



Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School

Family/Student Handbook & Code of Conduct

2025-2026 School Year

Notice

Howard Gardner MI Charter School Administration may change, delete, add, suspend, discontinue, or otherwise modify any policy, procedure, rule, provision, or other content set forth in this handbook at any time without prior notice, as required by law, or when necessary in the judgment of the School.

To obtain a hardcopy of this Handbook, please contact the Main Office.

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School Contact Page

About HGMICS

The HGMICS (HGMICS) is a tuition-free public school, open to the children of all Pennsylvania residents.

SCHOOL ADDRESS

1615 East Elm Street, Scranton, PA 18505-3925

SCHOOL HOURS

School Business Hours: 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Students School Day: 7:45 AM – 3:00 PM

Tuesday Dismissal at 2:15 PM for Staff Professional Development

Half-day Dismissal Time: 11:30 AM

PHONE NUMBER

(570) 941-4100

FAX

(570) 941-7699

WEBSITE

www.howardgardnerschool.com

Non-Discrimination

Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School (HGMICS) is non-sectarian and non-profit, and operates as an independent public charter entity. HGMICS provides equal employment and educational opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, genetic information, and gender expression. This policy relates to all phases of education and employment.

Mission Statement

Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School provides an approach to Kindergarten through Eighth grade education that cultivates the potential of each student through the development of their Multiple Intelligences (MI). By focusing on project-based experiences and real-world applications of knowledge, we aim to empower our young people to become independent, self-directed learners, who proactively problem-solve to positively change the world.

Vision Statement

Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School will become a model MI institution that initiates innovation and sustains growth through robust engagement with students, families, colleagues, alumni, community, and educational organizations.

Core Values

Safety - Trustworthy - Accountable – Respectful

Philosophy

HGMICS embraces a philosophy that addresses the needs of the whole child as well as practicing current, research-based education with an emphasis on Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory. MI theory is a way of explaining how children learn. It also emphasizes the diverse abilities of children and the need to assess learning using multi-dimensional evaluations. This approach focuses on the individual learner, emphasizing inner discipline and control across age levels, and encouraging students to become independent, self-directed learners. We strive to maintain the principles of democracy and respect for others and ourselves, in all aspects of the educational climate.

Additionally, the philosophy of HGMICS is based on the concept of teamwork and partnership, where employees, parents/guardians and students join together in an effort to recognize that every person has unique talents and productive skills to offer. Together we strive to make the school a safe place where the sharing of those ideas and talents contribute to produce the best education possible.

Our philosophy drives our curriculum and addresses both state and national standards. The curriculum materials the school utilizes integrate creative problem-solving and project-based learning.

We strive to ensure that our curriculum is constantly being updated to respond to educational research and state and national initiatives, all the while incorporating these standards into the consistent use and exploration of Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory.

History

The current HGMICS has a long and prestigious history, originally forming in 1975 as the Children's Learning Workshop in a small red schoolhouse on Albright Avenue in Scranton, PA. Through the years the school incorporated many educational reforms first as a Montessori-based program known as the Montessori Elementary School and later became known as The University of Scranton's Campus School, a Laboratory School owned by the University of Scranton.

In 2005 the school was reorganized as the Howard Gardner School for Discovery. The new name reflected both the school's unique niche in the community as a private, non-sectarian laboratory school, and gave credit to Howard Gardner, whose theory of Multiple Intelligences formed the framework of our school's curriculum and philosophy. An esteemed Harvard professor, Howard Gardner authored the now groundbreaking work on Multiple Intelligence Theory, *Frames of Mind*.

Gardner is a Scranton native whose work in school reform with Harvard's Project Zero is world renowned. He has authored more than 20 books on education and cognition and has also penned several hundred articles on a variety of subjects that impact learning. In 2005, he was selected by *Foreign Policy* and *Prospect* magazines as one of the 100 most influential public intellectuals in the world. That same year, our school faculty got to meet Dr. Gardner when they made a presentation at the 2005 NALS Conference in New York. The conference was hosted by Columbia University and Bank Street School and Gardner was one of the Keynote speakers. Gardner also delivered the Keynote address for the 2006 NALS Symposium that was hosted in Scranton by our school.

The Howard Gardner School for Discovery thrived for many years, until the decision was made in 2012 to transition from the school's long-time status as a private school and become a public charter school. The decision to become a public charter school was made in order to broaden the school's reach; as a tuition-free choice school, the HGMICS offers increased educational opportunities for all children, regardless of their economic standing.

