the medication to the custody of the nurse or trained school employee using the aforementioned process. The student may be subject to disciplinary action for being in possession of unauthorized medication.

Any student who is required to carry an emergency asthma inhaler, an epinephrine auto-injector, or insulin, glucagon or other diabetes supplies with him/her must provide:

- A Medication Administration form stating that the student needs to carry the inhaler, injector, or diabetes supplies with him or her and is permitted to self-administer if applicable; and
- A second inhaler, injector, or diabetes supplies to be kept in the nurse's office

## **Immunization**

State law where applicable requires that all children entering school must provide proof of immunization against DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis), IPV/OPV, MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella), Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Meningococcal Disease, Varicella (chicken pox), and the annual Influenza vaccine. These requirements can be waived only if a properly signed health or religious exemption is filed with the school.

All scholars must have on file proof of the required immunizations before they can be enrolled at Gateway STEM Academy. Failure to comply with immunization requirements may result in exclusion from school and missed school days.

## **STUDENT LIFE**

**Academic Program Gateway STEM Academy Core** Curriculum includes:

- **READING:** A robust reading program that includes both small group differentiated instruction and whole-class instruction using an on-grade-level and Common Core- aligned text. Students will spend a minimum of 90-minutes each day on developing reading skills and comprehension.
- **MATH:** 90-minutes of Math each day focused on fluency and automaticity with math facts, problem solving, logic, hands-on learning and critical thinking.
- **WRITING:** Students practice narrative, persuasive, opinion and research writing throughout the curriculum and benefit from a dedicated time each day during shared writing, independent writing, and (for K-1) handwriting practice.
- **SCIENCE:** Students will engage in a variety of hands-on, inquiry-based lessons that explore such topics as earth sciences, life sciences, physical sciences, and technology.
- **CIVICS/SOCIAL STUDIES:** Every student at Gateway STEM Academy will study geography, government, and history's impact on our communities and our world and this will be integrated into other content instruction.
- **SPECIALS:** Every Gateway STEM Academy student participates in electives such as Arabic, Reading Specialist, and project-based STEM lessons on a regular basis.

Our Instructional Model's success as a school lies partially in the clear and structured routines found in every Gateway STEM Academy classroom. Our instructional model consists of measurable aims, direct instruction, guided practice, and independent practice. Additionally, each class has regular and frequent assessments that measure each scholar's level of mastery with the content and skills.

Homework is an important element of our model and is essential for academic success. Daily homework assignments give students an opportunity each night to practice the skills and content learned in class. Gateway STEM Academy staff holds students to high levels of accountability with regards to homework, evaluates homework based on neatness and accuracy, and checks homework completion each day. Homework contributes to a student's final evaluation or report card.

At home, students must have a quiet place to complete homework and review class work. Gateway STEM Academy staff members are available in person during regular school hours and via email to answer homework questions.

*Gateway STEM Academy believes that the reward for hard work is an opportunity to be challenged even more. Students who show they are capable of excelling in one area will be challenged to excel in other areas.*

Students are accountable for completing all assigned work. A student's ability to make up work and receive credit may be conditioned on the documentation surrounding an absence.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are an important part of education and are used to enhance mandated and board approved curriculum. The school will notify parents when such trips are planned and ask for parental permission for children to participate. All students are expected to participate in the field trips and requests by parents to remove them for discipline reasons is prohibited. If a parent chooses to deny permission for his/her student to attend a field trip, the student will remain at home and his/her absence must be excused by the parent as a "vacation day." This is in accordance with our attendance protocol.

Academic Assessment Gateway STEM Academy use a report card that breaks each students' performance into four levels of achievement:

- 4 – Above Grade Level Mastery is demonstrated
- 3 – Grade Level Mastery is demonstrated
- 2 – Partial Mastery is demonstrated
- 1 – Minimal Understanding is demonstrated – area of concern
- 0 – Incomplete or missing work

The report card is only a report to parents on the child's progress and should not be used as a reward or punishment. Give the child verbal praise and assistance.

