
Gardendale Christian Academy

2024-2025 Handbook



Our Mission Statement: Gardendale Christian Academy seeks to further God's Kingdom by equipping its students to pursue a Spirit-led life of academic excellence and integrity.

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Welcome to GCA

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Gardendale Christian Academy! Thank you for trusting our teachers and staff to assist in the educational needs and the spiritual development of your child. This is an awesome responsibility, and we take it very seriously.

We strive to provide quality education in a safe, caring, loving, and spiritual environment. Our Christian staff and faculty will not only teach your child and help him/her to excel academically, but we will also pray for him/her and teach the principles found in the Bible.

We hope you will find the materials and information contained in the handbook to be beneficial. We urge you to contact the school for any additional information or assistance you may need. Thanks again for the privilege of serving your children.

Sincerely,

Rev. John D. Parrish
Senior Pastor

Emily Murphree
School Director

Gardendale Nazarene Ministries

School Forum

Gardendale Christian Academy (GCA) is a non-profit Nazarene Christian school. Our emphasis is placed on helping families raise their child(ren) to have a Christian-based education that supports their Christian values and beliefs.

The ultimate authority for governing and operating the school is the church board of the Gardendale Church of the Nazarene.

GCA is a member of Alabama Christian Education Association (ACEA) and American Association of Christian Schools (AACCS). Our website is gdalechristian.org.

Nondiscriminatory Statement

GCA admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its admissions policies, educational policies, and/or other school-administered programs.

Vision Statement

Students from Gardendale Christian Academy will exhibit the qualities of wisdom, knowledge, and biblical worldview as evidenced by a lifestyle of character, leadership, service, stewardship, and worship.

Specifically, the young men and women who are products of Christian schooling will mature to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37); will grow in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52); will be willing to stand apart from the world as "salt and light" (Matthew 5:13-14); and will give sacrificially of themselves and their resources, thus reflecting the essence and love of the Christ who lives and dwells within them. (Romans 1:1).

Mission Statement

The mission statement of Gardendale Christian Academy seeks to further God's Kingdom by equipping its students to pursue a Spirit-led life of academic excellence and integrity.

Purpose Statement

Gardendale Christian Academy exists for the following purposes:

- To provide a quality education with high academic standards within an evangelical Christian environment, to pursue academic excellence, and to encourage personal faith in Christ.
- To work closely with parents in training children in the highest principles of:
 - Christian leadership
 - Self-discipline
 - Personal integrity
 - Good citizenship
 - Appropriate manners
 - Morality, ethics, and Christian behavior
- To offer experiences that assist children in growth toward physical, social, academic, and spiritual maturity.

Statement of Belief

Gardendale Church of the Nazarene is a member of the global Church of the Nazarene. In our denomination's constitution, we have a Shared Statement of Belief. This statement is:

- In one God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- The Old and New Testament Scriptures, given by plenary [full] inspiration, contain all truth necessary to faith and Christian living.
- Human beings are born with a fallen nature, and are, therefore, inclined to evil, and that continually.
- The eternally impenitent are hopelessly and eternally lost.
- The atonement through Jesus Christ is for the whole human race, and that whosoever repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is justified and regenerated and saved from the dominion of sin.

- That believers are to be sanctified wholly, after regeneration, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The Holy Spirit bears witness to the new birth, and also to the entire sanctification of believers.
- Our Lord will return, the dead will be raised, and the final judgment will take place.

Our Philosophy

Gardendale Christian Academy believes that all truth is God's Truth, and His Truth is revealed through the Bible, which is the source of infallible premises and is the standard for living a Christ-centered life. Only by recognizing God as the Creator, Designer, and Organizer of the universe can the purpose of Christian education be achieved. Gardendale Christian Academy believes that Christian education is a process in which loving and mature Christian teachers assist parents in their God-given commission to raise children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Our Goal Statements

Physically, in that each student is provided instruction, opportunities, and modeling to:

- Maintain a healthy and fit body (Luke 11:34)
- Treat his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
- Be well-groomed and modest in presentation (1 Corinthians 12:23)
- Disciplines in healthy life habits (Romans 12:1-2)

Spiritually, in that each student is provided with instruction, opportunity, and modeling in:

- Loving God (Matthew 22:36-40)
- Loving his neighbor (Mark 12:31)
- Developing a prayer life (Matthew 6:9-13)
- Applying the principles and truths of God's word to all areas of life (2 Timothy 2:15)
- Owning and articulating a biblical Christian worldview

Academically, in that each student is provided instruction, opportunity, and modeling as to:

- Be equipped with a well-rounded education
- Attain excellence in scholarship in the various subject areas (Proverbs 1:5)
- Think critically (Colossians 1:9)
- Study effectively (Acts 17:11)
- Be fit for his cooperative role in his future station, whether at college or vocation (Colossians 3:17)
- Be able to articulate thoughts both in written and spoken form (Proverbs 12:6)

Socially, in that each student is provided instruction, opportunity, and modeling that promotes:

- The fruit of the Spirit
- Ministering for Christ (Ephesians 6:14-20)
- Spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)
- Modesty (1 Corinthians 12:23)
- Diplomacy in dealing with others (Titus 3)
- Civility and good manners (Titus 3)

Policies

Policy Handbook

The policies outlined in this handbook are subject to change at the discretion of the administration. Typically, revisions are made in the spring before the start of the next school year. However, if during the course of the year, it becomes evident that a policy is needed or should be changed, GCA reserves the right to make the change at the discretion of the administration. Parents should review the handbook each August for revisions, but be aware that additions or changes to this handbook can occur during the year without notice.

