

# LOWER SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK



**2020-2021**  
**Garrison Forest School**

*This printed version of the Lower Division Handbook is provided as a quick resource. Please note that the complete version of the Handbook is available on the GFS website at [www.gfs.org](http://www.gfs.org). Parents are responsible for the material contained in the full version.*

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LOWER SCHOOL

For over 100 years, Garrison Forest has provided its students with an introduction to school that nurtures their innate curiosity and stimulates their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Our teachers share the important goal of instilling the joy of learning in each child. By integrating our curriculum and guiding our students through both planned and spontaneous adventures, we challenge them to achieve their fullest potential in mind, body, and spirit.

The primary goal of Garrison Forest's Lower School is to provide students with an outstanding academic program in an atmosphere of warmth and understanding. Central to this purpose are the beliefs that education should foster a child's growth as a total human being; that a caring, family atmosphere is crucial to the learning process; and that children learn best when they are actively involved. The program provides outstanding learning opportunities where children experience the success that nurtures self-motivation and responsibility. We strive to promote excellence in academics and to develop each child's sense of accomplishment and self-worth.

The belief that learning should be challenging and joyful is central to the school's mission. The Lower School teachers meet the needs of their students by providing a solid grounding in basic academic skills, a broad exposure to the creative arts, and a true community spirit based in kindness, respect, and honesty. Small classes, an intimate environment, and a genuine concern for others combine to create an enthusiasm for learning that carries forward into the future.

*~Learning for Life~*

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## **MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY OF GARRISON FOREST SCHOOL**

At Garrison Forest School, we prepare our students in and out of the classroom to thrive in a complex, changing world by:

- challenging them to strive for academic excellence and to grow into informed, independent, and creative thinkers;
- cultivating an authentic and resilient sense of self, grounded in respect and integrity;
- creating a diverse and inclusive community built on a spirit of caring;
- inspiring young women to lead and to serve with passion, purpose, and joy.

Our motto informs our mission: *Esse Quam Videri*, To Be Rather Than to Seem.

### **STATEMENT OF RESPECT**

The Garrison Forest School community is deeply committed to equity, honesty, kindness, and respect as part of the educational experience. To this end, we:

- strive to celebrate diversity both within our community and in our curriculum;
- are concerned for the well-being of all people;
- seek to build the self-esteem of all people;
- aspire to promote understanding among all people.

Recognizing the dignity and worth of all individuals and to protect their rights, we oppose bias, prejudice, and discrimination. Garrison Forest does not condone any behavior which is inconsistent with these tenets. We believe that spoken or written language or any behavior that is inconsistent with this philosophy and/or that demeans one's ethnic, religious, racial, physical, personal, and/or sexual characteristics is unacceptable. We expect individuals to take responsibility for their words and deeds and to respect all people.

### **GENERAL CIVILITY**

GFS takes seriously its mission, philosophy and statement of respect as articulated at the beginning of this handbook. All students, parents, guardians and other student representatives are expected to engage with GFS employees in a manner that conforms to the values of GFS. This includes interacting with all GFS employees in a respectful and civil manner during conferences, school events and in any other communications. Students, parents, guardians and other student representatives are prohibited from raising their voices, yelling, becoming aggressive verbally or physically, threatening, bullying, belittling or engaging in any other similar behavior during interactions with GFS employees, on GFS property, or during GFS sponsored activities. Should any issues arise under this general civility policy, they will be addressed by the Division Head.

## GARRISON FOREST CORE VALUES

Our Motto matters. *Esse Quam Videri*, “To Be Rather Than To Seem,” has inspired our community since Garrison Forest School’s founding in 1910. These five Core Values, created and adopted by the GFS community in 2015, guide how we teach and learn, connect and collaborate, serve and succeed.

Underscoring our Mission and Statement of Respect, these five values are a road map for every member of our community, adult and child, to be our best selves. The division-wide faculty and staff Core Values Committee develops age-appropriate curricular and co-curricular programming around the Core Values.

### Be Authentic.

- Take pride in your unique personality, spirit and character.
- Take responsibility for your words and actions.
- Be honest and fair with yourself and others.

### Be Brave.

- Have the courage to think and act independently.
- Take risks and persevere when facing challenges.
- Advocate for yourself and others.

### Be Compassionate.

- Understand others’ circumstances and viewpoints.
- Accept others’ differences and celebrate their contributions.
- Promote a peaceful, caring and safe community.

### Be Curious.

- Get excited about new ideas, places and people.
- Create and innovate.
- Ask questions and participate fully in your education.

### Be Spirited.

- Show passion and joy in school, play and all endeavors.
- Connect and collaborate.
- Congratulate and celebrate others’ successes.

At Garrison Forest School we ensure that our curriculum and co-curricular activities are diverse and inclusive. We support all of our students in exploring various aspects of their identities. We build connection and understanding across difference in all of our divisions and among students, faculty, staff, parents and the broader community. We support the recruitment and retention of diverse students, faculty and families.

## **PERSONNEL**

### **ADMINISTRATION**

Chris Hughes  
Head of School

Stacy Mohn  
Director of Finance and  
Operations

Jamie Roeder  
Director of Early Childhood Education

Gail Hutton  
Head of Lower Division

Shannon Schmidt  
Head of Middle School

Reema Khanchandani  
Head of Upper School

### **LOWER SCHOOL**

Head of Lower Division

Gail Hutton, M.A., M.Ed.

Lower Division Admissions

Janice Bogdan, M.A.

Counselor

Shondra Cowling, L.C.S.W.

Academic Resource Coordinator

Christine Grant, M.Ed.

Curriculum Specialist

Ashby Litz Thoeni, M.Ed.

Kindergarten

Leslie Goldstein, M.Ed.  
Beth Murphy, B.S.

First Grade

Lisa Jenkins, M.S.

Second Grade

Amy Welling, M.S.

Third Grade

Deborah Lynn, B.S.

Fourth Grade

Dana Livne, M.S., M.Ed.  
Erin Viana, M.A.T.

Fifth Grade

Lindsey Holton, M.A. Teaching and Foundations  
Jennifer Stapleton, M.Ed.

Art

Korey Rosenbaum, M.A.T. Art Education

STEM Education

Chris Shriver, M.A.

Spanish	Liz Stroud, M.A., Ed.
Library	Missy Wells, B.A
Music	Christina Keown, M.M. Music Education
Physical Education	Laura Cline, M.S. (Kindergarten-2nd Grade) Leigh MacDonald-Hall, B.S. (3rd-5th Grades)
Science and Outdoor Education	Tracey Brocato, B.S.
Administrative Assistant	Jenni Glose, M.A.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE LOWER SCHOOL**

The spirit of inquiry, intellectual independence, and enthusiasm for learning that are integral to the Garrison Forest School Mission Statement are clearly evident in the Lower School. While the curriculum is structured, it reflects the needs of children for freedom and spontaneity. The faculty is committed to helping each individual child realize his or her full potential. Success and self-esteem are enhanced by a curriculum that carefully balances enrichment with the mastery of foundational skills. We recognize and support individual needs and differences and, at the same time, stress group cooperation and collaboration. In a challenging and stimulating environment, students are encouraged to advance as far as their maturity, interests, and ability permit in every area and activity they explore. The emphasis on basic skills is enhanced by the value placed on critical thinking, innovation, and self-expression. We encourage students to question, to take risks, and to think independently, helping them progress from concrete, multi-sensory experiences to abstract thinking.

