

LEARNING GATE COMMUNITY SCHOOL PARENT and STUDENT HANDBOOK

Kindergarten – 8th Grade

Revised July 25, 2018



Fostering the artistic genius of John James Audubon, the passion for environmental purity of Rachel Carson and the committed activism of Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, Learning Gate Community School has designed a fresh approach to education. Located in a country setting and using brain based instruction, Learning Gate is developing as a school committed to ecology and the environment while maintaining the comfort of an old one room school house.

This handbook is a work in progress and should be considered a living document. Frequent revisions may be made as we strive to define a superior learning environment for our students and families. Its present form and content should provide the most up to date information on the policies of Learning Gate Community School.

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

LEARNING GATE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

HANNA ROAD K-6 CAMPUS

16215 Hanna Road

Lutz, Florida 33549

(813) 948-4190

FAX (813) 948-7587

Absentee Line (813) 948-7502

Absentee email: attend@learninggate.org

Lutz Lake 7th and 8th GRADE CAMPUS

207 Lutz Lake Fern Road

Lutz, Florida 33548

(813) 909-2700

FAX (813) 909-2711

Absentee Line (813) 948-7502

Absentee email: attend@learninggate.org

Learning Gate Board of Directors

Learning Gate Community School operates as a charter school sponsored by Hillsborough County but governed by the state of Florida. It has its own board that sets policy and is responsible for the financial security of the school. Information about Charter Law in the state of Florida can be found on the Department of Education website.

Monthly board meetings notices are posted at both campuses, on the website and on the app.

Board Chairman

Dr. Jennifer Collins
University of South Florida
jcollins@learninggate.org

Vice Chairman

John Zdanowicz
Cleargage
jzdanowicz@learninggate.org

Treasurer

Stanley Kroh
Tampa Electric
skroh@learninggate.org

Assistant Vice Chair

Christina Goldstein
University of South Florida
cgoldstein@learninggate.org

Secretary

Dr. Jennifer Wolgemuth
University of South Florida
jwolgemuth@learninggate.org

Assistant Secretary

Amelia Terrapin
Mobius
aterrapin@learninggate.org

Board Member

Debbi Stone
Florida Aquarium
lgcsboard@learninggate.org

Board Member

Luke Chichetto
Mobility Rx
lchichetto@learninggate.org

Board Member

Christina Faudel
Tiffany and Co.
cfaudel@learninggate.org

Board Member

Steven McCarty
Enterprise
smccarty@learninggat.org

Board Member

Karen Ramlackhan
University of South Florida
kramlackhan@learninggate.org

Board Member

Briana Lindsay
bzolak-lindsay@learninggate.org

To reach the entire board of directors you can email board@learninggate.org

Parent Liaison Hanna Campus

Jim Hill
parentrephanna@learninggate.org

Parent Liaison Lutz Lake Campus

Nicole Rametta
parentrepllf@learninggate.org

School Administration

Michelle Mason	Principal
Kelly Pratt	Hanna Road AP
Adam Wolford	Lutz Lake AP
Donna Brynjolfsson	Data Processing/Attendance
Kris Smith	Bookkeeper
Mercedes Wisner	Guidance
KC Apple	ESE/504 Supervisor

Learning Gate Community School Student Calendar 2018-2019

August 9, 2018	Open House
August 10, 2018	First Day of School
September 3, 2018	School Closed- Labor Day
November 12, 2018	No School- Veteran's Day
November 20, 2018	Early Release for Students
November 21-23, 2018	School Closed- Thanksgiving
December 21, 2018	Early Release for Students
December 24, 2018-January 11, 2019	School Closed- Winter Break
January 21, 2019	School Closed- MLK Day
February 8, 2019	No School - Fair Day
February 18, 2019	No School - President's Day
March 4, 2019	No School for Students
March 15, 2019	Early Release for Students
March 18-22, 2019	No School - Spring break
April 19, 2019	School Closed
May 27, 2019	School Closed- Memorial Day
May 31, 2019	Early Release - Last Day of School

Please note that state required assessments in grades 3rd thru 8th are given throughout the month of May. Please do not schedule family trips during that time period.

Hurricane Make-Up Days:

November 12, 2018

February 18, 2019

March 4, 2019

Start Times

K-5TH 8:10 AM

6TH 8:05 AM

7TH-8TH 7:50 AM

Release Times

K-2ND 2:30 PM

3RD-4TH 2:55 PM

5TH 3:15 PM

6TH 3:30 PM

7TH 3:05 PM

8TH 3:15 PM

REAR EXIT

FRONT EXIT

- THE POSTED SPEED LIMIT IN THE DRIVEWAY IS 5 MPH.
- THE USE OF CELL PHONES IS PROHIBITED IN THE CAR LINE. THE HANNA CAMPUS DRIVEWAY IS ONE DIRECTION; ALL CARS MUST LOOP AROUND THE LIBRARY TO EXIT.
- STAFF IS NOT ALLOWED TO CONFERENCE WITH PARENTS DURING DROP OFF OR PICK UP DUTIES.
- STAFF MAY DIRECT YOU TO MOVE TO THE NORTH PARKING LOT IF YOUR STUDENT IS NOT OUT AT THE PICK UP LINE ON TIME.
- STUDENTS NOT PICKED UP WITHIN FIFTEEN MINUTES OF THE POSTED TIMES WILL BE CHECKED IN TO AFTERCARE. (FEES WILL APPLY)

INTRODUCTION

MISSION

The mission of Learning Gate Community School is to promote academic excellence, community service and environmental responsibility through family and community partnerships.

VISION

Tomorrow's leaders engaging in and contributing to an educated, sustainable world

PHILOSOPHY

Our teaching program will allow students to grow and develop as active rather than passive learners. A range of activities will be provided that are designed to meet the needs of grade school students at their level of development along the growth continuum.

The staff is committed to helping students discover their natural gifts through multiple intelligences training, brain based instruction and exploratory learning. We believe that all children should be given opportunities to learn about the community and how to live in it. Therefore, activity teaching through environmentally integrated curriculum establishes foundations for understanding self, others and the natural world. Activities will be designed to help each student develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

HISTORY

The recent "Green" and "No Child Left Inside" movements are not new to Learning Gate. Established in 1983 by Patti Girard as a "preschool where kids get dirty", she taught students to appreciate and care for our earth for over 25 years.

The original location of the pre-school was on a 5-acre of property in North Tampa full of beautiful oaks and native vegetation. Also on the property was a small working farm with a barn, chicken coop, a garden and farm animals.

The children spent the majority of their day outside, learning about how the world works by being in it.

The successful pre-school grew to include a private elementary school. Ms. Girard's vision was to develop an all-encompassing curriculum that would integrate the environment into every subject area. At a weeklong Audubon workshop on Hog Island in Maine, Ms. Girard, a longtime fan of Rachel Carson's work, was introduced to her book The Sense of Wonder. This book became her inspiration and guiding force behind the school that is today Learning Gate Community School. Gloria Bliss, a teacher at Learning Gate since 1986 was instrumental in developing a literature-based curriculum with an environmental theme.

In 2000 an application was submitted and approved by the Hillsborough County School District for Learning Gate Community School, the first environmentally focused charter school. The school opened with 108 students. In October of 2003 the school moved 300 students to the 27-acre property on Hanna Road. This school year, Learning Gate will enroll 800 students located on two campuses. A waiting list of prospective students is a testimony to the dedicated and hardworking staff.

In 2009, its sponsor, Hillsborough County School District, rewarded the school for its high academic performance and sound financial practices with a 15-year contract. Learning Gate Community School is the first school to receive this lengthy contract in the history of the charter movement in Hillsborough County.

In 2009, Learning Gate Community School became the first public school in the nation to receive the LEED Platinum Award for schools. This is a prestigious honor and shows the commitment the school made to the sustainability of the environment.

In 2015, Learning Gate Community School was awarded accreditation by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission. AdvancED is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that accredits primary and secondary schools throughout the United States and internationally. AdvancED was formed in 2006 by the consolidation of the pre-college divisions of two of the U.S. regional accreditation organizations: The Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA CASI), and the Council on Accreditation and School Improvement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS CASI). In 2012 the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) joined AdvancED.

GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL OFFICE AT BOTH CAMPUSES

- Hours: 7:30am to 4:00pm.
- The office staff will accept forgotten lunches, water bottles and glasses; items will be placed in the lunchroom at a specified table and the teacher will be advised
- The office staff will not accept or deliver, under any circumstances, forgotten schoolwork, backpacks or planners or any other items.

ACCOUNTING OFFICE

- Hours: 8:00-4:00 Located on the Hanna Road Campus. You may contact Kris Smith at kris@learninggate.org.
- Please make sure checks written to Learning Gate, contain updated information and the name of the student in the memo section.
- There is a \$30 charge for any returned checks. Cash or money order may be required of families that write checks on insufficient funds.

CONSERVATION AND CAMPUS CARE

Learning Gate Community School prides itself on being environmentally conscious and sensitive to the natural world. Staff, students, and visitors should be mindful of waste at all times and should make every effort to conserve natural and school resources. Everyone is expected to use campus-recycling bins, and is responsible for cleaning up after themselves and/or their students/children when using any common areas, indoor or outdoor, on school property.

PARENTS

Learning Gate Community School believes that well-informed parents promote a positive school environment. Consistent with this philosophy, both parents and students are required to familiarize themselves with this handbook, so that you may become acquainted with the school's policies and procedures and school life. Students and parents are also required to complete the Handbook Agreement. In this Handbook, the school has included various regulations, the Code of Student Conduct, activities, and general information, all of which aid students in becoming productive members of the school community.

Studies show that students perform better in school if their parents are involved in their education. Parents' knowledge of the standards in each

grade will help them interpret their children's report cards and work with teachers to improve students' learning. For this reason, parents are urged to read the standards for all grades rather than just the particular grades their children are in. Standards can be found at CPALMS.org

Edsby is our primary grading and communication platform. Parents are required to register for Edsby and link it to their primary e-mail account to this program to promote communication between parents, students and the Learning Gate Staff.

Parents can also participate in parent conferences, work on school events, and be involved in physical activities with their children. They should support classroom activities, promote and participate in special events held within the school and in interschool activities, and promote healthy active living through their own habits and practices. In grades that use the planner (K-5) it is also the parent's responsibility to read and sign the student planner on a daily basis, to promote open lines of communication.

A fundamental principle of our school is inspiring and educating children on how to learn and live in a community. Therefore, please maintain a positive attitude and exhibit respectful behavior to others while on school grounds or participating in school events. Parents are expected to respect the classroom and classroom hours and address faculty and staff in a polite and courteous manner. Conversations regarding students must be by appointment. Employees shall adhere to a 24-hour response policy. Although the response to the parent could vary according to the nature, the employees should at least acknowledge receipt of the query within 24 hours.

When using social media please remember we are all one community working towards the best interest of the students. Keep it positive!

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students have responsibilities with regard to their own learning, which increases as they advance through elementary and secondary school. Students are required to follow the student Code of Conduct, be respectful to the teachers and staff at the school and follow the LG53. Students are responsible for bringing all needed materials to school each day. If items are forgotten, parents may only drop off lunches, water bottles and glasses. Homework, projects and all other materials will not be accepted by the front office.

CIVILITY POLICY

The faculty and staff of Learning Gate Community School will treat parents and other members of the public with respect and will expect the same in return. LGCS is committed to maintaining orderly educational and administrative processes in keeping school and administrative offices free from disruptions and preventing unauthorized persons from entering school/district grounds.

The aim is to promote mutual respect and orderly conduct within the school, thereby setting a model for children and others in the community. It is not meant to deprive any person of the right to freedom of expression. Volatile, hostile or aggressive actions and words are discouraged, and individuals who engage in these activities may face penalties, including but not limited to restricted access to the campus and legal consequences, dependent on the actions.

A parent acting in a manner that negatively impacts an environment conducive to effective learning may receive a request to discuss the contravention. It is the right of the School Principal to submit a written warning to a parent displaying conduct that negatively impacts the learning environment at LGCS. This warning may request that the parent cease such behavior or accept the consequence of dismissal from school grounds.

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

Parents/Guardians recognize that Learning Gate Community School is a school of choice and by choosing to enroll their child as a student at Learning Gate you agree to support, uphold and conform to the policies, requirements and principles of the school. Parents recognize that they are responsible for completing 30 hours of volunteer time and 10 hours of education classes. Parents will adhere to the school's attendance and tardy policies, making sure students arrive to school on time and ready to learn each day. Parents/Guardians who do not comply will put their child's position at Learning Gate Community School in jeopardy.

CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION

It is the responsibility of the parent to know the chain of communication and use it when contacting faculty and staff members. Any concerns about student performance, task completion, teacher practices, classroom policies and behavior issues should be directed to the classroom teacher. Parents should only contact administration concerning classroom performance if they have contacted the teacher and not received a response within 24 hours. If a parent wishes to talk about the teacher or classroom with an administrator,

the teacher or staff member will be invited to attend the meeting as well. The Administration also requests that you email, phone or make an appointment as needed to discuss challenges, issues, concerns, offer recommendations and or praise. If there is a complaint about administration, the person should contact the administrator directly to talk through the situation. If common ground cannot be obtained, the parent/student may contact the parent liaison (contact information is on page 3) for guidance or the Board of Directors – board@learninggate.org

COMMUNICATIONS HOME

Effective communication is essential for students' success. Teachers and parents will communicate through the following avenues: students' planner (grades 1-5), email, Edsby, phone and conferences. Please see the teacher's syllabus (grades 6-8) for the preferred method of communication. Teachers are responsible for responding to parents within a 24-hour period, they are not always able to answer immediately.

Planners are given to students in grades 1-5. Both teachers and parents must sign the planner daily. Lost planners are \$10.00 to replace.

All Parents/guardians must sign up for an Edsby email account at the beginning of the school year and are responsible for reviewing their Edsby page on a daily basis

Conferences with a teacher, administrators or any other staff members must be scheduled ahead of time and a reason provided. This ensures that your concerns can be addressed effectively while maintaining proper confidentiality.

GRIEVANCES

A grievance is another name for a complaint. A student/parent grievance exists when a student/parent believes that he or she has been treated unfairly or has not been afforded due process. Anyone wishing to register a school level grievance must do so within ten (10) days from the time they became aware of the alleged infraction. Anyone involved in a grievance has the right to present evidence or witnesses concerning the charges. All conversations and situations concerning grievances will be confidential and all parties should refrain from discussing grievances and related meetings with anyone not involved in the proceedings.

The steps to follow to resolve a school level grievance for a parent or student are:

1. Ask to schedule a conference with the person(s) who allegedly treated

you unfairly for the purpose of discussing your complaint. All involved parties should make every effort to solve any disputes calmly, equitably and expediently.

2. If the person charged with the alleged infraction does not resolve your complaint, arrange a conference with the school principal. A minimum of two conferences between the teacher and all parties must be conducted prior to the grievance being escalated to the school principal.
3. The school principal will make recommendations regarding resolution of the grievance and all parties are encouraged to accept these recommendations and do their part to affect a resolution.
4. Students should involve their parents or guardians in resolving school level grievances.

Most grievances can and should be resolved at the school level through informal conferences with teachers and other school personnel. If all efforts to resolve the grievance with school level administrators fail, the student or parents may submit a written request for further consideration with the principal. The principal will provide a written explanation either accepting or rejecting the grievance and detail the reasons for his/her action and, if applicable, any further recommendations regarding resolution. The school principal may choose to involve the school's Board of Directors in certain situations.

A student/parent wishing to appeal the principal's written decision must file a grievance with the Learning Gate Community School's Board of Directors at board@learninggate.org

DUE PROCESS

Due process is simply another name for fairness of procedure. A basic ingredient to due process of law is that one who is not satisfied with a decision may appeal it to a higher authority. Due process is not a mechanical instrument; it is a process. Due process is a right guaranteed to all by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution.

Individuals must give or have proper notice; an opportunity to be heard and meetings to affect resolution must be conducted fairly.

The basic ingredient or steps to be followed in guaranteeing due process procedures are:

1. Individuals must have proper notice of the charge or complaint being made against them and that their actions were in violation of established rules, policies or regulations.
2. Individuals must have the opportunity to know the specific charges or complaints.