Assessments Gateway STEM Academy prepares students to succeed on standardized tests required for promotion, high school graduation, and college entrance and success. Teachers monitor student progress using a variety of teacher created and standardized tools. Some of the assessments that we use include BAS (Benchmark Assessment System for reading), running records, Bridges for math assessment, and regular quizzes and exams. To track student growth and mastery in specific content

areas, GSA administers the iReady Math and iReady Reading assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of each academic year. Students in third through seventh grade also take the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs).

### **Grade Level Promotion**

Promotion to the Next Grade Gateway STEM Academy has high promotional standards. It is not automatically assumed that a student will pass from one grade to the next: the student must earn promotion by demonstrating mastery of the essential knowledge and skills in their current grade level. Students may not be promoted if they are performing significantly below grade-level standards. Promotion decisions will be based on a student's course and exam grades, attendance, homework completion record, adherence to GSA core values, and other measures including teacher observations. A student may be retained if he or she misses 10 days in a school year, misses a significant amount of instructional time, or if the student fails to complete and hand in a high volume of required assignments.

### **Special Needs & English Language Learners**

Gateway STEM Academy provides special education services and services for English Language Learners in accordance with state and federal special education laws, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the regulations implementing those laws. The GSA team:

- Maintains all special education records in accordance with state and federal laws;
- Provides specialized instruction and related services in accordance with scholars' Individual Education Programs, 504 plans, and other educational and behavior plans
- Evaluates and makes eligibility and continuing eligibility determinations in accordance with IDEA classifications;
- Schedules all annual IEP reviews;
- Organizes professional development for teaching staff; and
- Supports teachers in making appropriate curriculum and instruction modifications

### **Character Development**

At Gateway STEM Academy, we recognize that we are molding our students into future leaders. It is important to help our students accomplish personal and academic success as well as develop the habits of thought and deed that help people live and work together as families, friends, neighbors, communities and nations. The character development program enables students and staff to understand, care and act on core ethical values such as respect, honesty, citizenship, and responsibility for self and others. Upon these values, we form the attitudes and actions that are the hallmark of safe, healthy and informed communities that serve the foundation of our society. At GSA, the teaching staff will deliver monthly focus lessons around a core character trait. All staff will support this work by emphasizing the trait for each month in regular, daily interactions with students. Students will be recognized monthly for exemplary modeling of the identified character trait.



Character Pledge: *I will make good choices today. I will respect myself, my teachers, and others. I will give my best effort in all I do.*

## **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**

PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) is an organized, data-driven system of interventions, strategies, and supports that positively impact school-wide and individualized behavior planning. Respect for law and for those persons in authority shall be expected of all students. This includes conformity to school rules as well as general provisions of law regarding minors. Respect for the rights of others, consideration of their privileges, and cooperative citizenship shall also be expected of all members of the school community. Respect for real and personal property; pride in one's work; achievement within the range of one's ability; and exemplary personal standards of courtesy, decency, and honesty should be maintained in the schools of this District. Gateway STEM Academy utilizes PBIS to teach students expected behaviors.

At GSA we use the acronym STAR—Self-control, Teamwork, Accountability, and Respect. The STAR system provides consistency and predictability in the school environment which contribute to academic success.

We believe the purpose of discipline is to help children take responsibility for their own actions. This is necessary in order for students to learn. Our students are to demonstrate respect for others, their safety, and their property at all times. As a school, we do not tolerate fighting, disrespect toward others, bullying, obscene language or destruction of school or student property.

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

### **Communication**

Gateway STEM Academy is committed to having families contribute to the academic success of our students. As such, we use a variety of methods of communication. Communication may include:

- Regular Progress Reports: A progress report that includes academic and behavioral updates as well as a brief overview of important school events.
- Monthly Newsletter: Parents will receive a monthly school newsletter send home in Communication Folders with their child and via email.
- Flyers: Teachers may send students home with written notices to update parents on school events, and other miscellaneous announcements.

### **Phone Calls**

Families are encouraged to call teachers at their school assigned phone number. If a teacher does not return a message within 24 hours, the school leader may be informed. Abuse of the phone numbers of the GSA staff will result in serious disciplinary action.