Social and emotional growth is also carefully promoted. Each child's self-image and self-esteem are developed in an atmosphere of respect, cooperation, collaboration, kindness, and the peaceful resolution of conflict. Students are guided in their ability to interact respectfully with both adults and peers. Independence and the acceptance of responsibilities, challenges, and limits are also emphasized. Through outreach projects, daily interactions with each other, assemblies, literature, field trips, and the core curriculum, a system of ethical values based on honor and integrity is cultivated in each student. The School's Statement of Respect is upheld and taught in ways that are developmentally appropriate, and it is incorporated into the daily lives of the students and the faculty. The children move through Garrison Forest with increased confidence and competence.

## THE DAILY SCHEDULE

### Lower School

Early Birds begins.....	7:30 a.m.
Doors open to students.....	7:30 a.m.
Morning Carpool greeting.....	7:40 – 8:00 a.m.
Classes begin .....	8:00 a.m. (Promptly)
Classes dismissed.....	3:30 p.m.

### THE DAILY SCHEDULE: LOWER SCHOOL (Kindergarten to Fifth Grade)

**Morning Arrival:** School begins in the Lower School for Kindergarten through Fifth Grade promptly at 8:00 a.m. Students may arrive as early as 7:30 a.m. and will be supervised in the library or on the playground until 7.55 a.m. Students will be greeted and helped out of their cars between 7:40 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. **Please be sure to arrive before 8:00 a.m. each day (with the exception of Thursdays when school begins at 9:00 a.m.)** The school day begins promptly at 8:10 a.m. and your child will not have time to unpack and transition if she does not arrive on time.

**Many Lower School students must ride in an approved booster seat or car seat.** Maryland law requires that all children under the age of eight or those who weigh less than 65 lbs or are shorter than 4'9" ride in an approved booster seat or car seat. Clearly labeled car seats and booster seats may be left in the lobby by the front door if your child will be going home with another adult.

If you would like to talk to your child's teacher or to an administrator, please call or email and make arrangements in advance for a time that is mutually convenient. In the morning, it is important for the teachers to be able to greet students as they enter the classroom and for the students to make a smooth and unhurried beginning to their day. It is difficult to have parent conferences at this time.

Students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. will be required to sign in at the front desk and will be marked late. This is to ensure the whereabouts of all students and the accuracy of our attendance and lunch counts. Repeated lateness is extremely difficult for children and disruptive to the rest of the community. Please be respectful of arrival times.

**Dismissal:** The girls wait for carpool by the front door of Lower School beginning at 3:30 p.m. They are called by the teachers and ready for your cars when you arrive in the loop. Please do not get out of your car and come into the building. When you do so, it is difficult for us to ensure each child's safety and whereabouts. You may not use Admissions parking spaces at any time. Please do not pull into handicapped spaces unless directed to do so.

**Students are not permitted to travel to other parts of the campus at dismissal time without an adult (see transportation form for exceptions).** In addition, students who wish to go to the Bookstore/Ozone afterschool **must** be accompanied by a parent. Most instrumental music teachers will make arrangements to pick up their students in Lower School. If your daughter is riding after



school, we will help you make arrangements to ensure that there is someone to accompany her. Children participating in all other after-school activities will be escorted by an adult.

Children should be picked up promptly at the end of the day but not before dismissal time. All early dismissals must take place before 2:45 to avoid traffic difficulties. If your child's carpool arrangements change during the school day, please call the Lower School Administrative Assistant at 410-559-3251. She will convey the information to your child's teacher. Calls must be made in ample time for the information to be communicated. **Children not picked up by 3:45 will be taken to the Harford Heights After-School Program. Pre-registered students will pay the emergency rate. Students who have not pre-registered will be charged the \$50.00 registration fee at that time.** Children enrolled in the After School Program may be picked up at 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m.

Parents are strongly discouraged from bringing forgotten homework, riding apparel, or other items to school during the school day. This is to ensure an uninterrupted classroom environment for the students and to encourage their growing independence and sense of responsibility. If you feel an item is truly necessary, such as forgotten medication or lunch, you may bring the item directly to the Administrative Assistant, and she will deliver it to your child's teacher **so as not to interrupt the classes that are in session.**

**Parents are asked not to go to their child's classroom unexpectedly or unannounced.** The Administrative Assistant will convey all messages and materials to teachers and students during the school day. Classrooms will be locked after dismissal and on weekends. Parents may not request permission to return after dismissal for forgotten clothing, homework, books, or other possessions.

**Grizzly Gathering** (formerly Morning Meeting): Parents are invited to attend our Grizzly Gathering from 8:20 to 8:45 a.m. on Mondays and/or on Fridays from 2:35-3:00 p.m. in the Lower School Library Meeting Room. Grizzly Gathering is a time for the Lower School community to share ideas and skills, explore various academic and non-academic topics, and make announcements. In addition to periodic presentations by different classes, teachers, and Upper and Middle School students and faculty, the program generally focuses on respectful conduct, internet safety, diversity, community service, and geography.

## **AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

**Afterschool Care for Kindergarten through Grade Five:** The Extended Day Program at Garrison Forest School is run by Harford Heights Child Care Program. Dismissal is either 5:00 or 6:00 pm. The program, licensed by the State of Maryland, is entering its 27<sup>th</sup> year of providing high quality after-school programs to several independent schools. Enrollment in Emergency Care is **required** of all students participating in any after-school activities on campus. The \$50 registration fee (one fee covers regular enrollment and/or Emergency Care) is **one-time only** and will carry through your child's years at GFS. All students from age three through Fifth Grade are **strongly** encouraged to register. We have no other accommodations for emergency care in the event that you are unexpectedly delayed at the end of the school day. Our teachers have other responsibilities at the end of the day and will not always be available to watch children if you have an emergency.

**Woodlands:** The joy of learning and creative engagement continues beyond the school day at the Lower School through meaningful and enjoyable afterschool programs. Girls make broader social interactions, explore new learning opportunities, express themselves and have fun in a variety of activities or clubs rooted in the mission, vision and warmth of the Lower School.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips to places of educational interest are an important part of the curriculum for older students. They extend and reinforce classroom instruction, help expose children to the outside world, and give students and teachers opportunities to relate under different surroundings. Pre-Kindergarten students take a limited number of trips, but beginning in Kindergarten, students take several trips during the year. Parental supervision, chaperoning, and the use of parent drivers or buses will depend on the requirements of the trip. When tickets are required, we make every effort to include parents and guardians who wish to chaperone, but volunteers may have to rotate. For students in Grades One to Five, buses are generally used for transportation. A general permission form is included on the website but permission slips are also sent home prior to each trip. Parents receive ample notice of upcoming trips. All students are expected to go on field trips if they are in school that day.

