

# PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2017-2018

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



## Guffey Community Charter School

**“Kindness to children, love for children, goodness to children – these are the only investments that never fail” ~ Henry David Thoreau**

## WELCOME

Welcome to Guffey Community Charter School! The staff would like to welcome all new and returning families to GCCS for 2017/18 school year. We look forward to working with you as partners in creating an inviting and effective learning community.

GCCS is a “living” school. At our best, we are flexible and adaptive in working together to meet the varying needs of all our students and their families. In addition, we all work hard on achieving the educational requirements of the Guffey Community Charter School.

### **Vision**

Guffey school is a place of learning and service that nurtures the light of the individual spirit by treasuring our countryside, the classroom, and the community, both local and global, in an atmosphere of safety, kindness, and joy.

### **Mission**

Students will have a life-long excitement for learning and be prepared academically, personally, socially and intellectually to achieve their personal goals and contribute actively to the betterment of their community.

## SCHOOL PERSONNEL

We have exceptional teachers and fine support staff. All our staff are residents of Guffey or nearby small towns and are thoroughly dedicated to the children and the school. Our three classroom teachers are Colorado State Certified Teachers with extensive classroom experience, advanced degrees, and a love of children that is boundless.

The strength of each individual teacher is multiplied by the fact that the whole staff works in harmony to meet the educational needs of all students.

### **Board Members:**

President: Frank Ruvo, [fruvo@guffeyschool.org](mailto:fruvo@guffeyschool.org)

Secretary: Chris Peterson, [clp@guffeyschool.org](mailto:clp@guffeyschool.org)

Member: Linda Parrish, [lparrish@guffeyschool.org](mailto:lparrish@guffeyschool.org)

Member: Laura Owens, [lowens@guffeyschool.org](mailto:lowens@guffeyschool.org)

Member: Cathleen VanEgmond, [cvanegmond@guffeyschool.org](mailto:cvanegmond@guffeyschool.org)

### **School Staff:**

K-2 teacher: Jenny Hartman, [jhartman@guffeyschool.org](mailto:jhartman@guffeyschool.org)

3-5 teacher: Lynda MacDonald, [lmacdonald@guffeyschool.org](mailto:lmacdonald@guffeyschool.org)

6-8 teacher: Hillevi Peterson-Hirsch, [hph@guffeyschool.org](mailto:hph@guffeyschool.org)

Principal/Administrator: Martine Walker, [mwalker@guffeyschool.org](mailto:mwalker@guffeyschool.org)

### **Support Staff:**

Bus Driver: Dean Wilson

Janitorial: Kelli Maguire

Maintenance: Steve Taylor

## ENROLLMENT

### Kindergarten Enrollment Age

Colorado state law mandates that children must be 5 years old before or by October 1<sup>st</sup> of their starting school year in order to be eligible to enter Kindergarten.

### Open Enrollment

GCCS is a Public Charter School authorized by the school district and the state of Colorado. GCCS is a member of the Colorado League of Charter Schools. Our school was one of the first 20 charter schools to be authorized by the state in 1998. Our charter allows us to enroll students from Kindergarten through Grade 8. Enrollment is open to any child who resides within the state of Colorado. GCCS enrollment is limited to space and resources, first consideration is for residents of Park County.

### Non-discrimination policy

GCCS's educational program is nonreligious, nonsectarian, and consistent with applicable law. GCCS will not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry, disability, or need for special education services. Teachers and staff will exhibit professional behavior at all times in regards to our non-discrimination policy.

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

<http://guffeyschool.org/resources/calendar/>

## ATTENDANCE

### School Hours

Our school day is Monday – Thursday, 7:30am – 4pm

### Attendance Policy

Colorado's Compulsory Attendance Law, JH/JHB (7104), establishes the expectation that all children between the ages of seven and sixteen be registered and attending school.

For our students to succeed in school it is of the utmost importance that they regularly attend. Frequent absences may lead to poor academic work and possible academic failure. Developing a habit of regular and punctual attendance will help a student throughout his/her educational experience. Poor attendance is a major cause of poor performance and other problems as well as resulting in additional work for both the student and the teacher.