Attendance at this school is a privilege and not a right. We strive to train students in the highest principles of Christian leadership, self-discipline, individual responsibility, personal integrity, and good citizenship. Gardendale Christian Academy stands without apology for the gospel of Jesus Christ, without any denominational emphasis.

Gardendale Christian Academy reserves the right to inspect any package, book bag, etc. that is brought on campus.

Admissions Policy

Gardendale Christian Academy is open to anyone interested in securing a Christian education, from kindergarten and up, whom the school finds qualified for admission and who agrees (and whose parents agree) that he or she shall abide by Gardendale Christian Academy rules. It must always be understood that attendance at Gardendale Christian Academy is a privilege and not a right. Any student who does not conform to the school's standards of conduct and/or who is unwilling to adjust to our environment may forfeit this privilege.

Parents of children enrolling in GCA can obtain the necessary enrollment forms from the receptionist's office. After completing all required paperwork and payment of registration fees, the child will be allowed to enroll based on space availability. If the class is full, the child will be placed on a waiting list and called in order when a spot becomes available. Registration fees are due at time of enrollment and are **not refundable**.

Returning students cannot be enrolled in the academy for an upcoming school year unless all fees and tuition are current from the previous school year.

Admission includes Academy registration and book fees, student registration application, financial agreement, and teacher information sheet. Also, a copy of the child's birth

certificate, social security card and a valid Alabama Certificate of Immunization record is required.

New grade school students must also present the last report card distributed by previous school. Children entering K5 must have reached their fifth birthday on or before September 1st.

Parent/Legal Guardian Disclosure

Parents or legal guardians are required to disclose any physical, emotional, or behavioral limitations, needs, or concerns about their child in writing before registration. The director reserves the right to deny your registration if it is determined that our program is not suited or staffed to meet your child's needs. Gardendale Christian Academy reserves the right to withdraw any child from our program at any time if behavioral or emotional problems with a child disrupt class time, threaten another person's safety, or the child makes it unreasonably difficult to meet the needs of the other children in the school.

Beginning of the School-Year Requirements

Kindergarten (K4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be potty trained • Nap mat for students staying all-day (can be purchased at front office) • Change of clothes labeled with child's name • Book bag (can be purchased at front office)
Kindergarten (K5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of clothes labeled with child's name • Book bag (can be purchased at front office) • School supplies (list provided with registration)
Elementary (Grades 1st-5th)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book bag • School supplies (list provided with registration)

Parents must attend the orientation meeting, which will be held the week prior to school beginning.

GCA reserves the right to refuse re-enrollment to any student of families who have demonstrated disharmony regarding the purpose, objectives, standards, policies, rules, and regulations of the school.

If there are custody agreements involved with your child, you must provide the academy with a copy of court papers indicating who has permission to pick up the child. The academy will

not deny a parent access to their child without proper documentation. The academy will not be involved with any custody issues.

Finances

Tuition Payment

As a non-profit organization, GCA seeks to provide the best quality education at a minimum cost. As a Christian school, we are not entitled to tax revenue and must receive funds for operating the school from parents, sponsors, and others called to support this ministry. Financial responsibility is one of the key factors in maintaining a quality Christian school for your child. Your cooperation will enable GCA to maintain a positive Christian testimony by having funds necessary to meet our financial obligations promptly.

All gifts received by GCA, for which no services are rendered, are tax deductible.

The administration of Gardendale Christian Academy will announce tuition prices in April for the following school year. The annual tuition may be paid by using any one of the following methods:

- One annual payment—the total annual tuition is due on August 1.
- Ten equal payments – The first payment is due August 1 or at the time of registration after August. This is non-refundable. The remaining nine payments are due on the first of each month, September through May.

Parents must choose a method of payment and sign a tuition agreement. Signing this form constitutes a contractual agreement between the school and the parent for the payment of the tuition.

An annual registration fee will be due at time of registration. **Registration fees are not refundable.**

Financial Contract

It is understood that the enrollment contract made with Gardendale Christian Academy is a contract between the parent and the school for payment of the monthly or weekly fees and that these fees are due and payable as to all terms of the contract except:

- When the student moves out of town at an unreasonable distance that the school sees as a problem for transportation.