Parents who are chaperoning trips are invited for the purpose of supporting the teachers and providing an additional measure of safety for the students. The teachers will give each chaperone specific instructions about their plans for the trip. Parents may not use cell phones or other electronic devices unless it is an emergency. They are also asked to ensure that the experience is equitable and pleasurable for all students, regardless of the group to which they are specifically assigned. This extends to prohibitions against making purchases for individual or groups of children.

## ALLERGIES, LUNCH, AND SNACKS

**Allergies:** Several students and faculty members in the Lower Division have severe allergies. People with severe nut and dairy allergies have life-threatening reactions to ingesting even trace amounts of nuts and dairy products. Therefore, the **Lower School is a nut-free/dairy sensitive environment and Preschool is nut free**. Nut products may not be brought into the buildings. Preschool students and families use many of the Lower School classrooms, so they must be aware of the additional dairy precautions and restrictions for the Lower School. Lower School teachers will monitor snacks brought from home and if they find obvious nut products they will provide alternatives. Daily nut-free snacks are provided for all Lower Division students and careful accommodations are made in the dining hall for students with allergies. The children will become very protective of their classmates with allergies. Parents of children in class with a student with allergies will receive more information at the beginning of the school year about additional accommodations for specific classrooms, including for birthdays and special snacks.

**Lunch:** Students in Kindergarten through Fifth Grades eat lunch in Alumnae Hall. Because Lower School students often do not have the ability to make healthy choices from such a wide selection, they are encouraged to bring a lunch; but they also have the option of buying a hot lunch **beginning in Third Grade**. Milk and water are provided for all students in the dining hall. Families of K-2 students may purchase lunches through Graul's Market. The Graul's lunches are delivered directly to the Lower School each day. Information to sign up for this service can be obtained from the Lower School Administrative Assistant.

**Buying Lunch:** (Third-Fifth Grades) Hot lunch is served cafeteria style and includes soup, a salad bar, a sandwich bar, and two hot entrees. Hot lunches are charged on a per meal basis to incidental accounts. If a student forgets her lunch, she is given a GFS lunch which is charged as an incidental expense. Weekly menus are available on the GFS web site. If your daughter is buying lunch, please use the daily menu to discuss healthy options in advance. The academic schedule of the afternoon is

compromised by poor choices at lunch.

**Lunches brought from home:** Children should bring a lunch, including a beverage. Lunches should be healthy. “Junk food” is strongly discouraged and candy and soft drinks are prohibited. The children have a rigorous afternoon schedule and good nutrition plays an important role in each child’s ability to fully participate. In striving to teach children the benefits of nutrition and a balanced diet, it is counterproductive for them to eat the popular non-foods items on the market. “Sticky” snacks are particularly objectionable. Please read labels and strive for a healthy balance. We ask the children to leave uneaten food in their lunch boxes so you can see what they did not want and better judge what to pack. Keep in mind that they are likely to eat fruits and vegetables when they are hungry and when good choices are being modeled by teachers and peers.

Please send an “ice pack” lunch box and no perishable food. Placing a frozen juice box or water bottle in your child’s lunch box and avoiding meats and mayonnaise is important for adequate cooling; otherwise perishable food may become hazardous. **Please do not send items that need to be microwaved.** Lower School children eating in Alumnae Hall are not permitted to use the microwave or the toaster.

**Snacks:** Students are provided a daily mid-morning snack of saltines, graham crackers, fresh or canned fruit, carrots, cheese crackers, cereal mix, or pretzels. Parents are encouraged to make arrangements with their child’s teacher if they would like to bring a nutritious snack (fruit, cheese, yogurt, etc.) for the whole class, keeping in mind that Lower School is “Nut and Dairy Sensitive.” Lower School students (with the exception of those in Second and Fourth Grades) are encouraged to bring their own individual nutritious snacks, such as fruit and a small water, each day. Candy and junk food may not be brought to school. **ALL snacks brought from home must be nut free.**

## TECHNOLOGY

Technology is an integral part of the GFS program. All Lower School teachers are encouraged to use the best available tools to create a learning environment that will stimulate the interests of their students and provide them with a broad understanding of the topics in the curriculum. Classrooms are equipped with wireless projectors and/or interactive whiteboards and teachers are provided with laptops that can bring the outside world into the classroom. Beginning in Kindergarten, the students begin to work on iPads or PC laptops and Fourth and Fifth Grades, we start our 1:1 Chromebook program, providing a valuable resource for research, writing, math, and long-term projects that bring together various areas of the curriculum.

**Responsible Use:** Beginning with Kindergarten, students and parents are expected to read, sign, and return the Garrison Forest Responsible Use Policy (RUP). The RUP clearly defines the expectations associated with the use of computers and other technology at schools (found in the appendix). All Lower School students participate in a Digital Citizenship curriculum that includes topics such as understanding privacy, cyberbullying, ethical use of technology, and developing a positive digital footprint.

**Technology at Home:** Parents who make technological tools available in their homes must take responsibility for helping their children be responsible digital citizens. It is vital for parents to role-model appropriate use, set clear expectations, maintain open communication with your children and the School with respect to responsible use, and most importantly, supervise your children to ensure

compliance with the rules of your household. To accomplish this, parents must establish and maintain clear rules that address:

- ensuring that all technology available to children and connected to the Internet is in a public place in the home that can be supervised
- using family e-mail accounts or knowing your child's passwords, so all e-mail and online activity by your child can be monitored
- knowing the identity of all your child's online contacts
- uniformly enforcing the GFS Responsible Use Policy and your home policies

**Cell Phones and other personal electronic equipment:** Cell phones and Apple Watches are not to be used in school during the school day. If a student brings a cell phone or Apple Watch to school, she must keep it turned off and safely stored in her backpack during the academic day. Students found having or using these devices as a first offense will be asked to keep the device with the Head of Lower School. Any subsequent offenses will result in the loss of the privilege to bring the device to school for a certain period of time. Cell phones are useful for emergencies only. There are ample telephones available for student use throughout the campus. Parents are asked to tell their daughters not to text them during the day. Our cell phone policy also applies to other mobile devices such as tablets, wearables, etc.

Cellphones, Apple Watches and other mobile devices will not be allowed on any field trips, including our overnight trip to Echo Hill for Fifth grade students. Despite our faculty's best efforts, students attempt to use their phones throughout our trips and this takes away from the overall experience at the site and with their peers. With regard to pictures, we will have high quality (S-DLRs) cameras that students and faculty will use to document the event. In case of emergencies, parents should call the school in order to contact an administrator/faculty member on the trip. Every faculty member on the trip will have a cell phone to make or receive calls.