By building the habit of daily attendance, you will help your child see that school is important. Even though students may make up missed assignments at home, they miss the class discussion and integration of classroom objectives, which is critical to the overall learning process. Of course, we do not want ill students to attend school, but we certainly encourage avoiding absences due to other circumstances.

If your child is going to be absent, it is of utmost importance that the office is notified at 689-2093 **before** 8:00am on the morning of the absence. The procedure for receiving daily assignments for students who are absent is as follows:

- A telephone call or email, should be received by 10:00am
- The homework may be picked up at the end of the day in the office, giving teachers ample time to prepare it
- Student homework should be returned to their classroom teachers within 2-school days for each day absent (i.e. student absent on Tuesday – make up work is due Thursday)

- If student rides the bus and will not be on the bus any given day, call the school by 6:00am and leave a message. If after 6:00am you may still call the school and/or Martine Walker.
- If a student needs to leave during the school day, parents must sign the student out in the office. Upon the student's return (if during the same day), parents must check the student back in with the office.

It is important to maintain a high degree of health at school. If your student becomes ill or is ill at school we will request that you, or your designated emergency contact, pick up your child. Please advise the school IMMEDIATELY if your child is diagnosed with an illness that is contagious.

*In fairness to all students and our staff, students who have excessive absences (8-days in a trimester) or who are tardy for school 3 or more times each trimester (3 times tardy equals 1 – day absent) will be subject to a meeting with the student's teacher and school principal.*

### **School Closure - Inclement Weather Policy**

It is sometimes necessary to close school because of inclement weather or hazardous conditions.

When the decision is made before school opens in the morning: Phone calls are made to a "snow call tree" that will result in contacting every parent (via call or text) who has a phone. You may also check the website home page for updates.

When the decision is made during school hours: It is extremely unusual for school to be closed during school hours, due to the complications in getting every child safely home with a parent or authorized guardian. Parents are encouraged to pick up their children at school if they feel the weather conditions dictate such action, or to keep their children home if they suspect weather conditions in their area would place their children in danger. If weather conditions prohibit the transportation of children to homes, administration and teaching staff will be responsible for making the students as comfortable as possible, providing supervision, and furnishing food to students from the school kitchen. Students will be released only when it is safe to do so, and only to adults who are authorized by the parents to act as emergency guardian.

## **TRANSPORTATION/SCHOOL BUS SAFETY RULES**

Our school's 30 passenger school bus will transport students to and from school daily. As in the past, our school makes every effort to meet the transportation needs of our school community. Having a school bus is a great privilege for Guffey families because the state does not require a public school to provide student transportation. The following are rules for riding our school's bus:

1. In the afternoon, students who do not have a parent/guardian at the bus stop will be returned to the school for pick up. The driver may have to take them to the rest of the bus route before returning to school.
2. All school rules apply while riding the bus
3. The driver is in charge
4. No food, candy, drinks or gum are allowed to be consumed on the bus
5. Unacceptable language, gestures, or loud noises are not permitted
6. Always be on time, arriving 10 minutes before stop time
7. Cross the road at least 10 feet in front of the bus
8. Board or leave the bus at your assigned stop. Students must have written permission from parent, approved by the principal, and presented to the driver in order to go to another stop
9. Parents must provide written permission if their child can walk home from the bus stop

### **CONSEQUENCES:**

1. Driver, staff, student meeting with possible seat assignment
2. Pink slip
3. Suspension/expulsion from riding the bus

If the driver deems the bus to be unsafe due to student behavior, the bus will be pulled to the side of the road, where it will remain until order is restored. Staff or local law enforcement may remove the student/s from the bus, and parents may be called to pick up their student/s.

## LUNCH AND NUTRITION

Our food philosophy is holistic in nature and considers the nutritional content of the food, how the food is produced and its impact on our environment and economy. Aside from our philosophical stance we acknowledge scientific research that shows students to focus, perform and feel better physically and mentally when they eat nutritious whole foods.

