

# *Grass Valley Charter School*

## *Handbook*



### **Our Mission**

The mission of Grass Valley Charter School is to inspire students to achieve high standards, create quality work, and embrace lifelong learning and service through Expeditionary Learning.

### **Our Values**

At Grass Valley Charter School, we...

- **understand** that individuals learn best through purposeful experiences that provide opportunities to become active learners -- taking responsibility for their own learning
- **value** the use of the world existing beyond the classroom walls in order to teach compassion, service, discipline and respect
- **develop** a sense of civic and social activism in students
- **believe** that we have a responsibility to provide stewardship of the Earth
- **focus** on development of individual character steeped in our “design principles” and “character traits” including *Respect, Responsibility, Crew, Discipline, Courage, Compassion, Integrity, Perseverance, and Stewardship and Spirit of Adventure*
- **foster** a culture of reflection, critique and revision
- **incorporate** project-based learning, fieldwork and the arts into purposeful and rigorous expeditions
- **blend** a strong sense of community, supportive environments, and parent involvement

Dear Parents,

The Grass Valley Charter School staff warmly welcomes you and your child to Grass Valley Charter School. We look forward to working with you to make this a great year.

We have four objectives for every child who attends Grass Valley Charter School and hope that you share them with us:

- that every student feels great about him or herself
- that every student loves school
- that every student receives the best possible education
- that every student accepts the responsibilities set forth in this handbook and in the classroom

We have two goals for every parent. They are:

- that you understand and are comfortable with your child's educational program
- that you feel free to contact the school if there is ever a question or concern

This handbook is provided to inform you of our basic procedures. We hope you find it helpful.

### ***General Information***

#### **School Hours**

Short Day Kindergarten: 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Monday -Thursday,  
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Friday

Extended Day Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grades: 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Monday- Thursday,  
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Friday

#### **Office Hours**

Monday through Thursday: 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.  
Friday: 8:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.

### **School Arrival**

Students should not arrive at school prior to 8:15 a.m. unless they are in the before school program, and students should be picked up from school promptly at 3:00 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, and 12:30 p.m. on Fridays. ***Students arriving before 8:15 a.m. will be sent to the Before School Program and charged a \$5.00/hr per child fee for childcare.*** Please consult the drop off/pick up & parking map for specifically designated areas.

### **Absences**

Please call or email Cissy (cmurphy@gvgsd.k12.ca.us) whenever your child is going to be absent, even if you have notified your child's teacher. To ensure your child's safety, a call will be sent out to your home or your place of business if your child is not in class and we have not heard from you. Uncleared absences are marked as unexcused. Independent study contracts are available for planned absences - see the teacher to arrange this. Excessive absences will result in letters going home and may be referred to the School Attendance Review Board. A student must be in class for thirty minutes in order to be counted for attendance for that day. ***Students who are sick should not come to school, even for the thirty-minute check in.***

### **Tardies**

School starts at 8:30 a.m. Students will be marked tardy if they are not in their classroom before the 8:30 a.m. bell rings. ***Late students need to go to the office, before going to class, to get a tardy slip from Cissy so she knows he/she is at school and does not send a call home.*** Excessive tardies will result in letters going home and may be reported to the School Attendance Review Board.

### **Hot Lunch Procedures**

- Students must purchase lunch or milk tickets BEFORE SCHOOL. Tickets with more than one day's credit will be saved. No lunches may be charged.
- Call the office before 9:00 a.m. if you are running late and want to order a hot lunch.
- ***No hot lunches may be ordered after 9:15 a.m.***

### **Do-Not-Bring-To-School List**

The following objects are illegal to possess on any school campus in the state of California:

- Firearms, knives of any kind, stun guns, or anything that can be used as a weapon
- Alcohol, tobacco, or drugs of any kind (unless with a doctor's prescription)
- Matches, lighters, firecrackers, or other explosives

Also not to be brought to school by students:

- Chewing gum
- Toys, radios, CD players, electronic games, iPods or other MP3 players
- Other disruptive, illegal, or dangerous objects
- GVCS is not liable for lost or stolen items

### **Cell Phones, Electronics, and Acceptable Use of Technology**

- As some students may need to bring cell phones to school, they must remain off and out of sight at all times during school hours.
- If an electronic device is either in use or in sight and is confiscated the following procedures may be implemented as appropriate:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> offense: item will be returned at end of day
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> offense: item will be returned to a parent/guardian
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> offense: item will be kept in administrator's office for 1 week and then returned to parent
- All students will sign an Acceptable Use Agreement in order to use school computers and devices. Unacceptable use will result in consequences, including being restricted from using school property.