After a successful first year as a charter school, HGMICS moved from its historic Northern Scranton location to the East Mountain neighborhood, purchasing the former Friendship House building on East Elm Street. This larger facility allowed the school to add additional classrooms and expand its programming, all in a beautiful rural location with access to local parks and outdoor spaces.

Part of the school's mission is to improve the practice of teaching. On any given day, preservice teachers from local colleges and universities visit our classrooms to observe and work with our teachers. Our connection to Howard Gardner and his theories has served as a framework for our school vision. We are one of a small group of so-called Multiple Intelligences (MI) schools in the United States, and one of only two that bear his name.

Our focus on every child's innate intelligence and potential exemplifies the MI approach to teaching and learning. Our students come to us filled with experiences and understanding of their world. It is our job to broaden their understanding and challenge their potential with a curriculum that is both exciting and rigorous. A combination of a well-trained faculty and small

class sizes help us enable our students to truly discover learning through inquiry and their own unique experiences.

HGMICS is governed by a community-based Board of Trustees that includes local business representatives, educators, and residents. The Board holds a public meeting on the third Tuesday of each month at the school premises.

Governance

HGMICS is a regional public charter school approved in 2012 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education under charters granted by the Scranton School District and Abington Heights School District. The Pennsylvania Department of Education reviews this charter every five years. HGMICS teachers meet or exceed certification standards set by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

A current listing of the Board of Trustees, Faculty and Staff can be found on the HGMICS website.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Admissions and Withdrawal

Enrollment for the siblings of current students and new students takes place January through March of the current school year. Priority is given to siblings of current students, contributing families, and children of employees who need not participate in a lottery, unless applications exceed available slots.

- For all remaining applications, the selection of applications is based upon a public lottery drawing from the School's chartering districts, Scranton and Abington Heights first. After Scranton and Abington Heights applications have been drawn, all other districts are drawn.
- Kindergarten students must be five (5) years old by September 1 of their kindergarten year.
- Sequential numbers determine who is admitted. All others are placed on a "waitlist" in the order of their lottery numbers.
- Pending availability, those on the waitlist may be offered an opening from April through October.

Current families wishing to withdrawal from HGS must notify the school by filling out a Withdrawal Form found on the schools website.

Sycamore Student Information System

The School uses a centralized information system to record and communicate information about students. In the Sycamore system, parents/guardians can do the following:

- View family contact information (address, parents/guardians phone numbers, emails)
- Choose how/when you receive voice/text notifications, including automated emergency notifications
- Schedule bi-annual teacher conferences
- View and electronically sign student trimester progress reports

- View lunch menu, place orders, view order history, make payments, and verify account balances
- View student documents, e.g., trimester progress reports, grades, attendance records

****Please note: You are not able to change any of the data in the Sycamore system. If your information needs updating or you feel there is an error, please contact the school’s Operations Director.**

Transportation

PA Charter School Law requires a student’s school district of residence to provide transportation when students either reside within the host school district(s) and/or when the charter school is not more than 10 miles, via the nearest public highway, beyond the district boundary. For students who do not meet these criteria, transportation is not provided and becomes the responsibility of the parent/or guardian.

Note: Transportation stops and times are not determined by HGMICS.

For information regarding your child’s transportation or eligibility, please contact the Operations Director.

Transportation Behavioral Expectations

HGMICS students are expected to exhibit the same STAR behavior when waiting and riding district transportation as they do when in the school building. District Transportation provides the School with Bus conduct reports which are documented in our internal discipline system.

<u>2025-2026 Bus Behaviors</u>	
<u>Bus Managed (MIN)</u>	<u>Office Managed (MAJ)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talking back ● Trash on bus ● Noise level over a 2 (Driver’s judgement) ● Not following directions ● Not keeping aisles clear ● Sitting incorrectly in seat (turning around backwards) ● Dishonesty (lying) ● Inappropriate comments (spoken or written, non-aggressive or threatening) ● Observable behavior (standing, running, throwing objects of any kind, etc.) ● Disruptive behavior (distracting other students or bus driver) ● Physical contact (not intended to harm - minor shoving, pushing, etc.) ● Throwing objects out the windows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fighting or Physical contact (fighting, intent to injure, contact resulting in injury, public display of affection - sexual in nature or sexual acts, etc.) ● Vandalism or destruction of personal/school property (cutting/drawing on seats, breaking windows, etc.) ● Bullying/Threats/Harassment of any kind to other students or staff (spoken, written, or physical) ● Possession of weapons or discussion of possessing weapon ● Possession/use of tobacco, vapes, or other drugs/paraphernalia ● Sexual assaults ● Gang related ● comments/gestures/behavior ● Disrespect (major or repetitive)

Note- MIN and MAJ are not limited to the list above.