We recognize that food can be very personal and can take the perspective of right and wrong, so it is essential to remain non-judgmental. We believe food is a tool that connects us; it is not about judgment or discrimination. Healthy, well-balanced meals provide essential nutrition for your children's brains and bodies to perform optimally. Candy, soda pop, and other foods high in sugar or caffeine are not acceptable in school lunches or snacks at GCCS.

The school makes every effort to provide healthy snacks and lunches. Parents are asked to provide healthy classroom snacks. Since bused students arrive early in the morning, they are offered a light breakfast, however, we strongly encourage students to have a breakfast prior to coming to school. After mid-morning, classroom teachers serve a classroom snack. School lunch is served daily or students can bring a sack lunch from home. Although we have chosen not to participate in the federal government's lunch program, qualifying students will be served a daily lunch. Otherwise, the cost for lunch is \$1.75 per child per day, and adult lunches are \$3.50 per person.

## COMMUNICATIONS

GCCS is dedicated to good communication between the school and parents. In order to keep parents informed of happenings at the school, we communicate through a variety of channels: PONY's (folders sent home and to be returned to school on **THE NEXT DAY**), parent letters from teachers, school-wide emails, hard copies of important information, parent/teacher conferences, the school website, the middle school class website, the community shares email, etc. When communicating with Guffey Staff please use appropriate channels of accountable communications provided by the school for our employees: Guffey School Email Addresses, School Phone Line, and in-person Appointments.

### Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held twice a year, during fall and winter term, to communicate student progress to parents. This is a time for parent and teacher to come together and have a conversation about the progress of your child. Teachers will typically share examples of your child's main lesson work highlighting their strengths and acknowledging what your child may struggle with. It is also a time for the parent to share the child's perspective of school and any social concerns or academic concerns. Parents and teachers are welcome to make additional appointments as needed.

End of the Year Reports will be sent to parents at the end of the school year. Teachers will contact parents if concerns arise regarding a student's progress in school. It is essential to inform teachers of any changes in your child's life that might affect their performance in school (i.e. illness, death of family member or pet, divorce, separation, etc.)

**GCCS Website** [www.guffeyschool.org](http://www.guffeyschool.org)

The GCCS website contains important information and updates about the school, the board's meetings agendas and minutes, information about our policies, and much more. Please visit it often.

## **Middle School Website** [www.hillevipeterson.com](http://www.hillevipeterson.com)

The middle school website contains important information and updates about class. Please review for upcoming projects and due dates.

## **School Facebook Page**

GCCS has a Facebook page and we encourage you to follow us. We regularly post pictures and provide updates regarding events.

## **Texting/IM**

If you prefer electronic communication other than email the administrator, Martine Walker, is happy to communicate via whichever method you prefer. You can find her cell phone number at the beginning of this handbook. You may text message her or you may also use Facebook's Instant Messenger to communicate with the administrator that way.

## **PUBLIC CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS**

### **Policy and Procedures:**

GCCS strives to be proactive in promoting a positive culture between all community members. The following policies apply to grievances of any type. The steps below must be followed in order.

- 1. 1<sup>st</sup> line: Teachers - Address issues with those directly involved** –Bring the situation or concern to the attention to the a teacher.
- 2. 2<sup>nd</sup> line: Principal - Facilitate resolution with the assistance of the Administrator** – If satisfactory resolution is not realized after direct conversation between the conflicted parties, the situation must be brought to the attention of the School Administrator or designee. The School Administrator and the conflicted parties will address the situation, facilitate communication, and develop goals for conflict resolution. The School Administrator will monitor the process until resolution is realized or until an impasse is reached. If the concern is regarding the School Administrator, then the President of the Board or designated board member will facilitate the complaint at this level.
- 3. 3<sup>rd</sup> line: The Board - Prepare a written grievance for the school Board** - If the concern is regarding the School Administrator, then the President of the Board will facilitate the complaint at this level. The grievant shall prepare a formal written grievance. The grievance must: a. Describe the incident, decision or practice that gave rise to the complaint; b. If possible, cite the contract, policy or procedure that has been violated and/or rationale for concern; c. Describe what conflict resolution strategies were attempted via steps one and two; and d. Explain what corrective action is being requested. The Board will address in a closed, executive session.