3. Meetings and conferences conducted regarding a grievance must allow individuals to present evidence and/or witnesses on their own behalf.
4. Individuals must be advised that they have the right to appeal to the next higher authority if not satisfied with the action or decision rendered.

CONFERENCES

Parents/guardians are expected to participate in two parent/teacher conferences per year. Families will receive 1 parent education hour for the first conference for each parent in attendance. When attending a conference on campus, **children may not be left unattended.**

VOLUNTEER AND PARENT EDUCATION HOURS

Each family is required to provide 30 hours of volunteer time to the school. Volunteer hours are defined as time a parent/guardian gives to the school by volunteering in a classroom, lunchroom, driving on field trips, committees or events. Parents and guardians recognize that Learning Gate Community School is a school of choice and by choosing to enroll their child as a student, agree to support, uphold and conform to the policies, 30 Volunteer Hours and 10 Parent Education hours each year. Parents who do not complete these hours put their child's position at Learning Gate in jeopardy. Contact Michele Northrup (michelen@learninggate.org) for volunteer opportunities.

Each family is required to attend 10 hours of parent education classes. Parent Education classes are defined as, classes, meetings or educational workshops offered by LG or classes offered off campus with administrative approval. Classes are posted and updated on the school's website at www.learninggate.org.

Children cannot attend education classes unless otherwise stated on the website. Credit for hours may only be granted to parents or guardians of the students.

All education and volunteer hours must be documented on the proper form, which is found in the front office, and it must be signed by the supervisor of the event and have the name of the event. All parts of the form must be completed. Contact Linda Lugo (linda@learninggate.org) for the tracking of both volunteer and parent education hours or if you have any questions regarding a parent education class.

VISITORS TO CAMPUS

Learning Gate Community School uses SafeNet to sign in all visitors to the school. All visitors **MUST** sign in at the office with a Driver's License or state-issued ID card in order to obtain a visitor's badge. This badge does not give

a visitor permission to roam the school; it gives access only to the area/person they are signed in for.

Prior to the start of each school year, all parents or community members who wish to participate in school related functions are required to log on to the Hillsborough County Public Schools web portal to be screened as a volunteer. To apply for the screening click on the Online Volunteer Application link located on the Parent Info page of the LGCS website.

Parents, guardians and volunteers that fail to complete or clear the screening process may not volunteer on campus or chaperone an event or field trip.

This policy will also apply to anyone who enters the school in order to deliver goods. The Hillsborough County School District has an approved list of vendors who have undergone the background checks.

SIGNING IN AND OUT PROCEDURE

Students who are arriving late to school need to be escorted into the main office and signed in by a parent/guardian. Students will provide their school number and receive a tardy pass. Learning Gate has a tardy policy (See Tardy Policy Section).

Parents should make every attempt to schedule doctor and dental appointments during non-school hours or on days when school is not in session. Students miss valuable instructional time that cannot always be replicated. Students leaving due to arranged appointments should have the information documented in the planner. The teacher will have the student in the front office for the stated departure time.

On the Hanna Campus students cannot be signed out after 2:15PM. Learning Gate always recommends parking in the North Lot when picking up your student early. Drivers of students in the first dismissal may not park in the left-hand lane before 2:15. If you park in the lane you will be asked to move.

Middle school students must be signed out in between classes. Please make arrangements to pick them up before or after a class period.

Parents in a carpool may sign out their child early. However, the entire carpool should not be taken out early without the expressed written consent of each student's parent/guardian

Students are required to return to school after every field trip, without exceptions. If a parent wants to sign out a child after a field trip, the child must return to the classroom with the teacher. Parents may then return to the front office to follow the regular sign out procedures.

ATTENDANCE

Florida School Law, Chapter 232 states that children up to age 16 are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term. A parent who fails to have children attend school regularly may be guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by law.

Students have the right to:

- Receive information concerning attendance policies at the school
- Make up any work missed because of excused absences and/or an excused tardy within the appropriate amount of time

Students have the responsibility to:

- Attend classes daily and on time
- Request make-up work from their teachers within the appropriate amount of time
- Complete any work that was requested in advance upon return to school

Parents have the responsibility to refrain from sending a student to school if they have a fever or within 24 hours of having a fever.

Letter of notification will be mailed to parents whose children are chronically absent from school and such students may be referred for attendance interventions. The principal may require a note from a doctor/dentist explaining chronic attendance problems.

Students will be excused from school in observance of established religious holidays; however, such absences will be shown on all attendance records.

Students who are not in attendance at school may not participate in the sports program, dance or other afterschool programs that day. Students must be present for at least ½ day to participate.

To REPORT an absence, parents/guardian must report an absence to LGCS by 9 AM. This can be done by phone, email or in person on the day of the absence.

Phone# - (813) 948-7502 Email – attend@learninggate.org

TARDY

Students are expected to be on time for class and will be considered tardy if not present when daily attendance is taken. Any student arriving to school after the session has begun must report to the school office. A tardy slip shall be issued indicating an excused or unexcused tardy. For the student to receive an excused sign-in, a parent or guardian must

accompany the student to the school office with an acceptable excuse. Excused absences include doctor and dentist appointments, illness, accident, family death or religious holiday but do not include situations like waking up late or running behind schedule. If the parent does not accompany the students and/or the reason is invalid the tardy will be considered unexcused. Administration may request a doctor's note to excuse a tardy.

A student who has 5 tardies per quarter:

A letter will be sent home documenting the persistence of these events. This letter is placed in the Cumulative folder of the child.

Parents and student will be required to attend a face-to-face meeting with administration to discuss strategies to improve the situation.

A student who has 10 tardies per semester:

A letter will be sent home documenting the persistence of these events. This letter is placed in the Cumulative folder of the child.

Parents and student will be required to attend a face-to-face meeting with administration to discuss strategies to improve the situation.

Parents will be required to sign an agreement to improve the child's prompt arrival to school. Agreement states that the child's placement may be forfeited if the attendance does not improve.

A student with 15 tardies within a semester

A letter will be sent home documenting the persistence of these events. This letter is placed in the Cumulative folder of the child.

Parents and student will be required to attend a face-to-face meeting with administration to discuss strategies to improve the situation.

Parents will be required to sign an agreement to improve the child's prompt arrival to school. Agreement states that the child's placement may be forfeited if the attendance does not improve.

The family will be required to appear before the Learning Gate Community School Board of Directors to discuss the situation. A placement determination will be made at that time.

LEARNING GATE AFTERCARE PROGRAM

Learning Gate offers free before care to all students at both campuses beginning at 7:00 am. Students may not be dropped off before 7:00 am or left unattended. Students not picked up at their dismissal time will be checked in to aftercare and fee will apply.

After school care is available to all students at both campuses from dismissal until 6:00 pm. The cost is \$60.00 per week. Students located on the Lutz Lake Fern Campus will be shuttled to the Hanna Campus for Aftercare. All families must complete the aftercare application for their students to attend. For more information contact Leah at aftercare@learninggate.org

Students using the shuttle from LLF to the Hanna Campus for aftercare purposes, will be required to have completed registration paperwork and sign a behavior agreement.

There is no shuttle to transport students to Hanna after participation in after school club at the LLF Campus or for students who are required to stay for after school detention. Students must be pick up in these two cases immediately following the activity.

Aftercare payments must be made on time in order for a family to continue to use the program. All payments will be done through the Script APP. If difficulties arise, please talk to the director of the program.

HOLIDAYS

Significant holidays may be acknowledged in the classroom as daily and weekly course material incorporating the theme of the holiday. Teachers may have a celebration for the winter holiday and the end of the year during the last hour of the day. Other holidays may have small activities. Food items that are brought in for an activity/celebration should be healthy in nature, store bought and approved by the teacher before bringing them to the school.

STUDENT BIRTHDAYS

Teachers will recognize individual student birthdays on class calendars, at the morning flag salute and during other appropriate school activities; however, no formal parties or celebrations will be conducted for birthdays.

PLEASE DO NOT send balloons, cupcakes, cake or other food with your child to acknowledge their birthday! Parents/guardians are always

invited to have lunch with their child for a special day. The only time invitations may be given out at school for birthday parties is if ALL students in the class will receive an invitation.