- When in the case of agreement between the school and the parent that it is in the best interest of the child's education with curriculum material more suited to the child's personal learning needs.
- Death of a student.
- If there is a loss of income, equal to the amount of tuition, such as a job loss in the immediate family of the student.

Parents or legal guardians of each student will be required to sign a contract stating that early withdrawal from Gardendale Christian Academy still holds them responsible for completing tuition payments. There is a two-week withdrawal notice for K4.

Payments

- All payments for tuition will be due on the first day of each month. A late fee of \$10.00 will be added to any account with a balance due after the 7 of the month.
- Weekly daycare fees are due on Monday of the week of service and late fees are posted after 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday.
- A 1.5% monthly finance charge will be added to all unpaid balances once a child is dropped from enrollment.
- Morning K4 classes dismiss at 11:30 a.m. Children who are not picked up by 11:40 a.m. will be charged a late pick-up fee, and this fee will increase at 12:00.
 - Please refer to school brochure for current prices.
- K5 and grade school classes dismiss at 3:00 p.m. Children who are not picked up by 3:10 p.m. will be charged a late pick-up fee and this fee will increase at 3:30.
 - Children who are not picked up by 3:10 automatically go to aftercare.
 - These children cannot wait by themselves or at the office. Refer to the current schedule of fees for prices.
- No counter checks will be accepted. Checks must have all information printed by your financial institution.
- A 3% fee will be added to all debit or credit payments.

Special Circumstances

Holidays and Tuition

School tuition does not include day care needed on school holidays. If child care is needed, consult the office for fees and availability.

School Holidays

As a school, there are breaks during the academic year. The most accurate place to find the school schedule is the school's [website](#). Gardendale Christian Academy observes the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Good Friday
- Spring Break (announced at the beginning of each school year)
- Memorial Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans' Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The Friday after Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

Book Fee

A student book fee is due by July 1 each school year. This fee is charged per student to cover the cost of textbooks, workbooks, and student planner used by the student during the year. **This fee is non-refundable.** Once purchased, the books become the property of the student.

Payment Drop Box

A payment drop box is located in both the daycare and gym lobby for your convenience. Please make sure that your payment is marked with your name, child's name, and amount of the payment.

Returned Check Fee

A \$30.00 returned check fee is charged for each returned check. If a check is returned, the person who wrote the check will be contacted and a date agreed upon to replace the check. The time for replacement will not exceed one week. If a second check is returned for any reason, that family will be placed on a cash-only basis.

Discounts

Only one discount per family. If you qualify for more than one discount, the school will choose the discount that is best for you. **Accounts must remain current to keep your discount.** Some discounts require proof in order to obtain the discount.

- Sibling Discount - youngest child pays full price and discounts apply to older children
- Church Member Discount (10%) - for active members of Gardendale Church of the Nazarene
- Pastor's Discount (10%) - for active pastors with proper documentation
- Military Discount (10%) - for current military with an unexpired copy of military ID

Additional Discounts

- Pay tuition in full by the first day of school and receive \$100 credit for K5-5th grade only.
- A \$150 tuition credit will be given to any student that has recruited another student for the K5 or grade school programs. The following requirements must be met:
 - The student recruited must be enrolling for the first time.
 - The parent of the student recruited must sign a statement that they were influenced to enroll because of your encouragement.
 - The student must meet the handbook requirements for enrolling and must be approved by the administration.

- New recruits cannot be immediate family members or anyone already enrolled in Gardendale Nazarene Day Care.
- Only applicable in the student's first year.

Withdrawals and Dismissals

When a student is withdrawn from GCA, written notification must be given directly to the administration ten days before last attendance day. Official transcript papers will be given when all tuition fees, library books, and resource books have been turned in to the teacher. Books will be given on last day of attendance if a notification was given ten days in advance. Books will be held after a student's dismissal or withdrawal for two weeks at which time GCA will take possession.

All grades and records will be held until all outstanding balances are paid. No grades will be released on the same day a student withdraws.

Parents must complete all withdrawal papers and pay all fees and tuition payments due for the school records to be sent to the receiving school. Withdrawals from school must be signed and processed through the school offices. Withdrawal is not complete until the withdrawal forms are turned into the office. An account left open will incur additional tuition fees until withdrawal papers are returned to the administration office.

Parents will be asked to withdraw their child for the following reasons:

- Violation of school policies as outlined in this handbook.
- A student's conduct, attitude, or lack of academic effort makes it mandatory for that child to withdraw from GCA. In some cases, dismissal may be necessary.
- GCA tuition is 30 days delinquent.
- Parents/students are not in harmony with the mission and philosophy of the academy/ministries.

Curriculum

Gardendale Christian Academy uses Bible-based [Abeka](#) curriculum for grades K4 and up.

Christian Training

Since one of the basic purposes of GCA is developing Christian leadership in our students, it is only natural that Christian training has an important place in the life of the academy.