## **Expectations for Families**

Teachers may request mandatory family conferences with families of students who are in need of academic and behavioral support. All other families are invited to schedule appointments or to stop by to connect with their student's teachers. As teachers and leaders are extremely busy during the school day, family members who stop by without having scheduled an appointment are not guaranteed an opportunity to speak with a GSA staff member immediately upon their arrival. Gateway STEM Academy families must:

- reinforce Gateway STEM Academy academic and behavior standards at home
- check homework nightly for completion
- help with homework
- call teachers with concerns
- read and sign all notices sent home by the school
- read and respond to family communications when necessary
- respond promptly to disciplinary calls
- attend school-wide events
- pick up report cards and attend conferences

## **Contact Information**

At the beginning of the school year, Gateway STEM Academy collects family contact information, including address, parent/guardian phone numbers and emails, and names and phone numbers for additional emergency contacts. It is important for the school to maintain accurate contact information on file in the case of an emergency and to provide the parent with regular updates regarding the students' academic and behavioral performance. It is up to the parent to notify the school immediately if there is a change in contact information.

## **Birthdays**

Out of fairness to all of our students and our desire to ensure an academic environment free of distraction, we ask that parents refrain from visiting students on their birthdays and from bringing gifts, balloons and, in light of potential allergies, food for the class. Likewise, we suggest that parents wishing to invite students to birthday parties invite the entire homeroom (invitations may be sent to the homeroom teacher to be distributed via the Communications Folder). Students are required to be in school if it is a regularly scheduled school day on their birthday.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Parent conferences, arranged by the school, will be held for all children enrolled from Kindergarten through eighth grade. Conferences are scheduled in advance to accommodate parent schedules. The

conferences serve many purposes: to supplement the report cards, to share successes, to discuss problems, and to help parents be aware of what their child(ren) are doing in school. However, should the need for a conference arise at any time, the parent and teacher should schedule a conference at a mutually agreed upon time.

## **Procedures for Resolution of Parent/Guardian Concerns**

Gateway STEM Academy is committed to maintaining a strong partnership and ongoing dialogue between its teachers, staff, students, and families. If you have a concern about a school policy, academic grade, discipline decision, or anything else, we welcome your input and encourage you to contact the appropriate staff member at the school. We are committed to addressing the concerns of our families and seeking a resolution that first and foremost benefits the academic development of your child toward success.

*Informal Complaint Process.* If a parent or guardian has a concern or disagreement about a classroom event, curricular or disciplinary decision or other academic issue, he or she should first contact the teacher to attempt to resolve the disagreement through informal discussion. If the concern is not adequately resolved, the parent or guardian should request a further meeting. The teacher will contact the school leader and schedule the follow-up conversation. All Gateway STEM Academy staff members are expected to respond to a parent/guardian complaint. Every effort will be made to respond to a parent/guardian complaint as quickly as possible.

*Formal Complaint Process.* If the informal complaint process fails to produce a satisfactory resolution, a parent or guardian may initiate a formal complaint by submitting a letter in writing to the school leader outlining, in detail, the events, policies, or decisions at issue. The school leader will promptly conduct a thorough investigation into the matter and issue a response in writing detailing his or her findings and recommendations.

## **PROCEDURES FOR DISCIPLINARY VIOLATIONS**

### **Discipline**

At Gateway STEM Academy, we are committed to serving all students while simultaneously protecting the strong culture that makes our academic gains possible. All students are taught the GSA core values and are held accountable to them throughout the year. As stated above in the general Code of Conduct, misbehaviors at Gateway STEM Academy result in consequences. If negative behaviors persist, or if students have not adequately fulfilled the given consequence, more serious consequences may be put in place. Consequences vary based on the grade level of the student, the severity of the action, and the frequency of the incident. Such consequences may include

- Scholar reflection on community violation (may be written, private or public);
- Removal of school privileges (including school trips, in-school privileges, etc.);
- Detention;
- School/community service;

- In-school suspension;
- Short-term out-of-school suspension;
- Long-term out-of-school suspension; and
- Removal from the school community.