## **SPECIAL ED AND LEARNING CHALLENGES**

Special education at GCCS is primarily an inclusive program, where the special education visiting consultant support person works with children in the classroom or a designed setting. Through our school district we have a range of services to help in identifying students who require special services. If a child is thought to be struggling with some aspect of school, child study team meetings are conducted, including the student's parents, to discuss ways to serve the child. In the cases where students are clearly identified as requiring special education services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed by the parent/staff team. We also have contracts with other special service providers to include services in speech therapy, occupational therapy, audiology, and counseling. Upon request, a list of local counselors may be provided.

# DISCIPLINE

## Philosophy

At GCCS, our philosophy of discipline is rooted in respect for one another. As a community, parents and teachers endeavor to create a nurturing environment. Our school must be a place where all feel safety, security and protection. During the grade school years, the teacher is a model of self-discipline that holds the primary position of authority in the classroom. Working out of shared principles, the teachers have their own method and style of teaching, and their own method and style of discipline. GCCS is committed to maintaining a healthy environment that is free of harassment and discrimination of any kind.

The following list of core beliefs outlines the professional actions and attitudes of all staff members in GCCS.

- We strive to maintain the dignity and self-respect of students and staff
- Students will be guided and expected to solve their problems or the ones they create, without creating problems for anyone else
- Students will be given opportunities to make decisions and live with the consequences, good or bad
- Misbehavior will be handled with natural or logical consequences
- Misbehavior will be viewed as an opportunity for individual problem solving and preparation for the real world as opposed to a personal attack on school or staff
- School issues will be handled by school personnel. Criminal activity will be referred to the proper authorities. (Criminal activity includes, but is not limited to, bringing a weapon to school, threats of any type, vandalism, sexual harassment, etc.)

Every classroom at GCCS will have the same five rules:

1. Treat me, as your teacher, with the same respect with which I treat you
2. Your actions must not cause a distraction for anyone else
3. If you cause a problem, you will be asked to solve it
4. If you cannot solve the problem or choose not to, staff will intervene based upon the situation and the person/s involved
5. Student/staff concerns should be addressed privately, at an appropriate time

Consequences:

- Students will be allowed to experience the results of a poor choice, enabling him or her to make better choices
- Will be designed to fit the problems of individual students, and they may be different, even when problems appear to be the same

Playground Rules

- All games should be played with a concern for others using the playground
- The playground equipment is to be used properly. If there are questions, consult with a teacher or playground supervisor
- Students will not play roughly, including such activities as tackling or wrestling
- Students will show respect for others and follow instructions given by staff
- Students must stay within the playground area
- All equipment taken outside should be collected by the student after every recess
- Students will settle differences peacefully, if need be, inform the playground supervisor before recess is over

- Helmets required for anyone riding a bike, skateboard or scooter
- No throwing snowballs, rocks or wood chips

## **How Parents can help create positive school culture**

Model mutual respect to all adults and children in the school community

- Work collaboratively with others in the community
- Support the school and its mission
- Get involved
- Don't get involved in disciplining other people's children—turn difficult situations over to a teacher or principal
- Care about all children, not just your own.
- Bring concerns directly to the person concerned in a respectful way. Listen to other points of view as presented by staff. Be patient as the school endeavors to be thoughtful in determining how to respond to your concerns
- Do your part to contribute to positive relationships with staff and other parents
- Speak kindly about other people in the community around your children.
- Model compassion
- Respect the privacy of others and their children by not talking about confidential matters in front of others

## **Discipline Policy**

Guffey School students are expected to assume responsibility for their own behavior. This policy is in effect at school, during all school sponsored activities both on and off campus, and whenever a school staff member is present. Students who show problem behavior will be subject to disciplinary action. Example of behavior that will not be tolerated include:

