



GIFTED ACADEMY EDUCATIONAL CENTER

1517 K STREET, SE
WASHINGTON, DC 20003
(202) 431-5203
WWW.GIFTEDAEC.ORG

Welcome to Gifted Academy Educational Center (GAEC)!

At Gifted Academy Educational Center, we believe that education is most effective when students, families, educators, and community partners work together with shared expectations, clear communication, and a common commitment to excellence. Since our founding in 2003, our mission has been to provide a learning environment that nurtures students' God-given abilities, strengthens character and faith, and equips young people for success both now and in eternity.

As a microschool, our educational model is intentionally personal, relationship-centered, and highly responsive to the individual needs of each learner. The smaller size of our learning community allows us to provide individualized instruction, cultivate meaningful connections, and foster a strong sense of belonging. However, the success of this model depends on everyone understanding and supporting the standards, policies, and practices that guide our school community.

This handbook serves as an essential resource for students, parents, guardians, and staff. It outlines the expectations, procedures, and values that help create a safe, respectful, engaging, and productive learning environment. The handbook provides guidance on academic expectations, attendance, student conduct, communication protocols, health and safety procedures, family partnerships, and other important aspects of school life.

A handbook is especially important in a microschool setting because our close-knit environment requires shared accountability and mutual respect. Clear guidelines help ensure consistency, fairness, and transparency while preserving the flexibility and individualized approach that make microschools unique. By establishing common expectations, we can focus our energy on what matters most: supporting student growth, fostering academic excellence, developing leadership, and cultivating strong moral character.

We encourage all members of the Gifted Academy Educational Center community to read this handbook carefully and refer to it throughout the school year. The policies and procedures contained within are designed not only to establish order but also to promote a culture of excellence, responsibility, collaboration, and faith.

Thank you for being a valued part of the Gifted Academy Educational Center family. Together, we will continue to create a learning community where every student is empowered to discover their gifts, develop their talents, and fulfill their purpose.

General Information

Address: 1517 K Street SE Washington, DC 20003
Phone: (202) 431-5203
www.GiftedAEC.org

Our school's name is an acronym that stems from the following:

God
Inspired abilities
Fortified with Faith
Talent expanded through
Education and
Devotion.

What We Believe

At Gifted Academy Educational Center, we believe that every child is uniquely gifted by God and created with a divine purpose. We are committed to providing a Christ-centered education that nurtures academic excellence, strong character, spiritual growth, and a passion for lifelong learning. We believe that education should prepare students not only for college, careers, and leadership in this world, but also for faithful service to God and others. Through loving guidance, meaningful relationships, and high expectations, we seek to help each student discover and develop their God-given talents, grow in faith, and become confident, compassionate, and responsible citizens who positively impact their communities and the world.

Dress Code

Gifted Academy Educational Center recognizes that true Christianity is a matter of the heart and not outward appearance; however, we reserve the right to set a dress code that we feel best reflects the Christian standards we modeled. Based upon what we feel Scripture teaches about personal convictions, the following dress code is for all Gifted Academy Educational Center students.

- Attire must be neat and modest at all times (no tight, form-fitting or loose sloppy clothes).
- No gothic type clothing is to be worn in school.
- We believe that extreme hairstyles, extremes in make-up, and extreme jewelry are unacceptable on campus.

The Administration reserves the right to make individual judgments in ALL situations. If parents or students have questions regarding specific circumstances, they MUST contact the school BEFORE such clothing or hairstyles are worn. If a student is sent to school out of dress code, they may not be admitted to class at the discretion of the administrator.

All-school Standards

- **Hygiene**— although “Cleanliness is next to Godliness” is not a Biblical principle, the concept is necessary and applicable at Gifted Academy. Bathing daily with soap and wearing clean clothes is a must. Deodorant or Antiperspirant is a must.
- **Girls**— skirts should be to a modest length standing and seated.
- **Boys**— hair is to be neatly attired. Hairstyles such as “Rat tails”, “Bushes”, dreadlocks, Mohawk, cornrows, rubber-banded puffs of hair, very bushy and braid are to be NEAT. All natural hairstyles must be clean and maintained.
- Boys and girls are to be dressed NEATLY with shirts tucked in.