To preserve valuable instructional time, Gateway STEM Academy strives to keep its students in school and in classrooms. However, when a student's actions are detracting from the ability of other students to learn in a safe, productive environment, it may be necessary to remove the offending student from the classroom and eventually from the school. If a student's consequence involves being sent home or suspended for any period of time, a parent or guardian may be asked to meet with an administrator regarding the student's behavior prior to his or her return to school. Please note that suspended students who are sent to school notwithstanding the consequences outlined in their suspension letters may receive escalating consequences.

Tiered Behavior Responses While Gateway STEM Academy strives to implement our behavior system consistently, we also recognize that some student needs may be best met through customized behavior plans. We also seek to tailor consequences to the severity and frequency of the unacceptable behavior and the student's individual circumstances. Both the severity of consequences and the scope and depth of structured, proactive support provided by the GSA staff to students struggling to meet behavioral expectations will increase commensurate with the severity and frequency of the violations. As the consequences become more severe, we will notify and seek the involvement of families to help design and implement response plans. Gateway STEM Academy's response to behaviors will escalate as negative behaviors escalate, with the most serious infractions receiving the most serious consequences. Violence directed to other students or staff will lead to the most serious consequences.

All students facing out of school suspension are entitled to due process. For a short-term out of school suspension (i.e., a suspension for less than ten days), the student will, prior to the suspension, be told by the principal or school leader the basis for the suspension, the evidence supporting the consequence, and will be able to give his or her side of the story. For a suspension longer than ten days, a student will have the opportunity to present evidence to the school leader in a more formal proceeding, is entitled to be represented by counsel, will be provided the evidence supporting the suspension, and will be given the opportunity to confront the evidence against the student and to present evidence as well. The student can be removed from the school immediately if a danger to others and the school environment. In appropriate circumstances the student may also be referred to law enforcement authorities.

The most serious consequence, if all else fails and in extraordinary circumstances, will be expulsion from Gateway STEM Academy. A student facing expulsion and his or her parents or guardians will be afforded all due process protections required under applicable laws and regulations including a full and fair hearing.

## **Visiting/Volunteering at Gateway STEM Academy**

Gateway STEM Academy always welcomes and encourages visitors, both from within and outside of our school community, to observe our students and GSA staff members in action. However, in order to assure the safety and well-being of all students and staff, all visitors — including parents and guardians — are required to report to the receptionist. Visitors will be required to have a visitor's pass once they have checked in with the Receptionist. Any visitor who does not report to the receptionist, or is found in the building without authorization and a visitor's pass, will be asked to leave immediately, and the authorities will be called if the request is not heeded.

Gateway STEM Academy invites parents and family members to volunteer in the classroom. Volunteers must be 18 years or older and complete a volunteer background check in advance. Volunteers are requested to schedule their visits with GSA staff members in advance of their visit and should not be a distraction to the learning environment.

Parents and family members are welcome to request meetings with any member of the GSA staff. Meetings will be scheduled at the staff member's earliest possible convenience. If requests for a meeting are not met, family members should report the concern to the school leader.

In case of an emergency, parents or guardians should contact the receptionist either by phone or in person. Under no circumstances should parents or guardians contact students in their classrooms, or attempt to withdraw students from the building without notifying and receiving permission from the school.

Please note that while families are encouraged to visit the school, volunteer schedules are generally not permitted during the first six weeks of school. This allows teachers to establish a strong classroom culture that is focused on academic learning and is distraction-free. The following guidelines will be followed for volunteers:

- If you need to meet with a student's teacher, you must make an appointment with the teacher.
- Instructional time will not be interrupted for meetings.
- ALL visitors and volunteers must sign in at the main office and wear a badge.
- Volunteers must complete paperwork necessary for the school to complete a background check well in advance of your planned time in the classroom. Volunteers with a record of a felony conviction will not be able to work with our students.
- Younger children should not be brought into volunteer scenarios in the classroom as they can become a serious distraction to learning.

## **Disruptive Visitors & Restricted Access**

Gateway STEM Academy works hard to maintain a safe and orderly environment for teachers and students. To that end, the school reserves the right to restrict visitors (including family members of

students and staff) who do not display the GSA core values of the larger community while on school grounds, including during drop-off and pick-up. Examples of disruptive visitors include those who raise their voice, use profanity, threaten students or staff, or are physically or verbally aggressive in any way.