### **1<sup>st</sup> level:**

- Disrespect / Unsafe Behavior / Rudeness / Offensive Behavior

### **2<sup>nd</sup> level:**

- Physical Aggression / Vandalism / Dishonesty

### **3<sup>rd</sup> level:**

- Theft / Smoking

### **4<sup>th</sup> level:**

- Drug or Weapon Possession

### **5<sup>th</sup> level:**

- Habitual disruptive behavior

Depending on the behavior, severity, or if the behavior is repeated, one or more of the following actions may be taken:

- 1<sup>st</sup> level: Pink slip and warning sent home. Apology letter written by offender.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> level: Previous, written apology from student, community service, and *Behavior Contract*
- 3<sup>rd</sup> level: Previous, 1-5 day suspension, exclusion from some activities, modified *Behavior Contract* or *Remedial Discipline Plan*
- 4<sup>th</sup> level: Previous, 5-10 day suspension, law enforcement notified

- 5<sup>th</sup> level: Immediate expulsion

A *Behavior Contract* is written by the student and is mutually agreed upon by the student, classroom teacher, parent, and principal. It will indicate the consequences for the behavior, which may include any of the following: the loss of recess, details of their community service/work detail, lunchroom detention, and/or restitution for damages. Also, it will include the lessons learned by the student and how they will modify their behavior in the future to prevent further problems.

A Remedial Discipline Plan is intended to be pro-active, and is to be designed to guide and correct behavior before the student is labeled a “Habitually Disruptive Student.” The parent and/or guardian, school staff, and the school’s professional guidance staff will be a part of the development and implementation. Referral to legal authorities may be a part of this plan. Students who violate their individual remedial discipline plan shall be declared habitually disruptive students.

## **BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY**

GCCS prohibits acts of harassment or bullying. GCCS has determined that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student’s ability to learn and a school’s ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide positive examples for student behavior. “Harassment or bullying” is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e. internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand held device) that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic. These “characteristics” will be referred hereafter as these characteristics. Such behavior is considered harassment or bullying whether it takes place on or off school property, at any school-sponsored function.

“Harassment” and “Bullying” meets all of the following criteria:

- Is directed at one or more pupils
- Substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of pupils
- Adversely affects the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from GCCS’s educational programs or activities because the conduct, as reasonably perceived by the pupil, is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive as to have this effect; and, is based on a pupil’s actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic (see above), or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.

GCCS expects students to conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, school staff, volunteers, and contractors. GCCS believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents and guardians, staff, and community members of the school, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for GCCS and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members. GCCS believes that the best discipline is self-imposed, and that it is the responsibility of staff to use disciplinary situations as opportunities for helping students learn to assume responsibility and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with students shall apply best practices designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage students’ abilities to develop self-discipline. Since bystander support of harassment or bullying can support these behaviors, GCCS prohibits both active and passive support for acts of harassment or bullying. The staff should encourage students to support students who walk away from these acts when they see them, constructively attempt to stop them, or report them to the designated authority.

Consequences for a student who commits an act of harassment or bullying shall be unique to the individual incident and will vary in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance.

Remedial measures shall be designed to: correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the behavior; and protect the victim of the act. Effective discipline should employ a school-wide approach. The consequences and remedial measures may include, but are not limited to, the examples listed below:

#### Examples of Consequences

- Temporary removal from classroom
- Loss of privileges
- Detention
- Referral
- Suspension
- Legal action
- Expulsion or termination

#### Examples of Remedial Measures:

##### Personal:

- Framing the aggressive behavior as a failed attempt to solve a real problem or reach a goal. The adult assists the misbehaving student to find a better way to solve the problem or meet the goal.
- Transformative conferencing/restorative justice
- Peer support group
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience
- Supportive discipline to increase accountability for the bullying offense
- Behavioral assessment or evaluation
- Behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored
- Student counseling
- Parent conferences
- Student treatment
- Student therapy

##### Environmental (Classroom, School Building):

- Set a time, place, and person to help the bully reflect on the offending behavior, maintaining an emotionally-neutral and strength-based approach
- Strategies for determining the conditions contributing to harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- School culture change
- School climate improvement
- Adoption of research-based, systemic bullying prevention programs
- Modifications of schedules
- Modifications in student routes or patterns traveling to and from school
- Disciplinary action for school staff who contributed to the problem
- Parent conferences
- Referral to Family counseling