Clothing should not be tight, snug fitting, baggy, or otherwise sloppy. Clothing that is soiled, torn or ragged is inappropriate. On days designated “Tag Days,” all students may wear jeans.

- **Jackets and Coats:** *Jackets and coats are not to be worn in the classroom.* Jackets, sweaters, or any other clothing may not be worn tied around the waist nor shoulder.
- **Jewelry:** Boys are not to wear dangling earrings or body piercing while at school or on school-sponsored activities. Boys may wear small studs. Girls are allowed to wear earrings but no other body jewelry. Girls’ hooped earrings may not be more than 1 inch long and wide.
- **Nails:** Boys and Girls nail lengths cannot extend more than **one** inch long.

Further Guidelines

“Modesty” will not allow for girls to wear tights or legging alone under T-shirts. They may be worn under skirts. No tight, or snug fitting clothing should be worn to school or on school sponsored activities.

“Modesty” will not allow for boys to let their trousers “sag.” They are to be worn with a belt and the belt must be buckled at the waist. The belt must be visible above the trousers and worn properly through the belt loop. In addition, boys are not to wear tight or snug fitting clothing.

Uniforms

GIRLS wear navy blue uniform skirts, jumpers, or slacks. The shirts are to be a white or sky blue shirt (short and long sleeve) and a blue cross bow tie.

- **Sweaters** are navy blue cardigans or navy blue vest.
- **Hoodies** are permitted if they are navy blue and solid colored.
- **Shoes & Socks:** Socks or tights are blue or white with black shoes. Shoe heels are not to exceed two inches.

BOYS wear navy blue slacks, white or blue shirts (short or long sleeves) a blue necktie.

- **Sweaters:** Navy blue sweaters or navy blue vests.
- **Hoodies** are permitted if they are navy blue and solid colored.
- **Shoes & Socks:** Socks may be white or blue with black shoes.

P.E.: School shirts and navy blue shorts or pants are to be worn.

Spring Uniforms: White/Sky blue golf shirts and navy blue uniform shorts are allowed September-October 31 and April 19 until the end of school year. Students not in uniform will be furnished the **complete uniform at the expense of the parent.**

Discipline

Although we do have rules and regulations, true discipline is the internal discipline of willing submission, first to the Lord Jesus Christ and then to adult authorities. Our ultimate goal is to bring every child to that internal spiritual discipline.

Attendance at our school is a privilege not a right. Students need to treat the privilege with respect and appreciation. The following are the rules we follow in expressing our Christian values.

Student Code of Conduct

1. Students are expected to always respond with respect when speaking with adults.
2. Students must get permission to leave their seats once class has begun.
3. Students must be respectful of others and the property of others, as well as the authority of the individual teachers and administrators.
4. Students are not to be rowdy, run, yell, etc. which will not be permitted on school property.
5. Hand holding, arm-in-arm activities, etc., will not be permitted on school property.
6. All school activities will be chaperoned by an adult.
7. Students are expected to enter the classroom on time and in an orderly fashion, to listen during classes, and to raise their hands if they desire to speak.
8. Students are not to play with cell phones, Ipads, tablets, ipods, MP3, MP4, PSP, during class time unless special permission is given or it is lunch/ break time. Electronics are for school work ONLY!
9. Cell phones are not to be used during school hours. They may be used during students' breaks. **Please do not call your student on his/her cell phone during the school day.**
10. Breakfast is eaten between 8:30-9:00 a.m. Eating is allowed only at break/lunchtime or at special occasions where permission has been granted.
 - ❖ If the student arrives after 9:00 a.m., breakfast will not be prepared or eaten.
11. Students are not allowed to chew gum at any time at school.
12. Students are not allowed to have any weapon or imitation weapon on the school grounds.
13. Students are not to use tobacco of any kind, consume alcoholic beverages, or use any type of illegal drug at any time whether on school property or not.
14. Gambling in any form is not permitted.
15. The use of proper language is always expected.
16. Students are to remain on the school grounds in designated places unless granted special permission to do otherwise. Each student is to be in class on time unless otherwise authorized and shall not leave classes without permission. Students not waiting for transportation should leave shortly after school unless staying for supervised study. No loitering. Student drivers may not leave campus during the school day without administrative permission.
17. Students are not to talk during study hall. Study halls are to be quiet at all times.
18. Students are to quiet themselves in classes or church as soon as the class begins.