- Weekly chapel services will be held in the Children’s Sanctuary. On occasion, special guest speakers may be invited. Attendance is required. Honor's Chapel is held every nine weeks in the New Sanctuary.
- Daily devotions will be held in each classroom.
- A vital part of the curriculum is Bible memorization and familiarization with Bible stories and events. The King James Version is used.
- Special programs are designed to foster self-confidence, showcasing of talents, and to bring a presentation of what the students have achieved in their classrooms.

Before-and After-School Program

This program is offered for the convenience of working parents who wish to have their children arrive prior to and remain after school hours. See the tuition sheet for before and after school program rates.

Daily Schedule

No students may be on campus before 7:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m. without supervision and approval.

School Hours:

Kindergarten (K4)	8:00am-11:30am
Kindergarten (K4) Extended Care	11:30am-6:00pm
Kindergarten (K5)	8:00am-3:00pm
Elementary (Grades 1st-5th)	8:00am-3:00pm
After School Care (K5-5th Grade)	3:00pm-6:00pm

Summer Care:

K4-5th Grade

7:00am-6:00pm

Field Trips

- Classes may go on four field trips during the school year to nearby points of interest. Parents will be advised beforehand of any such trips. Money in the form of **cash** should always be given to the teacher.
- Consent forms must be signed for each student and be on file in the office.
- Field trips are part of the classroom curriculum studies. Students are expected to attend.
- It is important that all chaperones remember they are Christian role models for our students. Please be an example by demonstrating maturity in actions and attitudes. The teacher will be in charge of each field trip and will direct the parents as to what help is needed from them.
- Chaperones should refrain from purchasing special treats for the children unless all students in the class benefit equally.
- Only students enrolled in the class may go on the field trip.
- School shirts must be worn on all field trips by all students.
- All dress code requirements for a typical school day remain in effect for field trips. The dress code applies to both students and chaperones.

Academic Policies

Attendance Policy

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to a student's academic success and is required by Alabama state law. Punctual school attendance is the responsibility of both the parent and the student. Punctual school attendance includes arriving at school on time and remaining for the entire school day (8:00am- 3:00pm), unless a written excuse is provided to school officials. Students should be present at school each day except when absence is absolutely necessary.

In order to gain the most from school, each student must exhibit regular school attendance. **If a student has nine unexcused absences in a semester, that student will fail all subjects in that semester due to excessive absences.**

When a student, first grade and above, has **nine unexcused absences**, Gardendale Christian Academy is required by law to report them truant to the state authorities. Excused absences (listed below) do not count against the nine unexcused absences per semester.

Beginning the 2018-2019 school year three unexcused tardies will count as one unexcused absence.

Excused Absences

- Student illness (three or more days require a doctor's excuse)
- Severe illness in the immediate family with doctor's note.
- Death in the immediate family.
- Participation in an approved school activity.
- Approval by the administration (severe weather, e.g.)
- Legal quarantine

Special Notes on Excused Absences

- Written excuses must be received by the school within three (3) days of the absence. After three (3) school days with no written excuse, the absence will be coded as "unexcused" and the student will receive a grade of zero for assignments given that day.

- Only seven (7) days **per school year** may be excused by a parent note. Any absences thereafter will be coded “unexcused” unless excused by a doctor’s not or by permission of the school administrator.

Unexcused Absences

All other absences, including suspension, count against the nine (9) unexcused absences.

Tardies

Being tardy to school greatly affects student achievement and routine. Tardies include late arrivals to school and early checkouts. Students who enter the school building after 8:00 am will be considered tardy. A parent may excuse up to seven (7) tardies per school year for the same reasons as excused absences. An unexcused checkout will be coded as a tardy. In grades K5-5th, every three (3) unexcused tardies will count as one unexcused absence on a student’s attendance record.

Tardy & Absentee Notes

A note explaining the reason for the absence should be written by the parent and sent to the teacher, who forwards it to the office for filing in the student’s attendance record.

All absences are initially entered as unexcused and are changed to excused absences when supporting documentation is supplied.

It is the student’s responsibility to see that work is made up as soon as possible. Teachers set the deadline for making up work.

Assignments made before the absence retain the original due date. For example, a spelling quiz is assigned at the beginning of the week for Friday. The student is absent on Thursday. Since he/she was present when the assignment was given, he will not be exempt from the quiz. He/She is still responsible for the assignment unless arrangements are made with the classroom teacher.

Prearranged Absences

The school administrator may pre-approve two (2) days for any student to be absent from school. Only students who have an attendance rate equal to or greater than 90% at the time of the pre-approved absences will receive prior approval to be absent from school. Students who are absent without prior approval, or students who are absent without having met the

attendance rate of 90%, will have their absences coded as “unexcused”. Pre-approval can be utilized only once per school year.