### **Dress Code**

Charter students should wear clothing that is comfortable, clean, and appropriate.

- Shoes must be worn at all times. Flip-flops may be worn in grades 5 – 8, but shoes appropriate for physical activities must be brought to school each day. Younger students may not wear flip-flops due to a high number of toe injuries. ***Please wear shoes that allow full participation in physical activities.***
- Clothing, jewelry, and accessories with logos or words that promote alcohol, drugs, gangs, violence, bigotry, or sexual connotations are not permitted.
- Clothing that exposes the stomach, back, cleavage or underwear is not appropriate. Tank tops with one inch or smaller straps will not be allowed. Shorts and skirts must be no more than 4-6 inches above the knee.
- No student shall wear articles of clothing, jewelry, or accessories which could pose a threat to the physical wellbeing and safety of the students or others.
- Hats may be worn as teachers and aides decide.
- Permanent tattoos, body piercing or other forms of body mutilation are not permitted (exception: pierced ears).
- Underclothing (boxers, bras, etc.) worn as street clothing, are not permitted at any time.

- For K-5 students, only natural hair colors are permitted. Students in middle school are permitted to attend class with streaks or tips of non-natural hair color provided that this diversion does not become the source of continued distraction during instructional times. Unusual hairstyles are not permitted at GVCS. If an infraction occurs the student will be sent home only to return when he/she no longer wears an unusual hairstyle.

***If a student comes to school dressed inappropriately, parents will be called to bring appropriate clothing or GVCS will provide “loaner” clothes for the day.***

### **Volunteers**

We welcome parent volunteers and feel they are a vital part of our program! Parents assist teachers in the classroom as well as at home. Feel free to talk to your child’s teacher more about volunteering. A volunteer time will be made that is convenient for your schedule. ***Please check in at the office before entering the campus.*** Please note that a current TB Test is required prior to assisting in your child’s classroom. To ensure the safety of our children, volunteers are asked to wear a “GVCS Visitor” badge. These are available in the office.

### **Phone Calls**

Students will not be accepting phone calls at school. After school arrangements need to be made before leaving for school in the morning. If you absolutely must get a message to your child, the office staff will make every effort to deliver the message if it is received by 2:30 p.m. Before and after school is the best time to reach our teachers. Voicemail messages may be left during instructional times and the teacher will return your call when possible.

### **Visitors**

The school policy is to accept only those visitors who have legitimate business at school. ***Parents, guests and visitors must register at the office and receive a badge.*** Parents are always welcome.

### **Snow Day Information**

Please listen to radio station KNCO (830 AM on your dial), after 6:00 AM on snowy days. Approximately every ten minutes KNCO will announce school closures. . ***Please do not call the school or radio station for this information.*** You can also look online at <http://knco.com/community/school-closures>.

### **Change of Address or Transfers**

Please inform the office staff and your classroom teacher if you have a change of address or phone number. This is very important so that the school can notify parents of school activities and/or in emergency situations.

Also, please notify the teacher and the office staff as soon as possible if you are moving and will not be attending Grass Valley Charter School any longer.

### **Early Dismissal**

If your student is to leave early, please have him/her present a note to the teacher before school starts indicating the time of departure. You will need to go to the office to sign your student out.