Discipline Policy

The discipline policy includes a "Merit System" to provide positive reinforcement for good behavior

and achievement. This is balanced with the “Demerit System” for the disciplining of those involved in unacceptable behavior.

The Discipline System

The discipline system involves the assigning of warning, demerits, and suspensions for breaking of school rules and behavior or conduct both on and off school property deemed unacceptable by the school. The accumulation of too many demerits will result in suspension, and eventually expulsion from the school. Offenses of a more serious nature will carry automatic consequences of suspension or expulsion.

Warning/Suspension

These will be given for relatively minor offenses and will be assigned by the Director. Students will receive a copy of the warning slip from the director to take home to parents stating details of the incident that may have occurred during the school day. In the occasion of repeated action, the student will receive 10 demerits. The student will be assigned a suspension. Students will receive one warning per quarter. Demerits will become part of the students permanent record, and will not be removed, unless retracted by the director. Serving suspension will cost parents a flat fee of ten dollars per session. This will be an upfront fee. After serving a suspension students are required to serve a Saturday night make-up session. If students are to serve multiple suspensions, the price will double.

Example:

One suspension = \$20

Second suspension=\$50

Third suspension = \$100

Examples of minor offenses for which warnings can be given.

1. Unnecessary talking in class/homeroom
2. Unexcused tardy to class/homeroom
3. Being disruptive, creating a disturbance
4. Instigating others to be disruptive
5. Untidiness, poor grooming, shirt, blouse out, not in complete uniform.
6. Unexcused absence from break (Cutting school)
7. In classroom/ washroom without permission
8. Eating/drinking in the classroom without permission.
9. Chewing gum in school
10. Not having required textbook or other required class materials
11. Not handing in homework at prescribed time.
12. Littering or deliberate untidiness
13. Talking, irreverence, or other inappropriate conduct in church.
14. Disrespectful actions during devotion, pledge, or singing praise songs.
15. Using cell phone during regular school hours, without permission or at designated time.
16. Use of unassigned space
17. Infringement of rules relating to uniform/jewelry/hair styles/makeup
18. Impoliteness or general lack of courtesy
19. Failure to return signed discipline forms on the next school day

20. Any other minor offense not detailed above will be determined by the director.

The director will determine whether additional demerits or suspension of a student will also be considered for an offense if not so stated. Students' demerit accumulations will continue throughout the school year. At the end of each quarter the cumulative number of demerits for the school year is recorded on the student's record.

Suspension

Examples for which suspensions can be given.

1. Repeated dress code violations
2. Disrespect toward director, parents or visitor
3. Lying to the authority
4. Use of computer or Ipad, internet to visit unauthorized, lewd or pornographic sites, or to send similar messages (demerit/suspension)
5. Stealing school or other student property (suspension/expulsion)
6. Use of obscene/bad language, oral, written or otherwise
7. Cheating on quiz, test, exam
8. Throwing objects
9. Kissing, intentional physical contact or other forms of intimate contact
10. Fighting (verbal or physical) being a bully
11. Defacing/destroying school property (suspension/payment for repair/replacement)
12. Excessive loudness/unnecessary rough housing
13. Writing, telling, passing dirty, lewd, notes/jokes
14. Chronic repeated misbehavior
15. Cutting classes without permission
16. Leaving school property without permission
17. Spreading malicious gossip/maligning another person's character
18. Altering grades on tests, quizzes or reports
19. Forging parents/guarding signature
20. Disobedience to any person in authority
21. Possession or any dangerous object (toy, knives, Taser guns, matches, lighters, mace etc.)
(suspension/expulsion)
22. Writing graffiti on school property (suspension/payment for repairs)
23. Destruction or defacing of school property (desks, chairs, books, etc.)
24. Willful intimidation of any faculty or student (suspension/expulsion)
25. Copying of homework, class work, or other assignments to be graded (demerit/zero on assignment)