**E-Reader Device Policy:** Garrison Forest believes technology can enhance and improve the learning experience for students. We make informed decisions about appropriate technology use in our classrooms and evaluate new and existing digital devices to ensure their practical inclusion in our classrooms. We also acknowledge that the world of digital devices is constantly changing and we remain open to these changes and the learning potential they might afford students. We recognize that many students are using e-readers for their personal reading; iPads, Kindles, and Nooks are currently the most popular. Garrison Forest acknowledges that students using e-readers can enhance their reading experience and that these devices can support the development of reading skills. We will therefore allow students to bring an e-reader device to class given the following:

- In keeping with the rules for digital citizenship, students must ask teachers before using it in class or to record or take pictures during a class. Students should understand that not every teacher will feel that an e-reader is appropriate in their class.
- Students are responsible for the safety and security of their devices. Garrison Forest cannot provide service or support for these devices.
- Garrison Forest is not liable for any damage or theft of an e-reader or electronic reading device.

## **UNIFORMS AND THE DRESS CODE**

All Lower School students must wear sneakers every day. Parents are also asked to ensure that their children dress for the weather, including raincoats and sufficient outerwear for a trip across campus.

Every day, students leave their main classroom buildings to travel to Specials, either in an adjacent Lower Division building or in the Athletic Center or Fine and Performing Arts building.

**Uniforms:** Students in Kindergarten through Grade Five wear uniforms. They are expected to wear clothes that are clean, neat, and in good repair. Uniforms may be purchased at **Flynn & O'Hara** in Towson, MD (410) 828-4709. The GFS Parent Association sells gently used uniforms through Grizzly Gear. Consult the Directory for information about used uniforms.

**School-day uniform:**

K-4th Grade: GFS tartan jumper, white shirt or polo shirt with sleeves and a collar; solid white long sleeved turtlenecks may be worn in cold weather.

5th Grade: GFS tartan kilt, white shirt or polo shirt with sleeves and a collar; solid white long sleeved turtlenecks may be worn in cold weather.

For K-5th Grade:

- Girls should dress for the weather, including raincoats and sufficient outerwear for a trip across campus.
- Visible insignias and labels are not permitted.
- GFS gym shorts (available in School Store or Grizzly Gear) are worn under the skirt or jumper but may not be visible.
- All Lower School students must wear sneakers every day (no high tops or slip-ons) with solid white socks or solid navy or black tights or leggings (leggings may be purchased in the School Store).
- All students may wear solid navy blue cardigans, navy pullover sweaters (plain or cable knit) or any GFS sweatshirt, sweater or fleece that is sold in the School Store.
- Students may wear navy chino, poplin, twill or corduroy full-length pants (no cargo style pockets or zippers at the bottoms).
- Sweatpants and wind pants are not considered uniform attire. Outerwear may not be worn indoors.

Jewelry: Use parental discretion with respect to the wearing of jewelry during the school day. Small, simple jewelry and watches are permitted, but parents should be aware that these items are easily misplaced and lost during an active school day.

IMPORTANT: Please mark all clothing with your child's name. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of marking clearly ALL clothing, including sneakers. You are also strongly encouraged to check the Lost and Found periodically for lost items.

**Physical Education uniform:**

K-5th Grade: GFS gym shorts, a white shirt (no insignia), sneakers and white socks. They must also bring a mouth guard and case to class for specific sports seasons.

**Riding:**

Children participating in the riding program will be instructed as to proper apparel.

K-1<sup>st</sup> Grade: On their scheduled riding day, students should wear their riding pants, a uniform shirt and sneakers to school on their scheduled riding day. They will change into boots before riding.

2nd- 5th Grade: Riders will change into pants and boots for riding before they are picked up by the van. Younger students must have pull-on or zipper riding boots, not boots that tie. All riders must be able to dress themselves quickly and independently.

## **STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE**

**Guidance and Discipline:** In keeping with the mission and goals of Garrison Forest School, our discipline policies guide children in the development of worthy values and developmentally appropriate social skills. We want each student to grow in kindness, honesty, respect, and consideration for others. Teachers carefully plan the classroom environment to encourage and foster cooperation and collaboration. The day is carefully orchestrated to provide the routines and consistency children need. Most importantly, the adult-to-child ratio is kept low enough for problems to be addressed promptly and each child's needs to be met judiciously.

**Teaching Strategies and Curriculum:** Young children are still learning the problem-solving skills to express their feelings in appropriate ways. Therefore teachers are pro-active, deliberately teaching cooperation, collaboration, and compassion. Many materials and books support prosocial and nonviolent themes, inviting cooperation and the development of morals and a strong character. Using the Responsive Classroom approach, teachers model sharing, talking about feelings, respect for others, and problem solving. With the help of our Lower School counselor and through literature, group and individual discussions, role-playing, example, and actual situations that arise in the classroom, we purposefully teach respect, responsibility, kindness, manners, and an awareness of the needs and rights of others. When pertinent, teachers also discuss appropriate responses to conflict. Expectations for behavior are clearly delineated and discussed with the students on a regular basis. Cooperative and respectful behavior is praised and kind acts are noted. The need for discipline is circumvented and minimized by purposeful guidance and education.

**Responding to Conflict:** The safety of each child is our highest priority. If transgressions occur between our students, teachers provide reminders, intervene as necessary, and contact parents if the problem is on-going. When teachers have established a relationship of trust and respect, they may move an uncooperative child to action with gentle, verbal encouragement. Children are reminded of previously learned rules and expectations and prompted to respect the needs of others. Depending on their age and ability to reason, they are encouraged to reflect back on an incident and resolve to make better choices in the future. Sometimes, privileges are withdrawn so they can learn the connection between their actions and logical consequences. Friction between children may be uninterrupted but closely supervised, providing them with practice in problem-solving and conflict resolution. Aggressive behavior, however, is stopped immediately and calmly by the teachers and discussed privately with the child or children involved. A young child may be asked to sit quietly to regain self-control and may be removed from the activities of the other children for a short time.

**Parental Involvement:** Communication with families is at the heart of any discipline and guidance program. We welcome communication and initiate both formal and informal conferences. The

school and families work together to resolve discipline problems and to plan for guidance. Learning discipline and good decision-making skills is a process. The efforts of the faculty, the parents, and the administrators are all important in the creation of an optimal learning environment.