- Intervention Process: Bus Driver will fill out Bus Referral Form for any incident. Bus Referral forms will be reviewed by the administration.
- MIN: Students can receive **up to 3 warnings*** before a short term suspension of bus privileges is issued.
- MAJ: Students **WILL** receive a suspension of bus privileges (short term or long term).

Please note if a student is pulled from the bus at the time of dismissal, siblings will be removed for pick up purposes as well.

Additionally, if a student receives a suspension/detention at school or on the bus, the student will not be able to participate in any after-school programming for the day of the discipline infraction.

Schoolwide Instructional Schedule

HGMICS' Schoolwide Schedule is 7:45 AM-3:00 PM with the exception of Tuesdays with a dismissal of 2:15 PM to conduct professional development activities for staff.

7:45 AM	Early Student Arrival
7:45-8:10 AM	Breakfast
7:55-8:15 AM	Students Permitted to Homeroom
8:15 AM	Morning Announcements
8:20 AM	Classes Begin
3:00-3:15 PM	Student Dismissal

Arrival

Students are received at the East entrance door (Under the Bridge) from **7:45 AM – 8:15 AM** where staff members greet students as they enter the building. Parents/guardians driving their children to school should enter HGMICS grounds from East Elm Street using the lower loop and proceed to the arrival door. Once the student has entered the school, parents will exit using the upper loop directly onto East Elm Street. Buses and vans will follow the same procedure to drop students off.

Doors close promptly at 8:15 AM. All students arriving at 8:15 AM or later are considered tardy. They must enter through the main entrance and must be signed in by a parent/guardian before they can proceed to their homeroom classroom. If a pattern of tardiness develops, a conference between the parent/guardians and the Principal will be scheduled.

Please note that classes begin promptly at 8:20 AM. Please make every effort to send your child on time so that they are in the classroom and ready to learn when classes begin. It is disruptive to the learning environment when a student comes in late.

Full Day Dismissal

Students that are scheduled to ride district transportation will be directed at 3:00 PM (*with the exception of 2:15 PM dismissal on Tuesdays*) to board their bus/van. Vans are lined up from the end of the kindergarten building along the driveway to the front curb of the building with buses lining up behind the vans.

Students being picked up by parents/guardians are dismissed to the carline at the Main Entrance. Vehicles will enter school grounds using the lower loop from East Elm Street. Please drive all the way around the building. Vehicles will be directed to park on the upper loop. Staff members assist and direct you as students load into vehicles. In order to allow emergency access, **no vehicles will be allowed to line up for dismissal until after 2:30 pm., 1:30 on Tuesdays. Please be considerate of the neighborhood traffic and do not block driveways or regular traffic flow.**

Dismissal for bus and van riders occurs in the employee parking lot. Buses and vans line up in front of the Kindergarten glass doors. Students will be dismissed from the Elm Street entrance. Staff members assist and direct students to the appropriate bus or van.

Half-Day Dismissal

Half-day dismissal begins at 11:30 AM. Carline and district transportation follow the same procedures for regular dismissal as described above.

General Dismissal Notes

As a safety precaution, no child is released to anyone other than a parent or person listed as an approved pick-up, unless specific arrangements have been made at the office. A written note must be sent to the teacher, dated and signed by one of the parents/guardians stating the name of the person to whom the child is to be released. This person will be asked to produce identification.

Also, if your child is signed up to ride district transportation and you must change their normal routine or schedule you must notify the school in writing. Otherwise, we will follow the student's normal mode of transportation. *We cannot honor a student's verbal announcement of schedule change.*

If an unexpected need for a change of schedule occurs, you must notify the school by 2:00 PM.

Please Note: If your district of residence has a delay or early dismissal, they will send transportation to pick-up the students (at their bus stop in the AM or at the school in case of early dismissal) from their district according to the district schedule. It is your responsibility to know if your district will be late arriving to pick-up (in the AM or bringing your child home early).

School Delays & Cancellations

The school academic calendar is available on Sycamore. Flexible Instruction Days, emergency or weather-related cancellations or delays will be announced via the school's automated notification system, Remind®, as well as on WBRE (28) and WNEP (16) as early as possible.

In situations where there is inclement weather in your specific area, please be advised that the ultimate decision to send a child to school must rest with parents/guardians. We understand that our school attracts families from many outlying areas whose weather conditions may vary considerably from those in the Scranton area.

Additionally, you should follow your school district of residence when it comes to closings and delays. For example, if your district of residence is closed and HGMICS is open, your child may stay home, and the absence will not be counted as an unexcused absence against them.