26. Possession of tobacco or alcoholic beverages (demerit/suspension)
27. Communicating with visitors to the school campus without prior approval of the Administration (demerit/suspension)

Suspension

1. If a student accumulates 10 demerits he/she will have parent conference
2. If a student accumulates 15 demerits in a semester, he/she will be suspended for two school days. And will be prohibited from any extra activities.
3. If a student accumulates 25 demerits he/she will be automatically expelled, with no tuition refund.
4. In addition to this there are several offenses that will carry automatic suspension. Penalties of a minimum of two days in such cases parents will be contacted by phone or email by the director.
5. Any use of force, violence, or harassment will not be tolerated. Any of these will result in an immediate two school day suspension. And twenty demerits will be added.
6. A recurrence will raise the total to 25 demerits, and automatic expulsion.

Expulsion

If a student accumulates 25 demerits in a semester he/she will be automatically expelled and may not be allowed to return to Gifted Academy Educational Center.

Behavior to Immediate Expulsion

1. Sexual activity on campus
2. Misuse or abuse of prescription drugs
3. Use, possession, distribution or sale of illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia on campus
4. Use of tobacco and/or alcoholic beverages on campus
5. Illegal possession or use of any dangerous weapon
6. Conviction of any criminal offense
7. Involvement in gang related activities on or off campus
8. Gross insolence or disrespect to any member of staff.
9. Intimidation of staff by a parent or guardian of student
10. Stealing

Parental involvement in the discipline system

1. Parents wishing to query any disciplinary action may do so by phoning the director to set up a personal interview with the director. The Director will not see any parent who has not made a prior appointment.
2. Warning letter. When a student has received a total of 5 demerits in a quarter, a warning letter will be sent to his/her parents. When the total reaches 10 demerits the student will be suspended. The parent will receive written notification and will be required to accompany the student to school on the first day of his/her return and meet with the Director and pay the appropriate fee before admittance to regular classes.
3. Parents of students receiving frequent demerits for behavioral problems may be required to come in and discuss the matter with the Director.

Pick Up of Students

Each family who uses after school care will be required to file a form stating who is authorized to pick up the child(ren). Under no circumstances will anyone else be allowed to take them without special permission from the parent or guardian.

Early Dismissal

Students who need to leave school early must bring a note from their parents and present it to the person taking attendance in the morning. Parents are asked to call the school to verify that a student is to leave early. Students must be checked out before they leave. Only parents or those specifically named (on the school form used for this purpose) by the parents will be allowed to pick-up the student.

Emergency Communications

Parents will be contacted in all emergency cases. It is IMPERATIVE that parents provide the school, and keep the school provided with current emergency phone numbers. If a student should be involved in an accident, or if illness becomes apparent during the day, every reasonable effort will be made by the school to contact the parents. In the case of a potentially serious or life threatening injury or illness, the school will call 911 and have the child taken to the hospital. Every effort will be made to reach the parents or others listed on the Emergency Form for that child.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Individual conference may be planned at any time for parents and teachers to discuss each pupil's progress, just call the school to arrange an appointment. Two mandatory conferences transpire throughout the school year at the end of the first and third quarter.

Telephone

Students may use the school phone only in an emergency (and then only with permission). Phone hours are from 7am to 7pm. PLEASE No business phone call after that time.

School Hours

School hours are 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Students may be dropped off any time after 8:30 AM without charge. If you cannot pick up your children by 3:30 PM, they will be placed in Extended Care. Before 6:55 AM and after 6:00pm there will be a charge for childcare through our Extended Care system.

Snow Days (Weather-related closings)

Prior to 9:00 a.m. (starting time of school) Gifted Academy Educational Center will follow Prince George's County Public School (PGCPS) System's decision of either delayed opening or school closing when it comes to inclement weather conditions. After 9:00 a.m. (school has begun with no delays) Gifted Academy Educational Center follows PGCPS public schools for early dismissal due to inclement weather. Check your texts for details, or call directly. Extended care operates normally on days we have school and follows the academy for snow closings. There will not be morning care on delayed opening days. There will not be aftercare on early dismissal.