If a visitor's access must be restricted due to inappropriate behavior of any kind, s/he will receive a letter outlining the offenses that led to the restricted access and will be notified as to proper procedures for contact and communication with both staff and their student while on Gateway STEM Academy property. If a visitor continues to disrupt the learning environment after having received a restricted access letter, Gateway STEM Academy will pursue further measures including notification of law enforcement agencies.

### **Nondiscrimination**

Gateway STEM Academy does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1974 (ADEA). In addition, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to Gateway STEM Academy on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement. No person shall be discriminated against in obtaining the advantages, privileges or access to the courses of study offered by Gateway STEM Academy on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

### **Harassment**

Gateway STEM Academy is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school-sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. Gateway STEM Academy requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

### **Public Documents / Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)**

Gateway STEM Academy fully complies with all the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). Any requests for school records or information from the school must be in writing and submitted to the school leader. Within five business days of receipt of a written request, the school, depending on the requested information, will respond by:

- Making the information available at the school itself during normal business hours to the person

requesting it;

- Denying the request in writing; or
- Providing a written acknowledgment of receipt of the request that supplies an approximate date for when the request will be granted or denied.

If the person requesting information is denied access to a record, s/he may, within 30 days, appeal such denial to the school leader. Upon timely receipt of such an appeal, the school, within 10 business days of the receipt of the appeal, will fully explain the reasons for further denial or provide access to the record(s) sought.

The school may deny access to requested records if:

- Such records are specifically exempted from disclosure by state or federal statute;
- Such access would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- Such records, if disclosed, would impair present or imminent contract awards or collective bargaining negotiations;
- Such records are trade secrets and which, if disclosed, would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of a commercial enterprise;
- Such records are compiled for law enforcement purposes and which, if disclosed, would meet the conditions set forth in Public Officers Law §87(2)(e);
- Such records, if disclosed, would endanger the life or safety of any person;
- Such records are computer access codes; and/or
- Such records are internal materials which are not statistical or factual tabulations of data, instructions to staff that affect the public, a final policy, nor external audits.

The school may charge a copying fee for each page requested to be copied. The fee can be no more than the fee allowed by state law. Types of records held by the school may include:

- Student Health Records
- Student Immunization Records
- Student Medical Records Safety Records
- School SAVE Plan
- Reports of Fire Department Inspections
- School Contracts
- Management Contract Records
- Outside Contract Records
- Personnel Files

- Fingerprint Clearance Records
- Certification Records

### **Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

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 funding under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents and guardians certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are “eligible students.”

In accordance with FERPA law, parents, guardians, or students over 18 years of age have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Parents or students over 18 years of age have the right to request that the school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent, guardian, or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. The issue will first be heard by the Principal, Director of Operations or their designee. If the parent, guardian, or eligible student is still not satisfied with the decision, a hearing with the school board or a designated subcommittee of the board may be requested. The decision of the board of trustees or its designated subcommittee is final.

The school may disclose, without consent, “directory” information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. Any parent who does not want such directory information included should contact the school's Director of Operations or Office Manager.

This listing in the GSA School Handbook serves as the school's annual notification of parents and eligible students of their rights under FERPA.

Generally, the school must have written permission from the parent, guardian, or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, the school may disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.



**Board Meetings**

Pursuant to the Open Meetings laws, all meetings of the school's Board of Trustees are open to the public. A schedule of all meetings, including date, time and location will be posted at the school and on the school's website.

## Parent/Student Acknowledgement Form

I fully understand the expectations, standards, and policies set forth in this Handbook and agree to demonstrate my commitment to my education by adhering to the Gateway STEM Academy core values in the manner outlined above. I recognize that failure to abide by these standards and policies will result in the imposition of appropriate consequences as described in the Handbook. I acknowledge that I am responsible for my own behavior, and I pledge to follow directions issued by school leaders. Gateway STEM Academy is a school of choice. I understand that my parents or guardians are responsible for my education at any time.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_