FIELD TRIPS

Participation in class field trips is important. All field trips are educational and offer our students the opportunity to experience what they have learned in the classroom and apply that knowledge in an alternative-learning environment. Any child who does not participate in a field trip should attend school on the day of the trip (unless not attending due to illness). Arrangements will be made for the student and assignments will be provided for completion. Assignments will be reflective of the trip and provide information on the concepts and standards being missed.

All parents are required to complete the Field Trip Forms provided in the beginning of the school year. Chaperones must complete and pass the online screening (SEE VISITORS TO CAMPUS SECTION) Parents will be unable to attend field trips if all forms and screenings are not on record with the front office. Chaperones that have a DUI conviction may not drive on a field trip, but are welcome to attend.

Parents must also read and sign the Chaperone Guidelines that outline the chaperone responsibilities. If a parent does not follow the rules and procedures for a field trip as stated on the Chaperone Guidelines and Responsibilities, they will be unable to chaperone future trips. These rules include, no unscheduled stops or stopping at unapproved locations.

There is a list of cars that cannot be used to transport students on field trips. The list will be posted on the school's website and includes convertibles and several sports utility vehicles. You can also contact the front office for more information.

If you have a child that falls within the threshold for the mandatory use of car seats, you are required to provide the seat for a field trip. Please leave the seat on the front porch labeled with your child's name and teacher.

Only students in the assigned classes with proper permission and payment if applicable may attend a field trip. Siblings regardless of age or student status are NOT allowed to attend field trips.

Permission slips and payments are due by the date indicated Script. If a

completed permission slip with payment is NOT received by the indicated date on Script, the student will NOT be eligible to attend the Fieldtrip. Script is used for the permission slips and payment without exception.

Field trip forms will specify the dress code for that particular trip.

DRESS CODE

School uniforms are **mandatory** at Learning Gate Community School. Risse Brothers is the only provider of new school uniforms. Heron Outfitters is available for the purchase of used uniforms and is located in Heron Hall, dates and times of operation can be found on the school's website www.learninggate.org.

Students out of compliance with the mandatory dress code will face disciplinary actions that will include: notes home, parent bringing a change of clothes, parent phone calls, and lunch detention. Non-compliance may result in suspension or withdrawal of the student from Learning Gate Community School.

Middle School Students that are out of dress code will remain in the office until appropriate dress can be provided. If parents are unable to bring appropriate dress, the student will remain in the office with work until dismissal.

All uniforms must be clean, free of holes and worn appropriately. The uniform policy is in place to promote a safe environment for students and applies to all students in K-8th grade.

Employees at Reese Brothers and the volunteers in Heron Outfitters will help with colors/clothing allowed for each grade level

Uniform Shirts

K – 3 rd Grade	Green or Maroon shirts with the school logo
4 th – 6 th	Green, Maroon or White with the school logo
7 th & 8 th Grade	Green, Maroon, White, Black shirt with school logo

Shirts must be tucked into pants/shorts that have a belt loop.

Any shirt worn under a uniform shirt must be black or white, no colors or designs.

LG Sweatshirts may not be worn inside the classroom or any other type of non-official clothing. Students not following this guideline will receive disciplinary action as defined on the LG behavior form.

K-5 students may wear the PE shirt along with school bottoms and the required footwear on their specified garden day.

LG Hoodies are not allowed in the 7th and 8th grade

Uniform Bottoms

All school bottoms must be purchased from either Risse Brothers or Heron Outfitters. Bottoms brought from any other stores do not fulfill the Dress Code Policy.

Girl's shorts, skorts, and dresses MUST be longer than fingertip length or parents will be called to bring a change of clothes that meet the dress code policy. If the length of the clothing becomes a persistent problem, disciplinary action may be taken.

Learning Gate sweat pants are allowable on cold weather days only for PE/Garden.

Pants with belt loops must be worn with a brown or black belt.

Shoes

Shoes must be appropriate for the outdoors environment. Sneakers or sturdy closed toe/heel shoes are allowable. Boots, sandals, crocs, beach shoes and flip-flops are NOT allowed...even on a free dress day.

PE Uniforms

Must be purchased at Risse Brothers or Heron Outfitters and must be worn to school on PE Days

Other

Students may not wear hats indoors. Students may not dye their hair in unnatural colors or have styles that would disrupt/distract student learning. Students may not have facial piercings. Students may not wear accessories that may dangerous/disruptive to student learning.

Free Dress/non-Uniform Day

Free dress days are a privilege earned by students. Failure to follow the free dress requirements may result in the student loss of privilege in future free dress days. If a student forgets free dress, they will not be given the opportunity to call parents for a change of clothes. No clothing may have rips, holes, inappropriate pictures, words, logos, and advertisements, anything discriminatory, violent and may not be suggestive of drugs, alcohol. Anything questionable will be reviewed by the administration.

Shirts

Must have sleeves that fully cover the shoulders, chest and abdomen, may not be see through or tied or cinched at the waist.

Bottoms

Must be longer than fingertip length, may not have writing across the

backside of the pants/shorts/skirt, may not be worn below the hips

Shoes

Must be appropriate for the outdoor environment. Sneakers or sturdy closed toe/heel shoes are allowable. Boots, sandals, crocs, beach shoes or flip-flops are NOT allowable even on a free dress day.

Spirit Day

Spirit Day is held the last Friday of each month. Students may wear their spirit shirt (available for purchase in the front office) with uniforms pants/shorts and school appropriate shoes. Middle school students may wear their house shirt.

Field Trips

Field trip permission forms will specify the dress code for that particular trip.

Hair and Grooming

Hair must be neatly groomed. Hair shall not be dyed unnatural hair colors. Hair must not fall over the eyes. No shaved numbers, phrases or other designs shaved into hair are permitted. No hairstyles, colors, or combinations thereof, which may cause a distraction, are permitted. Make-up worn should be tasteful.

STUDENT PLACEMENT

Student placement will remain consistent throughout the year. Students will not be moved to a new classroom during the school year with the exception of a diagnosed medical reason or documented bullying or sexual harassment. Documentation of bullying or sexual harassment includes the completion of investigations and a finding of bullying or sexual harassment followed by formal referrals and the implementation of an Action Plan.

Students' placement for the following year is a process that involves many of the school personnel. The school does not take parent requests.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION INFORMATION

Students and parents are required to view their teacher's Edsby site for classroom information daily. Parents in grades 1st thru 5th must check the planners daily for homework and important information.

Elementary Curriculum can be found on the Learning Gate website www.learninggate.org. Grade level and subject area standards can be found at CPALMS.org.

Elementary students at Learning Gate will be assessed each trimester and

parents/guardians will receive an electronic report card.

Extra credit and test/quiz retakes are not given to improve grades.

Elementary homework will consist of reading nightly and independent studying for assessments. If a student requires any additional support, assignments may be assigned by the teacher in the core subject areas.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION INFORMATION

Students and parents are required to view their teachers' syllabi on Edsby. The syllabus will outline course expectations and grading, homework and late work policies.

Learning Gate's curriculum and placement procedure can be found on the school's website www.learninggate.org

Middle School Course Requirements

- In all middle school courses, the weighted average of the two nine week grades and the district scaled semester exam must equal a passing grade for the student to gain credit for the semester.
- To be promoted to 7th grade, 6th grade students must have earned 3.5 middle school credits by July 1st of school year
- To be promoted to 8th grade, 7th grade students must have earned 7.5 middle school credits by July 1 of the school year
- To be promoted to 9th grade, 8th grade students must:
 - Successfully complete three middle school or higher-level courses (both semesters) in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies
- Failure to earn semester credit in a core subject (social studies, LA, Math, Science) requires a student to retake that segment through Florida Virtual School to recover the credit.
- Parents are expected to sign their student up for credit recovery immediately after report cards are posted.
- 6th grade students are encouraged to sign up for elective courses on Florida Virtual School. Learning Gate cannot approve any course through Florida Virtual School that we provide as part of our curriculum unless it is needed for credit recovery.
- Middle school students enrolled in high school credit courses can view their grading procedures and options on page 58 of the Hillsborough County Student Handbook.