### **Medication at School**

Medical treatment is the responsibility of the parent and the family health care provider. Consequently, the parent is urged, with the help of the family health care provider, to work out a schedule of giving medication outside school hours. Specific direction for the administration of medication to be given at school must be included in a written statement from the health care provider clearly specifying the condition for which the medication shall be given, the dosage, and related information. Specific instructions should include the emergency treatment of allergic reactions such as those from bee stings, and they should clearly state what type of reaction for which drug is to be given, (i.e., localized, generalized, severe, mild). A signed release from the parents for personnel to administer any medications is required.

***Medication shall be brought to the school by the parent in the original container. No medication (prescription or non-prescription) may be transported by a student or be in the student's possession while at school.***

**Expedition Donations**

Our goal is that the money we collect from you in expedition donations will be all the money we ask of you for the entire school year. There are a few caveats to this statement. We have done our best job estimating all these costs, but circumstances may change during the year and the amount may not cover all the expenses. Additional costs may include:

- Food on fieldwork activities would be extra
- Gas money may need to be collected depending on the activity
- Special projects that a classroom may decide to do
- Excess parent costs over those required for supervision
- Outdoor School for 6<sup>th</sup> graders only

<b><i>Grade Level Breakdowns</i></b>	<b><i>Estimated yearly expedition costs per student</i></b>	<b><i>Yearly expedition donations from families</i></b>	<b><i>Per student contribution from GVCS Foundation</i></b>
<b><i>Pre-k – 2<sup>nd</sup></i></b>	<b><i>\$150</i></b>	<b><i>\$100</i></b>	<b><i>\$50</i></b>
<b><i>3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup></i></b>	<b><i>\$275</i></b>	<b><i>\$200</i></b>	<b><i>\$75</i></b>
<b><i>6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup></i></b>	<b><i>\$500</i></b>	<b><i>\$400</i></b>	<b><i>\$100</i></b>

**Fieldwork Guidelines**

During our school year we will go on many fieldwork trips together. *Fieldwork is a privilege, not a right.* Positive behavior is a requirement for participation in GVCS fieldwork up to, and including, the day of departure. While on fieldwork, students are representing our school and all school rules and dress codes apply. Students who exhibit inappropriate behavior will be sent home. Parents will be responsible for providing transportation home from the fieldwork location.

In order to make fieldwork a positive experience for everyone, we want to share a few guidelines:

1. Parents who are volunteering must be ***ON TIME***.
2. Good behavior is a ***MUST***.
3. Everyone (including parents) ***MUST*** follow directions and remain with the group at all times. No alcohol or tobacco products are allowed at any time, even in private vehicles if students are being transported.
4. Respect the facility's guidelines by staying in authorized areas and following rules regarding food and drink.
5. Dress appropriately for all school related activities. (Shirts must not contain logos or words that promote alcohol, drugs, violence, or inappropriate language. Pants with excessive tears are not appropriate. Shoes must be worn at all times.) ***REMEMBER-*** we're representing ***OUR*** school!

A "District Sanctioned Trip in Private Vehicles" form and a copy of proof of insurance declarations page is required of every parent in the Grass Valley School District who drives a private vehicle on school field trips. ***The fully completed form and insurance declarations page must be on file in the office prior to driving on any Charter School fieldwork.*** We will keep your completed form and the copy of proof of insurance declarations page on file for subsequent fieldwork.

**Educational Goals**

The broad goals of Grass Valley Charter School are stated in the Charter Document. Each broad goal is taught and assessed through the following:

- a. Grade level standards
- b. Staff, parent and student curriculum choices

- c. In-depth projects and investigations selected by the staff, student, and/or parents
- d. Individual designated grade level assessments and standardized instruments are employed for evaluation of student achievement

Basic curricular areas include, but are not limited to: reading, written expression, mathematics, social studies, science, and fine arts.

### **Student Responsibilities and Behaviors**

#### Student Responsibilities:

- Students are to make school a safe place by promising to follow common sense safety rules.
- Students are not to interfere with another person's right to learn.
- Students are to show courtesy to each other at all times.
- Students are to respect the property rights of the school and other individuals.
- Students are to keep their hands and feet to themselves.