At Garrison Forest, the joy of learning and respect for other people are considered primary expectations. We want the children to display a positive attitude toward school and work, and we expect them to behave in a courteous, thoughtful fashion. Our goal is to allow all individuals to grow and learn in a healthy and happy environment. When there is a serious deviation from this goal, the appropriate Head of Lower School will work in consultation with the parents. Any disciplinary action will be appropriate to the age of the child and the situation and in line with the guidelines of this policy. Gross misconduct, including physical harm to another student or behavior determined to be detrimental to the school community, may result in suspension or expulsion.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework that is appropriate and thoughtful will be assigned throughout the year. It is designed to provide reinforcement and practice of basic academic skills and to encourage good study habits and time management. Parents are expected to ensure that their children have a quiet place to work, that television and phone use are limited, and that the assigned work is completed. They are not expected to help with the completion of homework assignments except as needed for special projects. Homework assignments are given Monday through Thursday nights but long-range assignments or projects may occasionally carry over on the weekends. Teachers may prepare weekly homework sheets that are published on the web and/or handed out in class. This allows for planning around weekly family activities. If, on any night, a parent feels that a child cannot complete a homework assignment because of illness or unusual family commitments, the parent should send a note to the child's teacher the following morning. This does not include optional after-school activities, which should be limited to allow for the time needed to complete homework assignments.

The time it takes to complete homework assignments varies significantly by student and by circumstance. It is affected by the attention span of the child, the number of interruptions, the social and emotional state of the child at that particular time, and many other factors. The following times can only be guidelines and goals on the part of the teachers for the “majority” of students on “most” nights. If a parent feels that a child is spending an inordinate amount of time on a particular assignment, the parent should stop the child and send a note to the child’s teacher the following morning outlining the difficulty and the amount of quality time and effort spent. This will help the teachers monitor and judge their homework expectations for the entire class and make decision about re-teaching material. As general guidelines, nightly homework expectations are as follows: Kindergarten and First Grade: 10 to 20 minutes, Second Grade: 20 to 30 minutes, Third Grade: 30 to 45 minutes, Fourth Grade: 40 to 50 minutes, and Fifth Grade: 50 to 60 minutes.

**All students should read or be read to each night.** This is an integral part of each child’s education. Shared literacy fosters a love of reading and provides practice in basic reading skills and fluency at all levels. Twenty minutes of reading supplements the daily homework expectations.

In math, working patiently with your daughter in ways that are right for her development can be better than trying to explain your method of solving a problem. Invite her to try to take the numbers apart, use number sense, and explore different strategies. There is often more than just one strategy

for a solution to a problem, and more than one way to compute. Children develop confidence when given the opportunity to explore and find strategies that work for them.

Students in the Lower School are expected to make up all essential classroom work and homework missed due to absence from school. If a student is absent for one day only it may not be necessary to make up all of the work. She will complete the needed assignments when she returns the next day. For an absence of more than one day, parents should call the Lower School Administrative Assistant **before noon** to arrange for classroom make-up work to be prepared. These materials will be available for pick-up at the end of the school day at the front desk or may be sent home with another student.

## **HOMEWORK POLICY FOR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS & LONG BREAKS**

Homework, assignments, and assessments cannot be scheduled or due on the first day back from a religious holiday that is observed by Garrison Forest School. Additionally, students may notify teachers with a note from their family if there is another religious holiday that they observe that would preclude them from completing their work accordingly. The same policy for no homework, assignments and assessments being scheduled or due apply to the first day back from the following breaks: Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring Break.

## **ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS**

Each school day is integral to a coordinated program that provides the best possible education. Students are expected to attend school every day, on time, unless sickness or other special family circumstances interfere. Parents should call the Administrative Assistant in their child's building to report absences and, in Grades One to Five, make any necessary arrangements for the collection of missed work. Please report the reason for your child's absence so we can make decisions about communicating with other parents regarding contagious illnesses. **Students must be fever-free for 24 hours (without the aid of fever-reducing medication) before returning to school.**

The school day begins promptly at 8:00AM and concludes at 3:30 PM. On Thursdays, the school day begins at 9:00AM and concludes at 3:30PM. All students must arrive at school by 7:55AM. Students arriving after 8:00AM. (9:00AM on Thursdays) must be signed in at the front desk by the adult who drove them to school. **\*Please note that students arriving after 8:00AM (9:00AM on Thursdays) will not be admitted into the building without an accompanying adult.**

Punctuality is essential so that all students are able to prepare for the day by unpacking belongings and getting settled into their classroom. Chronic lateness is disruptive to the other members of the community and detrimental to a child's social and academic adjustment to the school day. **Any student who is late/absent unexcused 5 times in one trimester will be contacted by the Head of Lower School and it will be noted on the report card.** In consultation with the student's teacher, the Head of the Lower School will determine how the student may complete the missed classwork and receive a satisfactory grade.

A student's absence from school is excused for:

- Illness
- The graduation, marriage, or death of an immediate family member
- Observance of a religious holiday or event



Absences for all other reasons are considered unexcused. Please make every effort to schedule appointments after school, including those with doctors and dentists. Although there may be occasions when it is unavoidable, we feel strongly that students should fully participate in each school day. If a student must leave school early or arrive late due to a doctor's appointment or another compelling reason, a note must be sent to the teacher and the child must be signed in or out with the Administrative Assistant.

There are many long vacations built into the school calendar. We ask that families plan extended trips during those designated periods of time. It is also asked that families adhere to the dismissal dates and times prior to those vacations.

## **PLANNED ABSENCE**

If a student knows in advance that she will be absent, parents or guardians must notify the office of the date and reason for the planned absence. The Head of the Lower School will determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused. It may be necessary for the student to complete missed work upon her return. Teachers are not obligated to provide additional help if an absence is unexcused.

## **EXCESSIVE ABSENCE**

If a student is absent for more than 20% of a class, the Head of Lower School, in consultation with the student's teacher and parents will determine how the student may complete the class and completion requirements.

**Physical Education:** All students are expected to participate in physical education classes and join their peers in outdoor recess if they are in school. **A doctor's note is required for a long-term absence and any time a doctor requires the school to excuse a child from Physical Education classes. A copy of the doctor's note must be submitted to the PE teacher and Lower School Office.** The parents of any student who cannot participate fully in a Physical Education class must contact the Head of Lower Division or the Administrative Assistant directly and in sufficient time to make any necessary adjustments. For your child's safety, she will remain in the Lower School during PE class for the duration of the mandated medical leave. The child can resume normal PE activities once she is cleared by her doctor.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

To celebrate a child's birthday, classroom teachers welcome cupcakes, healthy snacks, and other simple refreshments sent from home. Parents must make arrangements in advance with classroom teachers and be mindful of any allergy concerns that may exist. **Classroom teachers cannot take responsibility for party invitations being distributed at school.** We ask that families remain sensitive to the feelings of classmates when deciding who to include and we require that all invitations be issued by mail or by phone. **Students may not leave school in groups for an exclusive event.**

## **BOOKS AND SUPPLIES**

The school provides textbooks, workbooks, desk supplies, and most art or project supplies as part of the Lower Division tuition. Occasionally, teachers may ask students to bring in special supplies for a project. In addition, most field trips and transportation costs are covered by tuition. Please do not purchase school supplies until you receive a summer letter from your child's teacher.