Textbooks

Textbooks are provided for the student's use by the school and are the property of Gifted Academy Educational Center unless otherwise stated.

Tuition Payment

Several plans are available for tuition payment.

PAYMENT PLANS

One (1+1) Payment Plan

The first 1/10th of the full tuition must be paid at registration or re-enrollment (in August) and the remainder paid at the same time or before September 9. This will be paid directly to the school by cash, check, Zelle, or CashApp.

Two (1+2) Payment Plan The first 1/10th of the full tuition must be paid at registration or re-enrollment (in August) and the remainder paid in two payments before October 29th and January 29th. This will be paid directly to the school by cash, check, Zelle, or CashApp.

10 (1+9) Payment Plan The total of tuition will be divided into 10 installments. The first installment is due the last Friday in August and will be submitted together with the re-enrollment form. The first installment (1/10 tuition only) will be by cash, check, Zelle, or CashApp. The nine subsequent payments are to be paid before or on the first of each month. If the first of the month falls on Saturday or Sunday tuition is due that following Monday. After the ninth of the month, the payment is considered late and a 20% late fee will be added.

Visitors

Visitors are permitted in the building only after they have obtained a pass from the office. Visitors are subject to all school regulations.

Visiting the Classroom

Our school has an open classroom policy. This means parents are allowed to visit at any time. The following guidelines should be followed:

1. Please contact the director in advance when you come.
 2. Do not try to "help" the teacher, unless this has specifically been arranged for in advance.
 3. Be considerate of the teacher's time.
- ❖ Remember, their primary duty is to conduct class.

Money and Personal Items

Students should not bring large amounts of money to school. Although we try our best to control risk factors, money can be lost or taken. It is best for students to only have what they need for expenses at school (e.g. lunch or lunch snacks) and not to bring other money. Likewise with personal items, the school will not be responsible if they are lost or stolen.

Student Drivers

All student drivers MUST register and receive a parking permit. The student will fill out a registration form (requiring parental permission) and return it to the school office. The permit MUST be displayed in the car windshield when parked on the street. Cars without permits may be towed at OWNER'S EXPENSE.

Lockers

Lockers are to be kept neat at all times. Any evidence of illegal substances, drugs, etc., kept in lockers will subject students to a locker search under the supervision of the administration. Lockers may be "decorated" on the inside only, but pictures that feature "pin-ups" (male or female figures scantily clad), explicit content, or anything deemed lewd are not allowed.

Library

We will make trips to the library for study, research and recreational reading. Library property should be carefully used, borrowed materials promptly returned, and reference books replaced on the reference shelves. Reference books are not to be taken out of the Library. Overdue materials may cause forfeiture of library privileges until borrowed materials are returned or replaced. LOST OR DAMAGED BOOKS MUST BE REPLACED AND PAID FOR BY THE PARENT BEFORE THE END OF THAT QUARTER.

Tutoring Service

Tutoring is available on campus during after-school hours for most subjects. Tutoring request forms (Homework Helpers) can be obtained by the director. **There is a charge for the service.**

Lunches

Students should bring their own lunches to school. Students are limited to using the Microwave once a week. The students will go out to lunch once a month on the last Thursday of the month. This is a mandatory outing.

Extended Care

Our school building provides extended care for those who need it from 7:00 AM until school opens, and from 3:30 PM until 6:00 PM. Families are charged a flat fee of \$7 a day for Morning care and \$10 a day rate per child for morning and aftercare. Charges apply until 8:30 AM and after 3:30 PM will be assigned to an extended care group, so that they are under supervision. Extended Care closes promptly at 6:30 pm. All children are to be picked up by that time.

Computer and Technology Services

All students and staff must follow the Gifted Academy's Acceptable Use Policy in the use of computers and technology at the school. A copy of the policy must be signed in each school year prior to the use of the system.

Medications

All medications, prescription and over-the-counter (OTC), should be administered by a parent outside

of school hours whenever possible. If a medication must be administered during school hours, follow the school policy concerning administration of prescription medications.