#### Student Behaviors:

- Students are in classrooms only when a teacher or an aide is present. No exceptions!
- Students are to be in their assigned seat, with necessary books and materials, when class begins.
- Students need to bring enough lunch money to purchase available lunches.
- All students should immediately return to class when a bell or whistle sounds at the end of recess.
- Snow or any dangerous object may not be thrown at any time.
- In keeping with our concern for the environment, students are encouraged to place all litter in the garbage can and recycle all recyclable materials.
- Students may sit on the grass when it is dry. If the grass is wet, students are expected to remain off the grass.
- Students may not sell or trade items on campus except in school-sanctioned clubs.
- Students walking home from school should leave campus immediately.
- Students are to stay within proper school boundaries before school, during break, and at lunch.

***Students not following behavior rules may be placed on a behavior contract. Students who are placed on a behavior contract must adhere to the terms of the contract or they may be removed from the Core Academic Program.***

### **Core Academic Discipline Policy**

The Core Academic teachers and administration will utilize the discipline policy as needed and at their discretion. The following steps may be taken as judged appropriate:

- Step 1. The student will receive a verbal warning.
- Step 2. The student will receive a time out with character reflection form.
- Step 3. Parent will be notified.
- Step 4. Student and parent conference - behavior contract
- Step 5. Student calls home and is sent home for the day.
- Step 6. Suspension of 1-3 days
- Step 7. Dismissal from the Core Academic Program

### **Enrollment and Lottery Draw Procedures**

Grass Valley Charter School uses the following pre-determined priorities for acceptance of applicants to the Core program of our school. The order of priority is as follows:

1. Currently enrolled Core students and children of .50 FTE or greater GVCS staff
2. GVCS Preschool students, siblings of Core students, and currently enrolled Discovery Studies students who have been enrolled in Discovery Studies the entire year.
  - Lottery draws within this priority group will be necessary if there are more applicants than available spaces in a grade level.

- Siblings from blended or split households: his/her primary residence must be ***more*** than 50% with the currently enrolled Core student to qualify for sibling priority status.

### 3. New applicants – lottery draw

The first lottery draw will take place early in May. This draw will consist of all new applicants who turn in a registration packet by the deadline. Registration packets turned in after the deadline will not qualify for the first lottery draw, but will be placed in the lottery for subsequent draws as openings become available.

### **Graduation Policy**

Students will work to achieve grade level expectations and standards. The following is the Graduation Policy for Grass Valley Charter School. The student must:

- Work at or above grade level in four or more core curriculum areas
- Demonstrate appropriate behavior as referenced by:
  - Behavior referrals
  - Student contracts
  - Number of suspensions
  - Parent conferences
  - School report card
  - Passing the Constitution Test
  - Having at least an 85 % attendance record for the school year
  - Completing designated graduation projects and products from the Learning Expedition
  - Completing 15 hours of service work, per semester, during his/her eighth grade year

### **Homework**

Our design principle of “Responsibility for Learning” is reinforced by homework completion. Students in grades 1-8 can expect 20-90 minutes of homework each night. Homework completion is expected according to classroom guidelines. Homework will comprise of:

- Individual assignments
- Class work not completed
- Thoughtful Expeditionary Learning support
- Project work

Besides assigned homework, students should spend time each day on spelling words, math facts, reading and reviewing notes or class work done that day, or reading a book for pleasure. It is extremely important in developing good study habits that the following be provided at home for student success.

1. A quiet, well lit place to do work
2. A specific time set aside each day for homework
3. A dictionary

Parents may help their student by checking their class work and homework assignments on a daily basis. When a student is absent, homework may be requested.

### **All Parent Meetings/Parent Involvement**

In order to ensure parental involvement, a parent council (consisting of *all parents* in Grass Valley Charter School) will offer opportunities to provide input into programs of the Charter School through regularly scheduled parent meetings and/or parent surveys. Input from parent meetings will go to the Charter School representative for Charter Council as needed.

### **Special Education**

While charter schools may operate in a unique fashion in comparison to non-charter schools, students requiring special education programs and services must be assured a free and appropriate education under federal law. If your student has an active IEP or is suspected of needing special education services, please work with your charter school representative prior to enrollment.