**The Garrison Forest School Store**, located in Manor House, offers a full line of crested GFS items such as shorts, tote bags, hats, mugs, school supplies, and sweatshirts. Students in Grades Four and Five may go to the school store during recess, but they must have a signed note from home indicating how much money may be spent and what particular item(s) will be purchased. Students will be assigned a partner and must ask permission to go. School Store hours are: 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Fridays.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

In accordance with Maryland State Law, fire and evacuation drills are held throughout the year at different times of the day. Early in the school year all students are instructed in proper procedures and a scheduled fire drill is held. Unannounced drills are held monthly from that point on throughout the year. In addition, emergency school-wide evacuation and lock-down drills are also held periodically.

## **GATE CLOSURES**

**The Reisterstown Road gates will be open 7:30-8:30AM and 2:30-3:30PM.** They will remain closed at all other times. These are the main gates at the traffic light on Reisterstown Road.

Please do not pull up to the gates and ask Security to come and open them. This will be a minor inconvenience for parents needing to come on campus during the school day, but is an important step to create a safer environment for our campus.

NOTE: If you are on campus during the day, you may still exit campus using the Reisterstown Road gates. Simply pull up to the white line at the closed gate, and the gate will automatically open to allow you to exit.

## **FUND-RAISING POLICY**

Garrison Forest School does not endorse fund-raising efforts that do not directly benefit the school or an approved charity working through one of our Community Service projects. All fund-raising events/projects meant to benefit one club, class, or division must be approved by the Head of School.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

### **INDIVIDUAL RECORDS**

Records are maintained for each student beginning with admission to Garrison Forest School. The following records may be included in a student's file where applicable:

- Personal and family data
- Test data: achievement and ability test records (excluding Admission testing)
- Other records which may contribute to understanding the educational progress of the student.

## **REPORT CARDS AND CONFERENCES**

Report cards are issued three times per year, at the end of each trimester for students in Grades one through five. Report cards for the Kindergarten students are available after the second and third trimesters. Parents will be notified when the reports will be available through the Parent Portal. Conference Days are scheduled three times during the academic year and parents are notified to sign up for a convenient time through the Parent Portal.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT**

Occasionally teachers and administrators find that a student requires enhanced or differentiated instruction which the teacher is unable to offer within the normal structures of the classroom. Teachers concerned about student achievement will consult with the parents and the Lower School Head. Parents may be asked to seek outside tutoring, an outside educational evaluation, or both. The goal of tutoring is to increase the student's self-sufficiency in the learning environment. The goal of an educational evaluation is to better understand the strengths, vulnerabilities, and specific learning styles of the student. Educational evaluators should provide a written report of the results of the testing, including a list of educational recommendations for classroom teachers. It is expected that the parents will share the results of the testing with the School so we may better understand and provide for the individual needs of the student. In the event that the School asks for either supplemental tutoring or an educational evaluation, communication between the parents, the administration, and the teachers becomes critical. Periodic meetings will be conducted with the parents and the educational team to review and revise the plan for educating the student, including any necessary accommodations and who will perform them. Although it is our intention to meet the needs of every child accepted into the program, in extremely rare cases, it is decided that an alternate placement would better meet the needs of a student. If this is the case, we will do everything possible to aid the family in the search for an optimal setting.

## **REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS**

GFS complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and all other federal, state and local laws regarding students with disabilities. GFS will provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities and will not discriminate against any student by excluding the student from fully participating in any student program in violation of the law. Requests for accommodations must be made to the Academic Resource Center (the "ARC"). Review of these requests is made on a case by case basis for each individual student. The ARC will decide which accommodations are to be offered in consultation with the parents, Faculty, and the Division Head and/or Head of School if appropriate. GFS requires documentation from a qualified healthcare provider including relevant test results supporting the request for accommodation. It is difficult for the school to honor informal requests for accommodation, so please be sure to follow this procedure.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

One of Garrison Forest's greatest strengths is the degree to which parents are involved in the school. There are numerous opportunities for parents to become involved both in the Lower School and in the community as a whole. A form is sent home by the Parents' Association to poll parents about becoming involved. We value our volunteers, but may not always be able to use each person who signs the form. Class parents and teachers are in touch with parents about classroom needs throughout the year. If you are interested in volunteering in a special way, please speak to a Lower School Parent Association Representative, an administrator, your class parent, or a teacher.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Through planned activities, each child learns the values and pleasures of giving to others. Projects and activities are designed to include the children in an age appropriate way and may include outreach within or outside of the immediate school community. In the Lower School, each class takes on individual projects and often requests the help and involvement of the rest of the Division or School. Many programs are school-wide efforts and bring the talents and efforts of the entire community together for a common cause. Additional age appropriate endeavors are often incorporated into daily activities, discussions, Grizzly Gathering (Morning Meeting), classroom projects, and literature.

## THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Garrison Forest Parent Association exists to support the educational choice parents have made for their children. The role of the Parent Association is to strengthen the triangle that students, faculty, and parents share. It is committed to supporting the Development Program (annual, capital, and planned giving) created by the Board of Trustees. Garrison Forest relies on the financial support of its parents, as well as alumnae, grandparents, faculty, staff, and friends through annual, capital, and planned giving. Each year GFS parents play a major role in helping to meet the goals of the Annual Fund, which contributes almost 8% to the current operating budget. The Parent Association also supports Parent Education initiatives. Meetings are held monthly for Parent Association Representatives from all areas of the school, including each division. Notices of open meetings are sent periodically via email.

**Fund Raising:** The Parent Association sponsors fund-raising activities such as Grizzly Gear (the sale of used uniforms and other items) to support its own operating budget. Any additional Parent Association fund-raising projects or promotions must receive prior approval by the Development Committee of the Board of Trustees and the Head of School. Within the Lower School, Spring Fling benefit the Assemblies, Field Trips, and Special Events Funds of the Preschool and Lower School.

## PARENT ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES AND CLASS PARENTS

Lower School Representatives to the Parent Association Board act as liaisons between the Parent Association Board and the Lower School. The representatives work closely with the Lower School Head and serve as the coordinators of Class Parents. Two Lower School Reps serve on the Parent Association Executive Board and attend general Board meetings.

**Class Parents** are liaisons between the classroom teachers and the parents. They work closely with the teachers planning field trips, helping with holidays and special events, and encouraging parent participation in various School events. Class Parents attend monthly meetings with the Head of Lower School. A list of our Lower School Representatives will be distributed at the start of the school year. Please contact the Head of Lower Division directly if you are interested in volunteering and helping with this important work for the school.