GCCS requires the Administrator and/ designee to be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the Administrator and/or the designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors, are

encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

GCCS prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Administrator after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICIES**

### **When to Keep a Student Home**

A child exhibiting any of the following symptoms should be kept at home to recover and prevent the spread of any illness:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Head lice
- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Infectious rash
- Severe cough
- Pink eye
- Communicable Illness

### **Medications**

School staff cannot administer prescription, nonprescription, or herbal medications to students unless 1) appropriate administration cannot be reasonably accomplished outside of school hours and 2) the parent or legal guardian is not available to administer the medication at school. In order to administer any medication to a child, a copy of the original prescription or doctor's permission letter must be on file at the school. All medication must be brought to school in the original container, listing proper dosage information and the child's full name. The parent(s) must fill out a medication administration form before our staff can administer medication. All medication brought to school must be given to the Administrator. Medication of any kind should never be kept in a child's backpack, cubby, or lunch box. Medication must remain locked in the classroom or office until it is returned to the authorized adult.

### **Head Lice**

It is important to check your children regularly for lice. If you find even a single nit, please keep your child at home. Immediately notify your child's teacher and the office so that the classroom can be thoroughly cleaned and class families can be notified (names will be kept anonymous). After all treatment procedures have been completed, and your child is free of live lice, he or she may return to school. Lice are usually detected by the eggs (nits) deposited on the hair shaft. Nits are oval, the size of a poppy seed, and white or gray in color. They will likely be firmly attached to the hair shaft about a half-inch from the scalp and will not slide. Check for lice with dry hair in direct sunlight. Part the hair from the crown to the hairline, scan the area, then repeat every half inch. Thoroughly inspect the entire head, particularly the back of the neck and around the ears.

### **Accidents/First Aid**

The administrator and other staff members are first-aid trained. Homeopathic remedies (with a parent's written permission) and/or basic first aid are administered for common injuries. Should a child sustain an injury that warrants treatment at school or needs further attention, 911 will be called and the parent will be notified by phone and/or in writing, based on the severity and nature of the injury as determined by GCCS staff.

## DRESS CODE

GCCS recognizes that students have a right to express themselves through dress and personal appearance; however, students should not wear apparel that may be deemed disruptive, unhealthy or potentially disruptive to the school environment. Here are the school's guidelines:

1. Shirts/tops on all students must reach their belt line when hands are extended above their shoulders
2. No skin showing around the middle when seated or standing is allowed
3. No spaghetti straps or strapless tops
4. Shorts, dresses and skirts must be at or below the middle finger of each hand when the student drops their arms at their side
5. Slacks, pants, shorts must be worn at waist line
6. Clothing should be free of offensive or visually distracting graphics or text
7. Proper seasonal clothing is required. In winter, warm jackets, boots, snow pants, gloves and hats are required to participate in recess
8. Any student who continues to wear clothing that does not follow school policy will be sent home

## PERSONAL ITEMS

Toys, games, stuffed animals, fidget spinners, fidget cubes, electronic devices, etc. are to remain at home and not brought to school. If such items are brought to school, they must be left with the teacher until the end of the school day. Inappropriate items will be held in the office and may be picked up at the end of the day, except in cases of habitual abuse of this policy. Such cases may warrant extended confiscation time, as determined by staff. Dangerous items will be confiscated and disposed of and will require more serious consequences.

## HOMEWORK

Guffey school students will have assigned homework from time to time, and the majority of their work should be able to be completed during school hours. However, students who are absent or not using their classroom time effectively should expect a fairly large amount of homework to complete at home.

Since our school is a four-day week, expect homework from classroom teachers depending on the grade level. Homework does vary, but on the average, parents should expect 10 minutes per grade level.

The Guffey School's PONY and classroom homework folder system are in place to assist parents and students in staying current with school assignments. Long term assignments are outlined well in advance so that students can plan accordingly. If you have any questions about homework or school assignments, please contact your child's teacher.