### **Children's Community Activities**

Each month we receive flyers from community organizations informing us of local activities for children. The flyers are from groups such as Camp Fire, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and sports organizations. When you come in to the Charter School office, please check for these flyers. We hope this keeps you better informed about community activities for your child.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

Any extracurricular activity is defined as one that a student participates in, either during school time or outside of school, that is not counted as part of a student's grade. Please be advised that learning at Grass Valley Charter School comes before extracurricular activities. Therefore, in order to participate, students must be up-to-date on schoolwork and homework. ***Unless there is prior approval from the principal, students who are absent from school on the day of an extracurricular activity will not be eligible to participate in that day's event or game.***

#### **•Absences**

It is very important that athletes attend all practices and games. If a practice is missed, the athlete will not play in the next game unless approved by the coach and/or sports coordinator. If three unexcused absences occur during the season, the athlete will be dismissed from the team.

#### **•Unacceptable Behavior**

Athletes are representatives of GVCS. It is important that they display exemplary behavior at school, during athletic events, and in the community. If an athlete behaves in an unacceptable way, a conference will be scheduled to determine whether or not the student will remain on the team.

#### **•Referrals**

Athletes participating in various activities, who are sent by referral to the office for disciplinary action during the season, may be dismissed from the team. Students who are suspended or expelled from school may be removed from the team.

Students who meet the above criteria may participate in a variety of sports: basketball, volleyball, track and field, cross-country. A fee of \$25 per student, per sport, will be assessed to cover the costs of refereeing.

### **Before and After School Program**

We offer a before and after school program for GVCS students only. The program will run from 7-8:30 a.m. and 3-6 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 12:30 – 6:00 p.m. on Friday. The cost is \$5 per hour, per child. Students may participate in the program on a regular basis or as a drop in. Drop in requests should be made by calling or emailing Alicia in the morning to check availability.



## **“Zero Tolerance” Policy**

Grass Valley Charter School maintains a **“No Tolerance”** policy with regards to student *use, possession, sale, or under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, “look-alike” drugs, steroids, or possessing drug paraphernalia* on the school premise or at any school function (home or away). ***These are strictly prohibited and any student found in violation of the Education Code covering these prohibited substances may be immediately suspended, cited by law enforcement, and recommended for expulsion.***

(Reproduced from California Laws Relating to Minors, Pages 158 and 159)

E.C. 48900 General

A pupil shall not be suspended from school for expulsion unless the superintendent or the principal of the school in which the pupil is enrolled determines that the pupil has:

- a. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
- b. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished a firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of an object of this type, the pupil obtained written permission to possess the item from a certified school employee, which is concurred by the principal or the designee of the principal.
- c. Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, or otherwise furnished, or been under the influence of any controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
- d. Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind, then either sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid, substance, or material and represented the liquid, substance, or materials a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant.
- e. Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- f. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school or private property.
- g. Stolen or attempted to steal school or private property.
- h. Possessed or used tobacco, or any products containing tobacco, or any nicotine products, including, but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, and betel. However, this section does not prohibit the use or possession by a pupil of his/her own prescription products.
- i. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- j. Had unlawful possession of, or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in section 11014.5 of the Health and Safety Code.
- k. Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
- l. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.

No pupil shall be suspended or expelled for any of the acts enumerated unless that act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring within a school under the jurisdiction of the superintendent or principal or occurring within any other school district. A pupil may be suspended or expelled for acts which are enumerated in this section and related to school activity or attendance which occur at any time, including but not limited to any of the following:

- While on school grounds.
- While going to or coming from school.
- During the lunch period, whether on or off campus.
- During, or while going to, or coming from a school sponsored activity.

It is the intent of the Legislature that alternatives to suspension or expulsion be imposed against any pupil who is truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from school activities. (Amend. Stats. 1989, Ch. 1306)

Pick-up/Drop-off & Parking Map Here

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Please return to your child's teacher by September 7, 2012



**I have read and understand the policies of Grass Valley Charter School as set forth in the school handbook.**

**Date \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student's Signature**

**Date \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian's Signature**