## PARENT VISITATION

We welcome parent participation in many aspects of the School. The safety and security of the children as a whole, however, have to be preserved by the following guidelines:

- Parents of our Kindergarten students may walk their daughters into school for the first few weeks of school. Please DO NOT park in any of our admission/visitor parking spots.
- Parents of our First through Fifth grade students should be dropped off in our Lower School circle. Students will be on hand to walk them to their classrooms if necessary.
- All visitors and parents **must** check in at the Administrative Assistant's desk. **Visitors and parents may not go directly to any classroom.**
- Parents must make specific prior arrangements with their child's teacher, and receive **specific** permission from the Lower Division Head. No unannounced or spontaneous observations are permitted in order to prevent disrupting the class. Observations may last no longer than 40 minutes and the Head of the Lower Division and/or the Academic Resource Coordinator must also attend the prescheduled visit.

There is time for parents to get to know each other and communicate with their child's teacher at traditional events, such as the fall parent receptions and class meetings. Parents are also encouraged to attend the Halloween Parade, Parents' Day, winter concerts and programs, class plays, and Spring Fling. Parents are always welcome to arrange to read a book to the class. Field trips and class parties often involve parents and some teachers may ask for parent help with cooking, computer time, and other special activities. We appreciate and depend on the support and volunteer time of our parents.

## HEALTH SERVICES

The goal of the Garrison Forest School Health Services is to maximize the potential of all students to learn and grow by promoting and protecting their health at school. Everyone in a school setting is working in close contact with others, so we work actively to protect students and others in the school community from disease and infection. The spread of many common contagious conditions can be prevented or ameliorated by teaching and encouraging good hygiene including using proper hand washing techniques, covering skin trauma, avoiding shared personal items and maintaining a clean environment. Our housekeeping standards remain exceptional and are based on Health Department recommendations for schools. We are vigilant about monitoring our community and require that students and teachers be cleared by a health care professional to return to school after contracting certain contagious infections. Our team of registered nurses provides coverage whenever school is open and a school physician is always on call.

## HEALTH RECORDS

The GFS health staff is responsible for the information contained in this section of the Handbook. The health staff must have complete and accurate health and emergency information for each student to comply with Maryland State law and provide optimal school health care. Check the list below to determine which forms are required:

- New students must provide a Health Care Power of Attorney signed by either parents or guardians and by two witnesses. This form is valid for as long as the child is a student at Garrison Forest School.
- All students must provide a current Health History and Physical Exam Form each year.

The Maryland Immunization Certificate must be updated as new immunizations are received prior to the start of the new school year.

- All students must have current family data, including names; addresses; and home, cell and work phone numbers of parents or guardians entered into the Parent Portal, that will then be uploaded into our online medical database, Magnus. It is essential to keep this information up-to-date, so families must update the Parent Portal and Magnus of any changes, including new doctors. If parents are traveling out of town and the student is left in the care of someone other than the listed emergency contact person, the Division Head must be notified in writing.
- All students requiring medication at school, including self-administered inhalers and EPIPENS, must provide a Medication Authorization Form (See the Medication Policy below for details.) and upload this onto Magnus.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Please check the State of Maryland requirements to be sure your child is in compliance before the beginning of the school year. The immunization record must show the day, month and year of each vaccination and must be signed by a physician or health department official. No child will be admitted to school without providing proof of current required immunizations unless officially exempted for medical and religious reasons that satisfy Maryland law. Consult with the school nurse, the Health Department or your physician about the requirements and proper documentation for any exemptions.

## **MEDICATION POLICIES**

We discourage the administration of any medication in school. However, if a physician decides that it is necessary for a student to receive prescription or over-the-counter medication at school for long or short-term administration, specific requirements must be met:

- Written orders from the physician, nurse practitioner or dentist must accompany all medications to be administered. A new order must be obtained at the beginning of each school year. This includes inhalers and EPIPENS.
- The written order must be dated and identify the medication, dosage, route, time or specific circumstances under which it should be given. Possible side effects should also be noted.
- The parent or guardian must provide written permission for the medication to be given.
- Any change in the medication, dose or time the medication is to be given must be accompanied by a new written order and parents' permission.
- The medication must be brought to school by the parent or other responsible person in an original pharmacy container labeled with the name of the student, the name of the medication, the name of the prescribing practitioner and the appropriate directions for school administration. This container will remain at school for the duration of the time the medication is to be given.
- All medications, with the exception of certain asthma and allergy drugs, must be kept in the Health Center or the school office. A student may carry an inhaler or an EPIPEN only with the written permission of his/her parent and the prescribing practitioner.
- Medications used in the treatment of attention deficit disorders must be given under the direct supervision of the school nurse or another officially designated School employee.
- Students must not carry prescribed or over-the-counter drugs in school for self-administration except under the guidance of the school nurse. If a student is found to possess medication not authorized by the nursing staff, the medication will be held for the student in the Health Center. The prescribing practitioner's order and parents' permission may be provided on the Medication Authorization Form available on Magnus.

If parents/guardians provide annual permission on Magnus in the Medicine Center, nurses may give students acetaminophen (like Tylenol), ibuprofen (like Motrin), antacid (like Tums), or throat lozenges for symptomatic relief and apply hydrocortisone cream or antibiotic ointment. No allergy shots or other medications will be given in the Health Center, except emergency medications.

## **MEDICAL NOTIFICATIONS**

The decision to notify parents or other members of the school community about a medical condition is based on the likelihood of another student contracting the condition. When a contagious condition is reported, the school nurse will consult with the school physician, and they will determine, based on their medical judgment, whether some or all students, parents and staff should be notified. If notified, parents should consult with their health care providers for further information. In general, students are in close contact and should be aware of the need for good hygiene. Particularly in the younger grades, we will continue to reinforce this in school and assist the children as they practice hand washing and other preventive measures.

## **USE OF THE HEALTH CENTER**

The nursing staff of the Health Center provides assessments, minor treatments and/or referrals for injuries, acute illnesses and chronic health conditions for the students of Garrison Forest School. Treatment of other individuals on the school grounds is limited to emergency first aid only. For the sake of their own health and the health of others, children may not be sent to school if they have been ill during the night or early in the morning. Children should be fever-free for twenty-four hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to school. Incidents of vomiting or diarrhea should be treated the same way. Please treat children at home for injuries received at home. The Health Center is available for use by students during school hours. Students who become ill or injured during the school day will be assessed by a teacher and taken to the Health Center if warranted. The nurse on duty in the Health Center will assess the student and determine if he or she should return to class, go home or receive medical treatment. A student who is unable to attend classes because of illness or injury must be picked up from school within a reasonable period of time. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to arrange for the transportation of the ill or injured student from the school. If the attention of a physician is judged to be necessary, the parent or guardian will be notified. In the case of a potentially life-threatening emergency, the parents will be called and the student will be taken to the school physician, the family physician or a hospital emergency room. Financial responsibility for any medical care rests with the parent.

A good night's rest, a balanced diet, regular exercise and good personal hygiene all help maintain a healthy body and allow each student to maximize the enjoyment and success of the School experience.