## INCIDENTS AT HOME VS. SCHOOL

To differentiate between *school* and *home issues*, we have the following policy:

- 1) If an issue involves students while they are at our school or on a school sponsored field-trip, it would be addressed on a case by case basis by our school's staff and with possible parent involvement. Examples are: bullying, internet safety, at school/bus, touching/boundaries, smoking, swearing on school grounds.
- 2) If the issue involves things that happen outside of school, for example: sex, drugs, sexting, suicide, suicide threats, trafficking, pornography... the list could go on and on, it would be left it up to the student's parents to address it.

The policy is for school personnel is to address school related issues. Issues that occur outside of school need to be left up to the child's family to handle as they choose.

## FAQs

### **What is Multi-age Instruction?**

All of our classrooms are set up to offer a multi-age teaching environment for teaching academics. Multi-age teaching, which allows for children of different age levels to be in the same classroom, is different from a “combined classroom.” A multi-age classroom with 5, 6, 7, and 8-year olds, for example, allows all ages to work together on similar learning projects, but to advance academically at their own level. This is very different from a classroom in which a 1st grade lesson is taught to 1st graders and a 2nd grade lesson is taught to 2nd graders.

The advantages of multi-age teaching are many. A multi-age classroom is a true community of learners where everyone is respected for where he or she is on the learning continuum. All children have the unique opportunity to be leaders and to teach other students, thus reinforcing their own learning at the same time they may be learning from other students. Teachers in multi-age classrooms are more aware of each student’s needs; lessons must be designed to teach a variety of levels, so curriculum and techniques are used that are developmentally appropriate for students. Each child is allowed to progress at his or her own pace. Children in multi-age classrooms have opportunities to stay with the same teacher for two or three years, thus eliminating a month or so of adjustment that is normally needed to establish the teacher-student-family relationship at the beginning of the year.

### **What is a Charter School?**

Charter schools are free public schools of choice. Charter schools are pioneers and innovators and are open to all students as a free public school of choice. Charter schools allow creative parents, community members, teachers and educational leaders to design schools that better serve particular populations. Because we are a charter school we have local autonomy in administering our school. Our five-member board is made up of Guffey citizens who are deeply invested in the Guffey Community School.

### **How can parents and community get involved in the school?**

One of our greatest assets at Guffey School is the involvement of our parents and the local community. Our parents and community members work hard to support our educational programs, and our school works hard to maintain a close link to the community. Classroom volunteers are encouraged and welcome in all of our classrooms. Anonymous community donors contribute generously to the school, indicating that the existence of our school is essential to the well-being of the entire community. It is significant to mention that when the students put on a school performance in Guffey, the entire community comes to honor the children and their accomplishments...parents and non-parents alike. We are a true community school, devoted to the educational needs of the children and of all citizens of Guffey. Another more formal way to get involved is to join the school’s Accountability Committee which meets quarterly. Contact chairperson Lynda MacDonald if you are interested.

### **What to do when things don’t go well**

Children are often the first line of communication that something is not going well at school. If they have a complaint about a teacher or other students, they are likely to voice this concern to their parents. It is important that parents pay attention to what their children are telling them; it is also important for them to check out what the child has reported. The first thing to do is to contact the child’s teacher to get another perspective on the event. Miscommunication and misunderstanding are often the case, so talking to the teacher is the most important thing that parents can do to resolve a problem before it becomes an even bigger issue. One of our school’s goals is to have the teachers and parents work together as a team in the interests of the child. If the issue cannot be resolved, then the school’s principal will become involved. If a family would like to voice their concerns in a more formal manner, the school has the *Public Concerns and Complaints Policy*, which can be found in the early part of this handbook.

### **What about enrollment?**

Our enrollment over the past three years has averaged 30 students, grades K-8th. Our small size is a great benefit to our students as we are small enough for personal attention, yet large enough to stimulate thinking and sharing. This

atmosphere seems to encourage greater parent/community member involvement because they have a stronger sense of being an integral part of the school environment.