Middle School Final Semester Grade Calculations Based on Exam Weight							
9 Week Grade Combinations	Exam Grade 15%	Exam Grade 20%	Exam Grade 25%	Exam Grade (Civics EOC) 30%	High School Credit Course		Semester Grade
					Exam Grade 25%	Exam Grade (HS EOC) 30%	
A,A	A,B,C,D	A,B,C	A,B,C	A,B	A,B,C	A,B	A
A,A	F	D,F	D,F	C,D,F	D,F	C,D,F	B
A,B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
A,B	B,C,D,F	B,C,D,F	B,C,D,F	B,C,D	B,C,D,F	B,C,D	B
A,B				F		F	C
A,C	A,B,C,D,F	A,B,C,D	A,B,C,D	A,B,C	A,B,C,D	A,B,C	B
A,C		F	F	D,F	F	D,F	C
A,D	A,B	A,B	A,B	A,B	A,B	A,B	B
A,D	C,D,F	C,D,F	C,D,F	C,D,F	C,D,F	C,D,F	C
A,F			A	A	A	A	B
A,F	A,B,C,D,F	A,B,C,D,F	B,C,D,F	B,C,D	B,C,D	B,C,D	C
A,F				F			D
A,F					F	F	F
B,B	A,B,C,D,F	A,B,C,D	A,B,C,D	A,B,C	A,B,C,D	A,B,C	B
B,B		F	F	D,F	F	D,F	C
B,C	A,B	A,B	A,B	A,B	A,B	A,B	B
B,C	C,D,F	C,D,F	C,D,F	C,D,F	C,D,F	C,D,F	C
B,D			A	A	A	A	B
B,D	A,B,C,D,F	A,B,C,D,F	B,C,D,F	B,C,D	B,C,D,F	B,C,D	C
B,D				F		F	D
B,F	A,B,C	A,B,C	A,B,C	A,B,C	A,B,C	A,B,C	C
B,F	D,F	D,F	D,F	D,F	D	D	D
B,F					F	F	F
C,C			A	A	A	A	B
C,C	A,B,C,D,F	A,B,C,D,F	B,C,D,F	B,C,D	B,C,D,F	B,C,D	C
C,C				F		F	D
C,D	A,B,C	A,B,C	A,B,C	A,B,C	A,B,C	A,B,C	C
C,D	D,F	D,F	D,F	D,F	D,F	D,F	D
C,F		A	A,B	A,B	A,B	A,B	C
C,F	A,B,C,D,F	B,C,D,F	C,D,F	C,D,F	C,D	C,D	D
C,F					F	F	F
D,D		A	A,B	A,B	A,B	A,B	C
D,D	A,B,C,D,F	B,C,D,F	C,D,F	C,D,F	C,D	C,D	D
D,D					F	F	F
D,F				A		A	C
D,F	A,B,C,D	A,B,C,D	A,B,C,D	B,C,D	A,B,C	B,C	D
D,F	F	F	F	F	D,F	D,F	F
F,F	A,B,C,D,F	A,B,C,D,F	A,B,C,D,F	A,B,C,D,F	A,B,C,D,F	A,B,C,D,F	F

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Learning Gate Community School is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate in its hiring or employment practices on the basis of age, race, sex, color, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. Discrimination in recruitment, examination, appointment, training, promotion, retention, discipline or any other employment practice based on one of these improper motives is prohibited. Furthermore, harassment based on a person’s race, color, gender, religion, age, national origin,

sexual orientation, or disability is a form of discrimination and will not be condoned. Any person having questions about Learning Gate Community School compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, or any other civil rights laws should contact the office at (813) 948-4190.

DISCIPLINE

Learning Gate Community School has established a comprehensive Code of Conduct that students must follow and LGCS enforces uniformly. LGCS does not tolerate behavior that disrupts or interferes with the education of other students or the school- learning environment. Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to this Code of Conduct. Parents are responsible for helping students understand and abide by these policies, for recognizing that unacceptable behavior is subject to disciplinary action, and for supporting the enforcement of these policies.

Teacher's authority to remove a student from class

The Florida Legislature and the Department of Education give school and classroom safety the highest priority and empower teachers with the authority and responsibility to ensure their individual classroom is safe. The Hillsborough County School District, in conjunction with State Law, gives teachers the authority to remove students from their classrooms who repeatedly interfere with or seriously disrupt their ability to teach or the student's ability to learn.

Learning Gate Community School discourages the release of students to the unsupervised Library area. Major incidents that occur off campus resulting in on campus issues are subject to disciplinary action.

Behavior Expectation Form

Collected on last day of each 9-weeks (clean sheet = 1 free dress day)

Administration of discipline includes offenses on school property and at school-sponsored events

Tier 1 Discipline

- Each incident = lunch detention and removal from weekly challenge
- 3 incidents = after school detention
- Each incident after = after school detention

Date:	Incident:	Teacher:
-------	-----------	----------

Date:	Incident:	Teacher:
-------	-----------	----------

Date:	Incident:	Teacher:
-------	-----------	----------

Tier 2 Discipline

- Each incident = lunch detention and removal from weekly challenge
- 2 incidents = after school detention
- Each incident after = after school detention

Date:	Incident:	Teacher:
-------	-----------	----------

Date:	Incident:	Teacher:
-------	-----------	----------

Tier 3 Discipline

- Each incident = after school detention and removal from weekly challenge
- Each incident after = ISS/OSS/ATOSS

Date:	Incident:	Teacher:
-------	-----------	----------

Tier 4 Discipline

- Each incident = ISS/OSS/ATOSS

Date:	Incident:	Teacher:
-------	-----------	----------

Positive Behavior Plan

- Each occurrence = removal of one Tier 4 incident
- Each positive behavior (minus negative behavior) occurrence = free dress day at end of 9-weeks.

Date:	Occurrence:	Teacher:
Date:	Occurrence:	Teacher:

Tier 1 Behaviors (including but not limited to...)

- Yelling in hallways, cafeteria, before care or disrupting another class
- Public displays of affection
- Off-task use of technology
- Violation of dress code
- Throwing objects in class, hallway or cafeteria and other forms of horseplay
- Chewing gum, eating candy, or using over the counter medication without the consent of the nurse
- Eating or distributing food during non-lunch time
- Defiance (examples: refusal to complete assignments and participate or stop a particular behavior)
- Loss of Middle School Behavior Expectation form
- Leaving classroom without permission or out of class without a pass
- Taking or tinkering with others materials or food, walking on lunch tables or creating a mess during lunch
- Using water bottles inappropriately to squirt water on others or to project the bottle cap
- Tardy to class

Tier 2 Behaviors (including but not limited to...)

- Drawing/graffiti on school property (will require work detail)
- Lying to LG staff members
- Continuous and repeated disruptive behavior
- Disrespect toward members of the LGCS community including mocking, gestures/or and inappropriate laughing
- Inappropriate use of fire escape window
- Grabbing or hanging on sprinklers
- Refusal to follow a staff members directions (including handing over cellphone, food, gum, behavior form etc.)
- Repeatedly tardy to class
- Cheating and plagiarism including copying/sharing assignments (both students will earn a "0" on the assignment)
- Use of cellphone between HR and dismissal (Parents required to pickup cellphone in front office)

Tier 3 Behaviors (including but not limited to...)

- Vulgar, offensive or graphic defacing of school property
- Use of racial/ethnic/sexual slurs and inappropriate slang/innuendos (even if meaning is not understood)
- Vulgar, graphic or hate based inappropriate use of technology
- Repeated use of cellphone between HR and dismissal
- Participating in a major disruption in school or at a school function
- Disruption during a lunch detention
- Skipping lunch detention or disruption during a lunch detention
Using speech, drawings or technology to purposefully make another student/teacher uncomfortable (kys)
- Unwanted physical horseplay
- Use of rubber bands and other objects in such a way as to cause harm or the potential for harm
- Chronically tardy to class

Tier 4 Behaviors (including but not limited to...)