It is the student and/or parent’s responsibility to check with his/her teachers before the absence to find out what assignments will be given while he/she is gone. On the day he/she returns to class, the student with prearranged absences will be responsible for turning in any assignments due while he/she was gone as well as any assignments due the day he/she returns. Parents should make arrangements with the teacher for making up missed quizzes or tests. Family vacations must be approved by the School Administrator for the student to be allowed to make up any missed work.

Unplanned Absences

It is strongly advised that assignments should be picked up from your child’s teacher if he/she is absent two or more days from school. It is the student and parent’s responsibility to check with his/her teacher as soon as he/she returns to school to determine what assignments he/she missed. The student will then have one day for each day of his/her unplanned absence in which to turn in those completed assignments. If more time is needed to complete assignments, parents should make arrangements with the student’s teacher.

Parents, please call the office the day of the absence to notify faculty that the student will not be in school. Homework may be picked up in the school office after 3:00 p.m.

Students must be present five hours to be counted present for the school day. Any time a student checks in late or out early they are counted tardy. If students are checked in after 1:00 p.m. or out before 1:00 p.m. they will be counted absent.

Unscheduled School Closings

For unscheduled school closings or delays, the school will send out a Parent Alert by phone **and** email. **We do not notify parents when school is open.**

- GCA does not always follow Jefferson County on unscheduled school closings.
- GCA may, on occasion, have an unscheduled closing due to providential or safety issues. Whenever possible, the administration will attempt to inform parents in advance of such closings.
- If GCA needs to close or start school later, we will inform parents by way of School Cast. Make sure the school office has any phone number changes.

Homework

Believing that homework is an essential part of the school program and has a powerful effect on learning, each teacher is at liberty to give homework each day. Each student is expected to complete all assigned work. Parents are expected to sign and date student planners each day. Teachers are under no obligation to accept late work or permit makeup assignments except in the case of an excused absence.

Grades

Progress reports are sent out each four and a half-week period, and report cards are given out each nine-week period. Conferences are held after the first and third nine-week periods. Parents may request a conference at other times as needed.

The grading scale for K5 through 5th grade:

100-99	A+	98-92	A	91-90	A-
89-88	B+	87-82	B	81-80	B-
79-78	C+	77-72	C	71-70	C-
69-68	D+	67-62	D	61-60	D-
59-0	F				

Promotion and Retention

The determination of passing or failing a subject is made by converting the letter grades and calculating the average of the quarter grades and semester grades. The final grade is the average of the Semester 1 grade and Semester 2 grade. If the final grade is below 60, the subject is failed. Students must pass with a minimum final grade of 60 in Mathematics, History/Geography, Language/Phonics, Reading, and Science in order to be promoted to the next grade level.

Honor Rolls

Students will all “A”s in all subjects, including conduct, will qualify for the “A” Honor Roll. Any student with any combination of “A”s and “B”s in all subjects, including conduct will qualify for the “A/B” Honor Roll.

Standardized Testing

Students in K5 - 5th grade participate in Iowa Assessments and Cognitive Abilities Testing each spring. Results are sent home once the school receives them.

Transcripts

Transcripts are forwarded to a school upon a student's transfer or completion at GCA if the account is current. If a request is made for additional transcripts, one will be provided for an additional fee.

Student Records

In the case Gardendale Christian Academy ceases to operate the governing body makes provisions for permanent maintenance of and access to student records.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education rights.

FERPA gives parents certain rights concerning their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level.

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great travel distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows the school to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Schools to which a student is transferring
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, directory information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors, and awards, and dates of attendance.

However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. GCA will not disclose student's names, addresses, phone numbers, date and place of birth to any third-party requests without parent's approval.

Health and Safety

School administration works diligently to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all our students. Parent cooperation with the school health-and-safety policies is necessary to avoid accidents and to care for our students.

Medication

Faculty will not administer medication without the written authorization from the parent. The school does not keep aspirin or Motrin for fevers or headaches. It is the parent's responsibility to provide any medication for students. Parents must fill out a medication slip with dosage, date, and time. All medication must be in the original container from the pharmacy, properly labeled with the student's name and with clear directions. Medication slips can be picked up at the front office.

Injuries

If a student is injured during school hours, the parent will be notified. If care for the student is more than the school can provide, the student will be taken to a medical facility by ambulance. If the injury is a scrape, small cut, etc., the school will wash the area and apply a bandage. No other ointments will be administered to the area.

Insurance

Each student has accidental school insurance through his or her registration fees. The school also carries insurance on each child. However, the parent's insurance and/or student insurance is primary (pays first) and the school insurance is secondary (pays after primary insurance has paid all considered by them to be eligible). Student insurance may take care of some or all of the deductible from family insurance.

Sickness

Students diagnosed with a communicable disease (meaning an illness which arises as a result of a specific infectious agent which may be transmitted either by a susceptible host, infected person, or animal to another person) must be kept home until the possibility of the contagious infection has passed. The school administration must be notified immediately of a diagnosis of a communicable disease. A doctor's note is required for re-entrance.