From time to time, it is necessary for HGMICS to release students early due to weather or other emergency conditions. We utilize Remind® for communicating for such events. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to monitor the posting sites on days when such an occurrence may happen. Please be sure that your family has an emergency plan in place for such occurrences, as all children need to be picked up from HGMICS in a timely fashion to help ensure everyone's safety.

All primary contacts are opted into notifications and MUST opt out if you choose to do so through the Remind© application.

It is the responsibility of all parents/guardians to ensure that contact information is accurate and up-to-date for calls/texts in the event of cancellations, delays, or emergencies. Please do NOT call the school to inquire about early dismissals, as doing so blocks the school phone lines, which must be kept open in case of an emergency. Parents/guardians MUST check the posting sites to find out about early releases.

Clothing at School

HGMICS has no uniform code for student dress. The administration, faculty, and staff at HGMICS believe that all students should be dressed for school in clean, modest, appropriately sized clothing that does not impede or distract from the learning environment.

Clothing Guidelines

All children should wear wash-and-wear play clothes and clothing easy enough to be handled and fastened by the child. All students spend approximately 15 minutes outside for lunch-recess unless we are experiencing inclement weather conditions.

Please make sure that your child has appropriate outdoor as well as indoor clothing.

Dress Code Infractions

- Halter, spaghetti strap, one shoulder, off the shoulder, strapless, backless, open back and see through/mesh tops, half/cut-off shirts, low-cut necklines and shirts with large armholes are not permitted.
- T-shirts may not display messages or pictures that promote drug or alcohol use, violence, obscenities, gangs, or use offensive words.
 - Shirts and sweatshirts may not cover shorts or skirts appearing no pants are worn.
- The hood on sweatshirts may not be worn while on school property.
- Shorts and skirts must be mid-thigh or longer—modest length.
- Leggings must not be see-through and be worn with thigh length tops.
- No pajama pants, other than approved PBIS events.
- Hats, caps, and hoods must be removed while in the school building.
- Regular sturdy footwear is recommended for daily wear.
- For safety purposes shoes must have a backstrap.

Participation in Phys. Ed. Class requires appropriate footwear. Please be sure you are aware of the day your child is scheduled for physical education.

The school will maintain a “Lost and Found” station. Items found on the playground or in the cafeteria will be kept for 30 days. Students will be reminded of items found on a regular basis. Items not claimed after 30 days will be donated to charity.

Food Services

HGMICS participates in the National School Breakfast and National School Lunch Program. The Household Application for Free and Reduced Meals can be obtained at the Main Office or on the school website. Families are required to complete a new school meal application at the

beginning of each new school year. Once the application is processed, the family will receive a letter indicating the student's meal eligibility determination. Families who have received a Notice of Direct Certification letter for free meals, you do not need to complete an application for the current school year.

- A school breakfast includes an entree, fruit or 100% fruit juice and milk. All schools participating in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) are to provide free breakfasts for all enrolled students. Breakfast entrees are not pre-ordered and are served in a grab-n-go fashion.
- A school lunch includes a protein, grain/bread, vegetable, and milk. Lunch is \$3.40. Additionally, students identified as eligible for reduced-price lunches through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) will not be charged for their meals..
- After School Snack is available for students participating in an after-school enrichment program and costs \$0.75. Reduced afterschool snacks cost \$0.15.
- Students participating in **competitive sports** programs are offered snacks at the A la Carte menu price ranging from \$.50-\$2.00 each.

HGMICS food service is cashless and does not take payment at the cafeteria window.

Lunch orders are placed online using the school's Sycamore System and pre-payments are made either in Sycamore via electronic check/credit card or sent to the school in an envelope labeled "Food Service."

A school meal will be provided to any student who does not have lunch. Parents or guardians may drop off a forgotten lunch for their child if needed. **Sharing of meals between students is strictly prohibited to ensure food safety and accommodate dietary restrictions.**

Because food allergies are quite common and the school is always concerned with providing a safe environment for children in our care, a special table is reserved for students with food allergies (peanut-free) and our lunch staff makes other children aware of the dangers associated with sharing food with others. Please be sure to notify the medical office in writing if your child has special dietary needs or allergies.

Lost Classroom Materials

On occasion, young children become very much attached to small pieces of classroom manipulatives and take them home. We would appreciate checking your child's pockets and the washing machine from time to time and sending any school property back to the classroom.

Celebrations

Birthdays

We feel that a child's birthday should be a very special day; however, to accommodate student birthdays, one celebration is held monthly for all birthdays within that month. If the celebration includes food, the homeroom teacher may arrange for it to be purchased by the parent/guardian from the school's food service department. **No outside food or drink** is permitted at classroom celebrations, including birthday and holiday celebrations.