- Skipping after school detention without prior teacher/administrative approval
- Sexual Harassment
- Leaving campus without permission
- Fighting of any form
- Possession of weapons
- Possessing, distributing or being under the influence of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia
- Destruction of school property including arson and technology deletion/manipulation
- Assault, threat, or intimidation of a member of LGCS including physically, verbally or written

- Bomb threat of general threats to the school population
- Breaking/entering/theft/robbery
- Persistent Documented bullying of any kind
- Malicious use of pictures/videos of LGCS students or staff on social media without their consent
- Any offense, at the judgment of Administration that is deemed to endanger the safety, security and well-being of yourself or other LGCS members – including the use of a non-weapon as a weapon.
- Bringing materials, planning, assisting or participating in a major disruption in school or at a school function

Consequences for the above offenses shall include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1) Notification of parent or guardian
- 2) Verbal and/or written reprimand
- 3) Lunch detention
- 4) After school detention
- 5) Consultation with administration
- 6) Parent Conference
- 7) Revoking of privileges
- 8) In-school-suspension, for up to five days
- 9) Revoking field trip privileges
- 10) Removal/Inability to participate in afterschool sports, activities and dances
- 11) Removal of student from NJHS and Student Government
- 12) OSS Out-of-school suspension, up to ten days
- 13) Referral to law enforcement agency as appropriate
- 14) Referral to LGCS Administration with recommendation for dismissal as appropriate
- 15) Referral to the School District of Hillsborough County for a change of placement

Students committing serious violations or demonstrating a pattern of offenses may have their field trip privileges revoked (as long as it does not affect their grade) and may be excluded from participation in other non-academic activities such as sports, pep rallies, dances, etc. for a period of 9-weeks or for the remainder of the school year as determined by Administration. Administration will communicate revoked privileges for suspensions to parents.

When a pattern of continuous disruptive behavior has been documented in multiple referrals, a letter from the Principal or designee shall be sent to the parent(s) or guardian(s) stating that a continuance of disruptive/inappropriate behavior may result in dismissal from LGCS and/or expulsion by the School District of Hillsborough County.

SECURITY THREATS/TERRORISM/POSSESSION OF WEAPONS

Threats of any type on the safety of student(s), teachers, employees, agents, of the school facility will be handled by the appropriate party including, but not limited to, the Principal or Grade Level Administrators and law enforcement agency if deemed necessary by administration. Consequences will be in compliance with Florida Department of Education, School District of Hillsborough County, local and federal law enforcement agency policies and procedures on such matters.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The Principal, Assistant Principal, a teacher or any other school staff member may temporarily detain and question a student when circumstances indicate that such student has committed, is committing or is about to commit a violation of Florida law or school rules and regulations.

In accordance with Florida Statutes, school authorities may search any area without notice if he or she has a reasonable suspicion that a prohibited or illegally possessed substance or object is contained in the other area.

Students have the responsibility to not carry, possess or conceal any material that is prohibited by law, to accept the consequences for their actions in cases where unlawful materials are found in their possession.

DETENTION

Detention authorized by assigning teacher or staff member will be held during lunch or after school according to the schedule announced by each grade level for students who misbehave or otherwise violate the Code of Conduct. Parents will be given 24-hour prior phone notice that the student will be serving detention. If the teacher is not able to actively talk to the parent via phone they may leave a voicemail detailing the behavior and the day of afterschool detention assigned. Middle school afterschool detentions will be held on Thursdays from 3:30-4:30 and detention may include work detail. Students may not leave campus in between school and detention. Depending upon the offense, single or multiple detentions may be assigned. If a student skips is absent on the assigned day, the student will serve the detention the next day they are back at school. If a student skips a scheduled detention they will serve detention the next day of school and will be referred to administration for further disciplinary action. During detention, students will be given an academic assignment or work detail to complete. If the assignment is not completed during the scheduled time an additional day of detention will be given.

SUSPENSION

In School Suspension (ISS) is the removal of a student from the classroom to a room in the office where they can do their work independently. The student does not participate in any class activities such as lunch, garden, P.E., etc. If a student skips a scheduled suspension or is absent on the assigned day, the student will serve the suspension the next day they are back at school.

Out of School Suspension (OSS) is the removal of the student from the school for up to ten (10) days. The student receives a “0” for all work missed.

Students shall be given notice of the conduct required of them while on school grounds and will be instructed regarding prohibited activities. Students will be informed of any specific charges against them and the identity of the person making the charges.

The school principal will immediately report any suspensions by phone to the student’s parents or guardians. The phone call shall identify the reason for and duration of the student’s suspension to the parent or guardians.

BULLYING/HARRASSMENT

Bullying: (HCPS Policy 5517.01) It is the policy of Hillsborough County Public Schools that all of its students and school employees have an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The district will not tolerate bullying or harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying or harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

Definitions:

“Bullying” includes “cyberbullying” and means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress

It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual’s school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to:

- a. teasing
- b. threat
- c. intimidation
- d. stalking
- e. cyberstalking
- f. physical violence
- g. theft
- h. sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- i. public or private humiliation
- j. destruction of property; and
- k. social-exclusion

Examples or types of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- physical - punching, shoving, poking, strangling, hair-pulling, beating, biting or excessive tickling;

- verbal - hurtful name-calling, teasing or gossip; • emotional (psychological) - rejecting, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, or perceived sexual orientation, manipulating friendships, isolating, ostracizing or peer pressure;
- sexual - many of the actions listed above as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, sexual harassment and abuse involving actual physical contact and sexual assault. In many cases, gender and cross-gender sexual harassment may also qualify as bullying;
- cyber-bullying - the use of information and communication technologies such as email, cell phone, and text messages, instant messaging (IM), defamatory personal web sites, and defamatory online personal polling web sites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to threaten or harm others, or which substantially disrupts or interferes with the operation of a school or an individual student's ability to receive an education.

Cyberbullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectronic system, or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communication, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyberstalking as defined in F.S.784.048(1)(d), means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

Within the scope of the District means regardless of ownership, any computer, computer system, or computer network that is physically located on school property or at a school-related or school-sponsored program or activity

“Harassment” means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

- a.** places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property;
- b.** has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education performance, opportunities, or benefits;
- c.** has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school

Bullying and harassment also encompasses:

- a.** Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.
- b.** Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
 - 1.** incitement or coercion;
 - 2.** accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system; or
 - 3.** acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment.

“Harassment” or “Bullying” also includes electronically transmitted acts (i.e., internet, e-mail, cellular telephone, personal digital assistance (PDA), or wireless hand-held device) directed toward a student(s) or staff member(s) that causes mental or physical harm or is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student(s).

Expected Behavior

The school expects students to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment. Such behavior is essential in maintaining an environment that provides each student the opportunity to obtain a high-quality education in a uniform, safe, secure, efficient, and high-quality system of education. The standards for student behavior shall be set cooperatively through interaction among students, parents/guardians, staff and community member, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-

discipline. The development of such an atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for district and community property on the part of students, staff and community members. School administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers serve as role models for students and are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying. The school upholds that school-related bullying or harassment of any student or school employee is prohibited:

- a.** during any education program or activity conducted by a school site's education institution;
- b.** during any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity;
- c.** through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of a school site's education institution

Bullying may be limited to a single incident. However, in most cases, bullying is characterized by repeated harmful actions on the part of the bully(ies). An individual has the legal right to report an incident(s) of bullying without fear of reprisal or retaliation at any time. Retaliation is defined in the dictionary as meaning "to pay back (an injury) in kind." When a person is accused of having engaged in an inappropriate action, especially bullying, the common reaction of that person is to be angry and want to pay the victim back (retaliate). Retaliation must not occur. Some examples of retaliations are:

- attempting to discuss the matter in any way while it is under investigation;
- spreading rumors;
- following the person;
- becoming physical in any way;
- destroying property;
- using the telephone or any other electronic or written form of communication to retaliate in any way;
- ostracizing.

Therefore, allegations of bullying will be promptly investigated, giving due regard to the need for confidentiality and the safety of the victim and/or any individual(s) who reports an incident(s) of bullying.

WAYS TO REPORT A BULLY:

- Verbally to an adult at school
- On a Bullying Reporting Form located in the front office
- Via email to school administrator or telephone call to school administrator or district office
- Crime Stoppers (1-800-873-8477)

IF YOU ARE THE VICTIM OF BULLYING:

- Clearly tell the bully(ies) to stop.
- Don't ignore the incident. Immediately report the incident to someone at school or seek peer mediation at school. Tell your parent(s)/guardian(s). If the bullying continues after you have clearly told the bully(ies) to stop, make a written record of the incident including date, time, witness or witnesses, and parties involved in the incident.
- Report the incident immediately to an adult who has authority over the bully(ies); for example: teacher, school counselor, assistant principal, or principal.
- Avoid being alone with the person(s) who has attempted to bully you in the past.

TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF BEING ACCUSED OF BULLYING DO:

- Keep your hands to yourself.
- Remember that NO one has a right to harm another person in any way.
- Think before you speak.
- Immediately apologize if you accidentally say or do something that has made another person feel oppressed.
- Report all incidents of bullying behavior you have witnessed to appropriate school personnel.

DON'T:

- Touch anyone without his or her permission and especially in an inappropriate way.
- Keep interacting with a person after he or she has perceived your behavior toward him or her as being inappropriate and has clearly told you to stop.
- Make remarks that may cause another person to feel oppressed (stressed, scared, intimidated).

Sexual Harassment

Students who engage in such conduct shall be subject to a range of punishment which may include, but shall not be limited to, notification to parent or guardian, verbal or written reprimand, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or dismissal from LGCS (sexual harassment occurring in cyberspace would result in appropriate punishment as well).

1. Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to, the following unwanted and unwelcome behavior:

- (a) Verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature
- (b) Pressure for sexual activity
- (c) Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implication (for example, comments about a person's body)
- (d) Display of, being shown, given or left sexually suggestive objects, pictures, illustrations, messages or written materials
- (e) Sexual or suggestive comments, jokes or gestures
- (f) Being "sexually rated" by an individual, for example, on a scale from 1 to 10
- (g) Being pressured to go out with someone
- (h) Being the recipient of whistles, jeers, or catcalls
- (i) Being touched, grabbed, or brushed up against or pinched in a sexual way
- (j) Spreading sexual rumors about a person
- (k) Having clothing pulled/removed in a sexual manner (bra snapping, cup checks)
- (l) Being forced to view centerfolds, photographs, posters, or drawings of a sexual nature
- (m) Having one's way blocked in a sexual way;
- (n) Placing messages or graffiti written about that person on a computer screen, restroom walls, in locker rooms, or any other public site
- (o) Being forced to kiss someone or do something sexual other than kissing
- (p) Being called a name that identifies one's sexual orientation: i.e., gay, lesbian, straight, hetero, homo, etc.
- (q) Being spied on or photographed while dressing or showering
- (r) Requesting sexual favors.

2. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments or welcomed interactions of a socially acceptable nature.

3. A student has the right at any time to raise the issue of sexual harassment with appropriate school and/or district personnel without fear of reprisal. Do not think that if you just ignore the problem, it will go away.

4. Allegations of sexual harassment shall be promptly investigated, giving due regard to the need for confidentiality.

5. Those being sexually harassed should take the following steps:

- (a) Clearly tell the harasser to stop.
- (b) Make a written record of the incident including date, time, witness or witnesses and parties involved in the incident.
- (c) Report the incident immediately to an adult at the school, such as

- a teacher, or principal.
- (d) Report the incident immediately to your parents or guardian.
- (e) Avoid being alone with the person who has harassed you

6. When a person is alleged to have engaged in any sexual harassment, the common reaction of that person is to be angry and want to pay him or her back (retaliate). Retaliation is defined as meaning “to pay back (an injury) in kind.” LGCS does not tolerate retaliation. Some examples of retaliation include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Attempting to discuss the matter in any way while it is under investigation
- (b) Spreading rumors
- (c) Persistent following of the person
- (d) Becoming physical in any way
- (e) Destroying property
- (f) Using the telephone, computer or other electronic means to retaliate in any way

7. To minimize the risk of being accused of sexual harassment:

DO:

- (a) Keep your hands to yourself.
- (b) Think before you speak.

DO NOT:

- a) Touch anyone in an inappropriate way.
- b) Keep asking a person to go out with you after he/she has said “No”.
- c) Be in a room alone with a person with the door closed.
- d) Make remarks that have sexual overtones or implications

ELECTRONICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

LGCS provides its students with many opportunities for computer and Internet usage. In order to participate in these opportunities, each student and family must fully understand and agree to the principles that guide this usage. Any student or family member that is not willing to accept these responsibilities will not be afforded computer or Internet access.

The acceptable use of technology and Internet privileges is an extension of the Handbook. The Internet is a global database system providing access to information from around the world. Students will have limited and supervised access to the Internet.

Prevalent in student cultures is the use of social media outlets. When students use social media to threaten other students, faculty, or staff which has a direct effect on school property, school security may be requested to conduct a “home visit” and/or law enforcement may be involved which could result in criminal prosecution.

The following principles guide this usage:

- (a) **Personal Safety and Personal Property:** No personal contact information or pictures of self or other students, faculty or staff may be posted by students on an Internet site or other LGCS locations. Personal information includes a home address, telephone number, school address, etc. This information may not be provided to an individual, organization, or company, including websites that solicit personal information. Students will promptly disclose to a teacher or school employee any message received that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable. It is required and incumbent on the parent to counsel their child regarding inappropriate Internet usage as defined.
- (b) **Illegal Activities:** Students will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to any computer system, including the LGCS network, or to go beyond their authorized access. This includes attempting to log in through another person’s account or access another person’s files. Students will not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other illegal act. Such an act will result in immediate notification of the administrator for his/her action.
- (c) **Security System:** Students are responsible for their individual accounts and must take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their accounts. Under no conditions should a student provide his/her password to another person. Students will immediately notify a teacher if they have identified a possible security problem. Students should not go looking for security problems, as this may be construed as an illegal attempt to gain access. Spread of computer viruses will also be avoided by following the LGCS virus protection procedures when downloading software.
- (d) **Inappropriate Language:** Restrictions against inappropriate

language apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on Web pages. Students will not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language. Students will not post information that could cause damage or disruption. Students will not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks. Students will not harass other students. If a student is told by another individual to stop sending messages, that student must stop. Students will not knowingly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

- (e) **Respect for Privacy:** Students will not repost a message that was sent to them privately. Students will notify teachers immediately should they receive a message via the network. Students will not post private information, including personal contact information, about another person.

Respecting Resource Limits: Students will use the system only for educational activities. Students will not download large files unless absolutely necessary and with prior consent. Students will not post chain letters or engage in “spamming.” Students shall not check their personal email accounts utilizing LGCS hardware, software, and network unless previously approved by their teacher for a class project.

- (f) **Plagiarism:** Students will not plagiarize works that are found on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as one’s own. Plagiarized work will not be scored and result in a grade of zero for the assignment.
- (g) **Copyright:** Students will respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when one inappropriately reproduces a work that is protected by a copyright.
- (h) **Inappropriate Access to Material:** Students will not use LGCS computers to access material that is not related to educational pursuits, is designated for adults, is obscene or profane, advocates illegal or dangerous acts, or advocates violence or discrimination toward other people. If a student mistakenly accesses inappropriate information, he/she should immediately tell a teacher or the Principal. LGCS parents

should instruct their children further, if there is additional material that they think would be inappropriate for their children to access. LGCS fully expects that students will follow their parents' instructions in this matter.

- (i) Disciplinary Actions: The Principal in accordance with this Handbook will discipline any student who violates these principles. In addition to other consequences, future computer use may be fully or partially taken away from the student accompanied by detentions and/or suspensions
- (j) Students in 5th – 8th Grade are required to complete and sign the LGCS Computer User Agreement and are bound by the rules and consequences of that agreement.

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

If a student brings a cell phone to school, they are responsible for the device at all times. Cell phones must be turned off and concealed in the students' backpack. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action and the device will be confiscated and will need to be picked up by a parent. All electronic devices are the responsibility of the student. Devices may only be used under the supervision of a Learning Gate staff member. Electronic devices shall be confiscated if used without permission, unless these devices have been approved for educational purposes.

The school shall not accept the responsibility for lost or damaged personal devices or property.

FOOD SERVICES

Free and Reduced lunch applications are available in the front office.