In the interest of every student's well-being, parents are requested to keep their children home when they are sick. If a child has symptoms, such as a fever of 100 degrees or more, rash, vomiting, excessive nasal discharge, or diarrhea you must keep your child home. If the child develops these symptoms during school, the parent will be called to pick up the student as soon as possible. If we cannot reach the parents, we will notify the next person listed on the student information card.

Please do not bring your student to school with a contagious disease. Keep your child at home for at least 24 hours or until symptoms subside.

Your help in this area is of utmost importance. If you bring your student to the school with these symptoms, sickness will continue to spread through the class.

Illnesses that result in temporary removal

- Fever – Student must not attend or remain at school if fever is 100 degrees or higher. The student may return when fever free for 24 hours.
- Strep – The student may return forty-eight hours after beginning antibiotic treatment as long as he/she is fever-free.
- Vomiting – Student may not attend if vomiting has occurred twice in 24 hours. May return 24 hours after last vomiting occurrence.
- Diarrhea – Student may not attend or remain at school if diarrhea has occurred twice in one hour. May return 24 hours after the last occurrence.
- Head lice is not a disease but are contagious. We maintain a nit-free policy. For this reason, any student diagnosed as having lice will not be permitted back into the classroom until the child, and his/her home has been treated. The school administration must inspect the student before re-entry. The administration can at any time require a child having head lice on a constant basis to see a physician before being allowed to return to school.
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) – A student who has pink eye will be sent home due to the contagious nature of pink eye. The student may not attend with white or yellow eye discharge. The student may return 24-hours after beginning medical treatment.
- Rash – Faculty/administration will notify the parent when a rash is observed. If the rash spreads or is accompanied by another symptom, the student must leave the school.
- Respiratory Infection – Student must not attend with an uncontrolled cough, difficulty breathing or wheezing. The student may return when symptoms subside.

Doctor Appointments

Whenever possible, all medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside school hours. Academic problems often develop when students make a habit of leaving school for medical appointments.

Nutrition & Physical Activity

Nutrition Policy

- All food served at Gardendale Christian Academy shall comply with USDA recommendations for Meals and Snacks
- GCA is a nut free facility.
- Water shall be available at all meals and snacks
- No sugar-sweetened beverages shall be served to children
- We use only 100% juice.
 - No more than 6 ounces per day
 - Only served at meal or snack time
 - Only for children over 12 months
- Children 2 years and older can be served milk. We only serve milk with 1% or less milk fat unless medical documentation is provided for child
- Food items that shall be served at least once a week
 - Orange vegetables for vitamin A.
 - Dark green vegetables for iron, vitamins A and C, and fiber.
 - Legumes for protein, iron, B vitamins.
 - At least half of grains served each week will be whole grains.
- Menus are posted in view of parents and food preparation staff. Menus are prepared at least two weeks in advance and are available on the school [website](#).
- Special diet needs and food allergies shall be kept on file in food preparation areas and in the children's eating area

Lunch and Breakfast

GCA offers a nutritious lunch program. All-day K4 students are provided a lunch. K5 and grade school students are charged per day (includes milk, check the brochure for the price) or 35¢ for milk if a lunch is brought from home. Soft drinks are not allowed during school hours unless approved by the school administrator. The complete nutrition policy may be viewed on the wall in the front hallway of the school.

Breakfast is offered from 7:00-7:30 each morning. Check the brochure for the price.

Restaurant/fast foods may not be brought into the lunchroom by anyone under any circumstances and should not be packed in students' lunchboxes.

GCA cannot refrigerate any student's lunch, nor can students use the microwave.

Physical Activity

Each child shall have an opportunity for the appropriate amount of active play each day. Active play shall take place outdoors when weather and environmental conditions permit. When the weather does not permit outdoor activity, active play shall take place indoors. It is at the discretion of the school director if outside play is permitted when the temperature falls below 55 degrees or rises above 95 degrees. All children should dress appropriately for cold or hot weather.

Screen Time

Screen time is defined as the use of television, videos, video games, and computers. Screen time shall be:

- Offered as a free choice
- Limited to no more than a total of 2 1/2 hours per week
- Prohibited during meal or snack time

Conduct & Dress Code

Students are expected to act in an orderly and respectful manner, maintaining Christian standards of courtesy, kindness, language, morality, and honesty. Students must agree to strive toward excellent character in dress, conduct, and attitude.