### **Who are the staff?**

We have exceptional teachers and a fine support staff. All of our staff are residents of Guffey or nearby small towns and are thoroughly dedicated to the children and the school. Our classroom teachers are Highly Qualified, Colorado Certified Teachers with extensive classroom experience, advanced degrees and a love of children that is boundless! The strength of each individual teacher is multiplied by the fact that the whole staff works in harmony to meet the educational needs of students.

### **How is the school funded?**

Charter schools in Colorado are funded in the Public School Finance Act, along with all other public schools. We receive per pupil revenue (PPR) on the same basis as other public school students in the district. As a public school we are funded like all state schools with the majority of the funding coming from Park County property taxes. Grant funding has also played a key role in our school having a host of additional enrichment programs. There is also the Guffey School Foundation, a fast and easy way for community members and friends to make private donations. In addition, the Guffey School Board manages a *Sustainability Fund*, which could be a key to the school's long-term sustainability. Ask the school about how you can donate to this fund.

### **Where is the school located?**

Guffey Community Charter School is located on Main Street, County Rd. 102, in the heart of the town of Guffey, Colorado, approximately an hour and a half from Colorado Springs and forty-five minutes from Canon City. The mountains that are now heavily treed were created by volcanic activity approximately thirty-five million years ago. Our current elevation is 8,000 to 9,000 feet, depending upon where you are standing! Our summers are pleasant with short afternoon rain showers and our winters average 60 to 65 inches of snowfall. Blue skies and sunshine prevail 300 days per year.

### **What is the curriculum?**

Our school is open Monday – Thursday. Our school is structurally simple but organically complex. The good work done in our school is not the work of a genius. It is the hard work of caring and competent, but ordinary, people who achieve extraordinary ends because they work in an environment that not only expects the best from everyone, but brings out the best in everyone.

Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Latin (in middle school), Technology and Fine Arts are all subjects that are taught at our school.

Eighth Projects require graduating students to be able to set project goals, create a budget, carry out their activities, assess their learning progress, and evaluate the final outcome of each project. Much of our learning is rooted in a sense of place, encouraging students to honor and serve their local community as they learn. Students are often out of the classroom, on research trips or involved in projects that require them to use academic skills in hands-on settings

### **How about class size?**

Guffey Community Charter School is still quite small. We have three main classrooms for the instruction of students in grades K-8. We have a K-2, 3-5 and 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade classroom. Our teacher to student ratio is also small which allows students to receive the individualized attention they need. Each classroom averages 10 students. Our small size allows us to provide one-on-one tutoring, as needed, in a warm and nurturing environment.

### **How will the school grow?**

As the surrounding population continues to grow, we will certainly be challenged to grow with it. We intend, however, to always honor the qualities of natural beauty, small size, community commitment, and the educational excellence that we now enjoy.

**What are the school's frameworks of standards and benchmarks?**

Our framework for math and literacy often exceeds the requirements of Colorado State Standards. All strands of science and social studies instruction are aligned with Colorado State Standards. Our students are assessed with the PARCC National Testing according to the same procedures as every other public school in Colorado. We also use Northwest Evaluation Association's MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) testing which is a computer-adaptive testing program that measures a student achievement levels, DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment), DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) and teacher observations.

**How does the school use technology?**

Our school is well equipped with an average of one computer for every student. We also have scanners, video-editing equipment, digital cameras, color copier and an LCD projector to assist in student projects. We have two computer labs, both of which are situated adjacent to our classrooms so that students have immediate access to the computers throughout the day as they work on research projects, written assignments and presentations. Some of our technology purchases have been made possible through grants and private donations.

## **STUDENT HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE**

Dear Parent or Guardian: Welcome to Guffey Community Charter School! We ask that all families review the important material included in our parent - student handbook. A parent or guardian must sign below and return this form. Signing verifies that the student and the parents or guardians have reviewed the handbook, either in hard copy or electronically, and are aware of the expectations, rules and practices at GCCS. Our handbook is available at on our website as well.

As always, thanks for partnering with us!

Warmly,

Martine Walker

Principal

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

As parent or guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ I do verify that I have read and am aware of the expectations, rules and practices at Guffey Community Charter School.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**RETURN THIS PAGE TO THE ADMINISTRATOR OR TEACHER**