Hanna Campus

Breakfast 7:15 am – 7:45 am

Lunch 10:45 am – 1:15 pm

Lutz Lake Fern Campus

Breakfast 7:15 – 7:45 am

Lunch 10:45 – 12:00 pm

Learning Gate Community School encourages healthy eating habits and discourages fast foods. We ask parents not to bring **fast food** into the cafeteria. If brought, the parent and child will be asked to eat at an outside picnic table or another area away from the cafeteria. Soft drinks (Coca Cola, Pepsi etc.) high caffeine drinks, coffee/tea, candy and chewing gum are not allowed to be brought to school. In classrooms that have a daily

snack, the snack must be healthy. Fruits, vegetables and other healthy items are preferred. High sugar drinks including sports drinks are not permitted. Candy, cake, cookies and high sugar snacks are not permitted

No kitchen facilities will be available for heating or storing lunches brought to school by students.

What is a Waste Free Lunch?

- A waste-free lunch program is more than packing a lunch. It is an educational tool for us to teach students about where our trash ends up and how we, as a community, can reduce our impact on the earth.
- Due to our school's commitment to the environment, we have implemented a waste free lunch program, **this means No litter, No trash, No throw away containers.** Compostable food will be disposed of in our compost buckets. Uneaten, non-compostable food will be returned in the student's lunchbox. All foods and drinks must be packed in reusable containers within a reusable lunch box/bag. Utensils, napkins and drink bottles must be reusable and packed daily.
- We are asking for your support as we develop the lunch program to better establish the environmental beliefs of our community.

Lunch Accounts:

All students must have a lunch account at www.myschoolaccount.com. You will need to create an account to monitor any emergency lunch charges.

Lunch Ordering:

Menus will be posted monthly and must be pre-ordered online at www.myschoolaccount.com. You must place your orders a minimum of 2 days in advance. Once your order is placed and confirmed, there is no way to cancel. Please check field trips prior to confirming orders. Snacks are available during lunch: \$.75 snack and \$.50 milk.

Student Expectations:

Students are expected to remain in their seats for the duration of lunch. Noise should be kept at a reasonable level. Toys and activities must not be brought to the lunchroom. Throwing of food/trash will not be tolerated.

Peanut Allergy:

A designated table is prepared for students with peanut allergies. The table and chairs are wiped with a separate cloth/bucket and bleach is used after each shift.

Emergency Lunch:

If a student forgets their lunch, one will be provided. Your account will be charged \$3.95. Emergency reduced lunch is \$.40. The emergency lunch will consist of a sandwich, vegetable, fruit and milk.

Parent Volunteers:

Lunchroom hours are from 10:45am-1:15 pm at the Hanna Campus and 10:30 – 12:30 on the Lutz Lake Fern Campus. Walk-ins are welcome. Please contact Jill Stokes jill@learninggate.org for more information. Assistance needed with cleaning tables, composting and helping kids during lunch.

HEALTH SCREENING

The school principal may allow the School Health Service Program or other licensed individuals or organizations to conduct health screening activities at various times during the school year. Parents or guardians will be notified in advance if any will have a fee associated with them and will be allowed an opportunity to decline such services. School health screenings may include, but are not limited to vision screening, hearing screening, measurement of height and weight, dental screening, scoliosis screening, etc. A parent or guardian must inform the school in writing if they do not wish their child to participate in any free portion of this program.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND CONDITIONS

Students who are ill and appear to have symptoms indicating a communicable disease will be isolated from other students. A parent or guardian will be contacted and should make arrangements to pick up their child immediately. If necessary, the school principal may ask for a written statement from a licensed physician stating it is safe for the student to return to school.

Signs of a communicable disease:

- vomiting
- diarrhea
- fever
- rash
- red, itchy eyes
- lice

Please do not send your child to school with any of the above signs/symptoms. Students must be fever free for 24 hours before returning

to school.

If a student is identified as or suspected of having head lice, parents will be notified immediately and the student will be removed from the classroom and isolated until he or she is picked up. Students will not be allowed to return to school until school personnel verify the student is free from lice and nits (the white eggs which adhere to the strands of hair). Parents should treat the child for the lice and return him or her to school as soon as possible. Absences due to head lice will be recorded as any other illness or absence from school. Please notify the nurse if you have recently treated your child or family for head lice.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

No over the counter medications such as cough drops, insect repellent, aspirin, etc. are allowed to be in the possession of a student. If a student is found to have any form of medication in their possession it will be given to the nurse and a parent will be required to pick it up after school. Parents or guardians should ask physicians to arrange medication schedules so all medication can be given at home whenever possible. If such arrangements cannot be made, school personnel will assist a student with the administration of prescription medication under the following guidelines:

- Only prescription medications will be administered. In rare cases where over-the-counter or sample medications are required, they must be accompanied by written orders from the physician on the physician's letterhead.
- All medication must be delivered to school in the container in which it was originally purchased by a parent/guardian.
- A separate supply of medication must be kept at school. Pharmacies will supply additional medication bottles with the label if asked. Medication cannot be transported from home to school on a daily or weekly basis.
- The medication label must indicate the name of the medication; the student's name, physician's name, dosage and frequency or time medication is to be delivered.
- Parents or guardians must provide and label any special equipment (cup, spoon, dropper) needed to dispense the medication.
- Parents or guardians must complete and sign the medication authorization form available from the office.
- Parents or guardians(s) are responsible for monitoring the supply of medications.
- School personnel retain the right to dispose of or destroy any expired medications or any medication left during extended holidays or at the end of the school year.

STUDENT INJURY

If a student is injured at school, the teacher will send the student to the clinic to be assessed by the school nurse and appropriate action will be taken. Minor injuries will be treated and the student will return to class.

More serious injuries will require a call to the parent or, in extreme cases, 911. If a parent or parent designee cannot be reached, the school principal, at her discretion, will accompany the student to the hospital with the notarized Authorization of Medical Treatment Form that was filled out at the beginning of the school year. In all but life threatening situations, a doctor or hospital will not treat an injured child without this form.

Accident/Injury Report will be filled out by the supervising teacher and sent home with the student for a parent signature. All but minor occurrences will be documented.

A student must have a doctor note in order to use crutches/wheelchair on school property

Parents or guardians are required to have, on file, a current Emergency Card. These cards are distributed during "Meet the Teacher" day and on the first day of school. Cards should be returned the following day. The school should be notified of any contact information changes promptly if this information changes.

COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY PLAN

Every teacher has been trained for emergency situations. Drills are practiced throughout the year with students and trainings are done with the staff quarterly. Some of the procedures are described briefly below. For a more detailed explanation, there is an emergency manual available in the front office for parents to read.

In case of evacuation at the Hanna Road campus, students will be taken to River of Life Church located at 410 Chapman Road Lutz, Florida 33549.

In case of evacuation at the Lutz Lake Campus, students will be taken to the Lutz Public Library at 101 W. Lutz Lake Fern Road Lutz, Florida 33548

You will be notified by phone, email or a text message if there is an emergency at the school.

Lockdown: This procedure is used when it is the opinion of the principal or assistant principal that students and staff are the safest in the classroom. Instruction stops, doors and windows are locked, blinds are closed and teachers will NOT open classroom doors FOR ANY REASON until it is deemed safe by the administration.

Modified Lockdown: This procedure is used when it is the administrations opinion that the students are safest in the classroom. Doors and windows are locked but instruction continues.

For the safety of students, staff, and parents, when in lockdown, no parents are allowed on school grounds. We will notify you when it is safe to pick up your student

Tornado Warnings: Students should be lined up against an inside wall where there are no windows. Students should assume the crouched position either against the wall or under a desk/table. Classroom teachers will be notified when the warning has passed by administration.

PARENT TEACHER STUDENT ASSOCIATION (PTSA)

Learning Gate Community School Parent/Teacher/Student Association is a volunteer organization working in conjunction with the school. Membership is not mandatory but encouraged and school volunteer hours are awarded for participation.

Executive Board/Committee Chairs will receive all volunteer hours plus 2 parent education hours.

All General Members will receive 1 volunteer hour for joining (per parent). Each General Member will receive 1 parent education hour for attending each general meeting (max 3).

A General Meetings calendar will be announced at the beginning of the school year

Membership is \$10.00 per adult

Students in 6th, 7th and 8th grade are encouraged to have a voice in their school and join the PTSA FOR \$5.



This Handbook has been developed for the purpose of informing you of the policies and procedures of Learning Gate Community School. We hope that it will assist you in making your school days pleasant and successful. It is the responsibility of each student and parent/guardian read, understand, and abide by this Handbook.