Standards of Conduct

- Be respectful.
 - Be respectful to school personnel at all times.
 - Be respectful of the rights and property of others.
 - Be attentive and responsive to your teachers.
 - Bullying will not be tolerated.
 - Be punctual.
- Abide by the dress code.
- No defacing of school property. Profane language will not be tolerated.
- GCA has a zero drug tolerance program in place for the protection of our students and preservation of school atmosphere. Possession and/or use of drugs, tobacco, and alcoholic beverages are strictly forbidden. This is grounds for immediate dismissal of the student.
- Non-educational materials (iPods, MP3 players, Nintendo DS, cell phones, Apple watches etc.) are not allowed in the classroom. If brought, they will be left in the office for the parent to pick up.
- No toys are to be brought from home except on “show-and-tell” days, which will be set by each individual teacher.
- GCA will not be responsible for items lost or stolen.
- Students are responsible for personal property. Parents are encouraged to label all personal items (especially coats and sweaters) for easy identification.
- Computers and Media
 - Students are not allowed to use computers without permission or go to website addresses without permission.

- Students are not allowed to put any degrading or harmful information about the school, students, or employees on any website.
- Only G-rated movies can be viewed at GCA.
- Gum is not allowed.

Discipline

Discipline, which is firm, consistent, fair, and tempered with love, is maintained at GCA. Our faculty maintains standards of behavior in the classroom through kindness, love, and genuine regard for their students. However, when the disciplinary action becomes necessary, it is firmly carried out, tempered by good judgment and understanding.

If detention and other more minor types of discipline are not effective, the guardian will be called to pick up the student from school.

A student may be dropped from enrollment in the school if he/she is unwilling to rectify behavior.

Discipline issues will only be discussed with the parent or legal guardian of the student. If a parent disrupts or disturbs classes by yelling, arguing, using inappropriate language, or exhibiting aggressive behavior, he/she will be asked to leave the campus.

If the parent does not leave the campus the Gardendale Police Department will be called and the student could be dismissed.

Cheating

Gardendale Christian Academy expects all school students to do their best, performing all schoolwork in an honorable and honest fashion. Any instance of cheating will result in an automatic zero for all parties actively involved and possible suspension.

You will not receive a refund for your child's tuition or weekly fees if they are suspended, expelled, or dismissed from GCA.

Bullying

Gardendale Christian Academy has high behavior standards and a reputation for well-behaved students. GCA strives to maintain a safe learning and work environment that is free of bullying. Students, staff, and the school community are expected to conduct themselves in

a respectful, Christian manner and demonstrate a level of respect and dignity toward others. Bullying is harmful behavior initiated by one or more students and directed toward another student or students. Bullying is the repeated intentional aggressive behavior towards another.

Examples of Bullying

- Verbal: name-calling, put-downs, racist remarks, teasing, threats, spreading rumors, sending inappropriate (violent, sexual, malicious, etc.) notes or pictures in any medium (magazine, over a cell phone or Internet, etc.,)
- Physical: pushing, hitting, shoving, biting, hair-pulling, scratching, spitting, tripping, damaging or stealing the victim's property, locking a person in a room, making mean faces or rude gestures, initiating or forcing inappropriate touching, etc.
- Psychological: acts that instill a sense of fear or anxiety
- Miscellaneous: any act that insults or demeans an individual in such a way as to cause distress, reluctance to attend school, a decline in work standards, or problem behaviors.

Reporting Bullying

Students and staff are prohibited from knowingly falsely accusing another of bullying. Disciplinary action, up to, and including expulsion/suspension for students and termination for staff, shall be taken if they knowingly make false reports.

Any reported bullying shall be addressed as soon as possible. The staff member shall assess the situation to determine if the behavior meets the criteria for bullying or if the behavior is an isolated incident that can be resolved within the classroom. Not all conflict constitutes bullying. If it is indeed a form of bullying, the school administration shall be notified immediately.

The school administrator will meet with the victim, witness, and bully privately. Appropriate actions (corporal discipline, or possible suspension) will be taken, depending on the age of the child and the form of bullying. This will be done at the discretion of the school administrator. Parents of all children involved will be contacted.

Dress Code

GCA desires to set a standard of modest dress and general appearance for students that will:

- Be a testimony for the whole student body.
- Be a testimony for the Christian atmosphere of our school.
- Not distract from the educational process.

This guide is established to remind parents and students that dress and appearance is an issue of the heart. Modesty, neatness, and cleanliness are the main concerns of our dress code. Our overall goal is to assist parents in preparing and nurturing your children's hearts to bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ in how they look, what they wear, and how they conduct themselves before others.

When the administration or faculty observes a student who is in noncompliance with the dress code the parents or legal guardians will be notified. After three violations, a conference with the administrator will be scheduled. Since this normally works a greater hardship on the parents or guardians than the students, parents are asked to supervise their child's dress on a daily basis.

Attire

- Shirts may be either long or short-sleeved. No sleeveless shirts will be allowed.
- Shirts are to be loose fitting.
- Students must wear their shirts to prevent the midriff from showing, regardless of the posture of the student.
- No distracting, offensive writing or pictures are permitted on shirts, sweaters, or jackets.
- Students may wear denim, khaki, or cargo-type pants (solid or print).
- Girls may also wear capri pants that are loose-fitting and fall below the knee.
 - Leggings without a proper length dress or long shirt, tight pants or baggy pants are not allowed.
- Pants must not have holes or frayed hems.
- Pant legs must not be so long that the student walks on them.
- Girls may wear knee-length dresses or skirts. Sleeveless dresses are not allowed. For modesty, K5 and 1st-grade girls must wear shorts under skirts or dresses.