For prescription medications, please follow these guidelines:

1. A doctor's note has been presented to the teacher and the teacher has this in his or her possession.
2. A parent's note accompanies the doctor's instructions.

All medications will be kept under lock and key. No changes in the schedule of medication will be made without a doctor's explicit instructions. For nonprescription, OTC medications please follow these guidelines:

Pre-K through 6th Grades

Parents should send in one dose of OTC medications in a labeled container to school with a note stating the name of medication, dose, time to be administered, and reason for administration. The teacher will lock the medication in a cabinet and check on the student's conditions.

7th through 12th grades

Parents will decide when their child(ren) are ready to carry and self-administer OTC medications. Responsible middle and high school students may bring one dose of OTC medication in a properly labeled, original container. Examples are Tylenol and Midol. No liquid medications are allowed for self-administration. Each medication must be accompanied by written permission of parent for student to self-administration. UNDER NO CONDITION MAY ONE STUDENT GIVE ANOTHER STUDENT ANY MEDICATION, OTC, OR OTHERWISE.

- ❖ Self-administered OTC medications may be kept in a student's locker or purse. These may only be taken with parents' knowledge and consent. ANY student that does not follow these guidelines is subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school.

Injury

Any injury occurring on school property should be reported to a teacher immediately. Students with minor injuries may receive first-aid from those designated to administer it. All injuries and illnesses will be reported to parents. Any student with a communicable disease should check with the director before attending school. Symptoms may include fever, diarrhea, certain rashes, etc.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are held periodically. It is the responsibility of each student, not only for his own safety, but also for the safety of others, to follow these rules:

1. Students are to follow the teacher's directions for leaving the room.
2. There must be absolute silence. NO TALKING.
3. Students should move rapidly, but not run.

Field Trips

Teachers may periodically schedule field trips. Students must return permission slips signed by a parent or guardian to be eligible to participate. Transportation will be provided. Parents share in the cost.

Financial Policies

Tuition and fees.

School tuition covers the cost of education for our students between 9:00 am and 3:30 pm. Semester Exams will not be administered without the semester or final Tuition payment.

Extended Care/Homework Helpers Program and other fees (e.g., school pictures, field trips, and monthly lunch out) are all additional costs.

The Instructional Material Fee covers the cost of textbooks, workbooks, testing materials and supplies for the student for the school year.

Tuition and other fees are not tax deductible.

All transcripts cost a \$10 fee

Grading Scale

Gifted Academy Educational Center follows the following grading scale:

A ⁺	=98-100	D ⁺	= 67- 69
A	=93-97	D	= 60- 66
A ⁻	=90-92	F	= 0- 59 Failing
B ⁺	=87-89		
B	=83-86		
B ⁻	=80-82		
C ⁺	=77-79		
C	=73-76		
C ⁻	=70-72		

Student & Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form

At Gifted Academy Educational Center, we believe that a strong partnership between home and school is essential to student success. Our handbook has been created to provide families with important information regarding our mission, values, expectations, policies, procedures, and educational practices. As members of the Gifted Academy community, we share a commitment to creating a safe, respectful, faith-centered, and academically enriching learning environment.

Please read the handbook carefully with your student. By signing below, you acknowledge that you have received access to the Gifted Academy Educational Center Student & Parent Handbook and understand your responsibility to review and support the policies and expectations outlined within it.

Commitment to Partnership

Together, we affirm our commitment to:

- ✓ Uphold the Christian values and mission of Gifted Academy Educational Center.
- ✓ Foster a culture of respect, kindness, responsibility, and integrity.
- ✓ Support high academic standards and lifelong learning.
- ✓ Maintain open and productive communication between home and school.
- ✓ Encourage each student's God-given gifts, talents, and purpose.

Thank you for partnering with us as we provide learning that prepares and equips students for **NOW and ETERNITY.**

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Gifted Academy Educational Center Student & Parent Handbook with my child. I understand that the handbook contains important information regarding school policies, procedures, expectations, and student conduct.

I agree to support the mission, values, and educational objectives of Gifted Academy Educational Center and to work cooperatively to promote my child's academic, spiritual, social, and emotional growth. I understand that it is my responsibility to remain informed about school policies and any updates communicated by the school.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____