## **LOST & FOUND**

Students are responsible for their possessions. Borrowing of textbooks and gym clothes is strongly discouraged. **Students must clearly write their names in all their books, jackets, uniforms, and sporting equipment.** Found items may be retrieved from the Lost and Found box in the Lower School at any time. Students may not open or remove another student's belongings. Lost and Found boxes are located in the Lower School Lobby, the athletic department office, and the stable.



## **LIGHT/DARK BLUE TEAMS**

The School colors are light blue and dark blue. Consequently, every student in the Garrison Forest Lower School is a member of either the Light Blue or Dark Blue team. The purpose of these teams is to unite the school through friendly competition in all aspects of school life. If a new student has a sister or mother who attended Garrison Forest, this student automatically will be a member of her relative's team.

## IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### **Preschool:** Parent-Toddler to Pre-Kindergarten

### **Lower School:** Kindergarten to Grade 5

Garrison Forest Switchboard	410-363-1500
Gail Hutton, Head of Lower Division	410-559-3230
Jamie Roeder, Director of Early Childhood Education	410-559-3220
Jenni Glose, Lower Division Administrative Assistant	410-559-3251
Cindy Isenhour, Preschool Administrative Assistant	410-559-3221
Fax, Lower School	410-559-3105
Fax, Preschool	410-559-3241
Harford Heights Extended Day	410-375-4580
Health Center	410-559-3200
Garrison Forest Website and Parent Login	<a href="http://www.gfs.org">www.gfs.org</a>

## WEATHER AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In the event of an inclement weather closing or delay, an automated message is sent to each student's household. The message is delivered at or around 6:00 a.m. or as soon as the decision is made. Information regarding the School's schedule is also available via the main telephone number at [410-363-1500](tel:410-363-1500) and information is posted on the website at [www.gfs.org](http://www.gfs.org), on Facebook at Garrisonforestschool and on Twitter at @garrisonforest. If there is a delayed opening, start time will be 10:00 a.m. Parents are encouraged to use their best judgment in deciding when it is safe to travel.

The School also uses AlertNow Rapid Communication Service as an additional way to contact parents. In the event of an inclement weather closing or delay, an email message will be sent to the parents' primary email address. The message will be delivered at or around 6:00 a.m. or as soon as the decision is made. In the event of an emergency (such as a major evacuation, relocation, or lockdown) an emergency voice and email message will be sent to every telephone number (home, work, and cell) and email address (home and work) on file for each student.

## **LOWER SCHOOL 2020-2021 CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS**

### **AUGUST**

Mon 31 Orientation for all Lower School families, 12:45-3:15 p.m. (nouniform)

### **SEPTEMBER**

Mon 01 Classes begin in all Divisions

Fri 04 Light Blue/Dark Blue Sorting Day (Out of uniform day, wear blue!)

Mon 07 Labor Day, no classes in all Divisions

Wed 09 Class Color Day: Kindergarten (blue) and First Grade (yellow)

Thur 10 Class Color Day: Second (purple) and Third Grade (red)

Fri 11 Class Color Day: Fourth (pink) and Fifth Grade (green)

Thur 24 Back to School Day for Lower School, midday dismissal for Lower School

Mon 28 Yom Kippur, no classes in all Divisions

Tue 29 Lower School Picture Day

### **OCTOBER**

Fri 09 Tentative: Multi-Cultural Potluck

Sun 11 Race for the Cure

Fri 16 Early Closing, 12:00 p.m. Dismissal. Faculty PD (regular 8:00 a.m. start )

Fri 30 Halloween Parade, Families invited, 9:30 a.m.

### **NOVEMBER**

Fri 06 Parent Conferences, no classes for students

Fri 13 Lower School Dance, Dine and Shine Event

Mon 23 Lower School Thanksgiving Feast, 10:00 a.m.

Tue 24 Thanksgiving Break begins at end of school day

### **DECEMBER**

Tue 01 Classes resume

Thur 03 Third Grade State Fair, 8:30 a.m.

Fri 04 Third Grade State Feast, 11:00 a.m.

Mon 07 Scholastic Book Fair

Fri 18 Lower School Winter Concert, 11:00 a.m. (noon dismissal, no late start)

### **JANUARY**

Mon 04 Classes Resume

Mon 18 No classes in all divisions, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

### **FEBRUARY**

Fri 12 Early Closing, 12:00 p.m. Dismissal. Faculty PD (regular 8:00 a.m. start)

Mon 15 No classes in all divisions, President's Day

Sat 20 Garrison Girl Gala (Performing Arts Center)

Fri 26 Parent Conferences, no classes for students

### **MARCH**

Sat 6 Snow date for the Garrison Girl Gala

Fri 12 Spring Break begins at end of the academic day

Tue 23 Classes resume

### **APRIL**

Thur 01 Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day, noon dismissal

Fri 02 Good Friday, no classes in all divisions

Thur 15 Art Walk Evening

Fri 16 Fifth Grade: Capstone Presentations

Thur 29 Third Grade: Beginnings and Beyond Celebration

### **MAY**

Sat 01 Spring Fling, 12:00-2:00 p.m.

Tue 04 Fifth grade students depart for Echo Hill (return on 5/7)

Fri 15 Field Day/Afternoon Parent Conferences (no classes for students in the afternoon)

Tue 18 Second grade Animal Fair

Fri 28 Lower School End of Year Concert

Mon 31 Memorial Day, no classes in all divisions

### **JUNE**

Tue 01 Find Your Passion Day, Last Day of Classes

Wed 02 Closing Exercises for Fifth Grade, 8:30 a.m.

## GARRISON FOREST LOWER SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY

At Garrison Forest School we practice five CORE VALUES. We aspire for students to **be authentic, brave, compassionate, curious, and spirited**. When students practice these values they help to make their community, school, and the Internet a safe and happy place to learn, work and play.

Please take a moment to read and discuss the following rules for the Responsible Use of Technology with your daughter.

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As a Garrison girl,

I will always **be authentic** when I use digital tools to learn, work and play on the Internet. Our school motto, *Esse Quam Videri—To Be Rather Than To Seem*, reminds me to always represent my true self and never pretend to be someone I am not.

I will always **be brave** when I use technology. I know that there is no device too difficult or app too hard for me to learn when I put my mind to it.

I know that I can **be curious** and search for answers on the Internet. I will practice safe and effective search strategies. I will strive to become an “expert information finder!”

I will always **be compassionate** on the Internet. I do not send email or any type of message that is mean or might make others feel sad, embarrassed, or uncomfortable. I will be an upstander if I see someone being bullied or disrespected online. I know that I can always count on my teachers and parents if I need help with anything inappropriate on the Internet or social media.

I know that I can **be spirited** and use technology and digital tools to connect with others and demonstrate what I have learned in creative and appropriate ways.

When we practice these CORE VALUES, we know learning in the Forest will be Grrrrreat!