- Shoes must be worn at all times. Sandals and open-toed shoes are discouraged.
- K4 students may wear shorts in warm weather with a three-inch inseam.
- **K5 - 5th grade students may not wear shorts.**

Hairstyles

Boys are to have a neatly trimmed haircut that does not obstruct vision or hinder participation in the classroom. Hairstyles that are extreme, disruptive, or have distracting colors or style are not acceptable. The administration reserves the right to make that determination on such issues.

Girls must wear their hair in a style that does not obstruct vision or hinder participation in the classroom. Hairstyles that are extreme, disruptive, or have distracting colors are not acceptable. The administration reserves the right to make that determination on such issues.

Jewelry

Boys are allowed to wear bracelets, necklaces, and rings. Earrings, dog chains, or body piercing are not permitted.

Girls may wear bracelets, necklaces, rings, anklets, and earrings (two piercings per ear only). Body piercing is not permitted.

Tattoos

Visible temporary and permanent tattoos are unacceptable for both boys and girls.

Hats

Hats are not to be worn on campus during school hours, except on designated days.

Classroom Information

School Pictures

Individual student pictures will be taken in the fall and spring of the school year. Class pictures will be taken in the spring. K5 Graduation pictures will be made in the spring. These photographs will be available to purchase.

Fundraising

GCA participates in one fundraiser per semester. We encourage each family to help make these fundraisers a success. The profits from these fundraisers help pay for our Mac Lab and iPad lab, software, and any other major school projects.

Class Parties

Each class is allowed three parties for the year. It is at the teacher's discretion which holidays will be observed.

Birthdays

- Your child's birthday may be celebrated with his/her classmates. Parents will need to contact the teacher **one week** in advance to make arrangements. The teacher will give the time of the birthday celebration to you.
- Parents are to bring all supplies, including napkins, plates, cups, forks, spoons, a knife to cut the cake if needed, etc. Nothing is to be used from the kitchen.
- Birthday invitations may not be given out at school unless the invitations include every child in the classroom.
- **Treats must be store bought. Check with teacher for potential allergies.**

Campus Policies

Traffic Flow and Parking

For you, your child, and our employees, the traffic flow around the building is **one-way at all times**. Parking spaces are furnished when bringing a child into the building. Please do not park at the curb outside the school office as this disrupts the flow of traffic.

Pickup and Drop Off

For your child's safety, there will be someone from 7:15 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. each school day to open car doors. Teachers will bring students out to the car line at 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. For your child's safety, all children must exit cars on the right or passenger side of the vehicle.

Campus Visitors

For the safety of all children and employees, all visitors to the school grounds must follow proper check-in procedures. Everyone must come to the receptionist's desk to sign in and out when visiting the school and daycare. All doors are locked except at the front desk, and we ask all visitors to exit at the front desk.

Lost and Found

Items that are lost or found can be turned in or looked for in the Lost & Found Box located in the stairwell in the gym lobby. Items not claimed are disposed of twice a year.

Smoke-Free Campus

Gardendale Christian Academy abides by the State of Alabama's Tobacco-Use Policy. We are a smoke free campus.

For the purposes of this policy "tobacco" is defined to include any lighted and unlighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, bidi, clove cigarette, and any other smoking product. This definition also includes electronic nicotine delivery systems, and spit tobacco, also known as smokeless, dip chew, and snuff, in any form.

No student, staff member, or school visitor is permitted to smoke, inhale, dip, or chew tobacco at any time, including non-school hours:

- in any building, facility, or vehicle owned, leased, rented, or chartered by the school
- on school grounds, athletic grounds, or parking lots; or
- at any school-sponsored event off campus.

In addition, no student is permitted to possess a tobacco product. The provisions of existing policies that address the use and possession of drugs shall apply to all tobacco products.

Notice of Receipt

_____ enrolled in Gardendale Christian Academy and
Student Name

parent/legal guardian(s), _____ hereby acknowledge by
Name of Parent/Legal Guardian(s)

our signatures that we have received and read the school’s handbook. We understand that these policies apply to all students and parents in Gardendale Christian Academy; to the school campus, school buses or other school-owned vehicles; and to school-related activities and events.

(Signature) _____
Student Name *Date*

(Signature) _____
Parent/Legal Guardian *Date*

(Signature) _____
Parent/Legal Guardian *Date*

NOTE: The student is to sign the above statement. If the student lives with both parents or legal custodians, both are to sign the statement. If the student lives with only one parent or legal custodian, only one is to sign. A separate statement is to be signed for each student. This statement will be filed in the student’s cumulative file in the school office.