Please do not distribute birthday party invitations or other private party invitations at school unless all classmates are invited. We ask that in cases where not all students are invited, you

send invitations via mail or other external means. Unfortunately, due to privacy requirements, we are not able to share emails, addresses, or phone numbers for other families enrolled at the school.

Holiday Celebrations

There will be occasional celebrations in the classroom during the school year. Parents/guardians who wish to contribute to a holiday celebration should make arrangements with the classroom teacher to arrange foods with the Food Service Department. No outside food or drink is permitted. If, for whatever reason, you do not want your child to participate in school celebrations, please contact the classroom teacher.

Toys / Games

Please do not allow your child to bring any kind of toys or games to school. The school environment provides for the child's needs at school. Please make arrangements with the teacher if your child wishes to bring in a special item of interest.

Video games, fidget spinners, trading cards, roller blades, skateboards or headphones/EarPods are not permitted.

STUDENT RECORDS AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents/guardians certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students".

- The School will respond to all FERPA requests in a reasonable amount of time but not longer than 45 days.
- Parents/guardians or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents/guardians or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents/guardians or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent/guardian or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent/guardian or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allow schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;

- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools must notify parents/guardians and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice). Individuals who use TDD may use the Federal Relay Service. Or you may contact us at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office
 U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20202-8520

The school shall maintain a system of safeguards to protect the confidentiality of students' educational records and personally identifiable information when collecting, storing, disclosing and destroying student records.

School staff shall maintain the confidentiality of student records and personally identifiable information, as required by law and regulations.

The school shall obtain written parent/guardian consent prior to releasing a student's educational record when law, regulations or Board Policy requires prior consent.

The school shall notify parents/guardians prior to destroying personally identifiable information in a student's record that is no longer relevant or necessary for providing educational services to the student.

Attendance at School

The Public-School Code requires all children of compulsory school age to attend school, with certain exceptions. Students returning to school after a period of absence are required to submit parents/guardians' written explanations for such absences, and certification by a health care provider of medical reasons for absences may be required.

HGMICS expects that students will attend school regularly. Regular attendance at school is an important part of every student's success and necessary to gain the greatest benefit from the educational experience. Students who are frequently absent from school miss direct instruction and regular contact with their teachers and peers creating a personal disadvantage to them. Therefore, every effort should be made to have every child attend school regularly.

Poor school attendance may be symptomatic of a more serious problem. School personnel will make attempts to work with parents/guardians to help the child resolve the underlying problem. In those cases where the underlying problem cannot be resolved, the school must still make every effort to have the child attend regularly. Students who miss more than thirty (30) school days in a given year may be asked to repeat the grade.

Attendance Procedure

For safety reasons, if your child will not be in attendance for the day, please notify the school before 8:30 AM through email or leave a message on our voicemail.

- Families must submit a **written excuse/s** for all student absences immediately upon the student's return to school.
- **The only email excuse that will be accepted is when it is emailed directly to attendance@myhgsd.com.**
- Verbal or telephone notifications do **not** count for purposes of an excuse.
- The written or emailed excuse must contain all of the following:
 - *Student's Name
 - *Date or dates of absence
 - *Reason for absence
 - *Signature or electronic signature of parent or legal guardian
- If an excuse is not turned in within **three (3) days of an absence**, the absence will be declared **unexcused**.
- Upon exceeding ten (10) absences in a given school year (excessively absent), a written excuse from a licensed physician or physician's assistant is required. If at any point a student is absent for ten (10) days in duration a written excuse is required from a licensed physician or physician's assistant.

Excused Absences

- Acceptable excuses include:
 - Medical, dental, or other health care appointments when verified by the Practitioner
 - Personal illness
 - Impassable roads, as determined by the school bus ability to transport
 - Unavoidable family emergencies including such conditions as hazardous roads (excuses for unavoidable family emergencies will be reviewed by the Principal or designee to determine whether the emergency is unavoidable)
 - Death of an immediate family member (excused absence limited to five (5) days exceptions can be made by the Principal)
 - Educational travel with prior approval by the Principal (request must be submitted 10 days prior to the trip).
 - Religious holiday or instruction at the written request of the parent

Educational Trip Policy and Request

- Students may be excused from school attendance to participate in non-school sponsored educational trips.
- To be eligible under this section, the student's parent/guardian must make a written application on a form provided by the school **at least ten (10) days prior to the trip and submit it to the Dean of Students**. *It is recommended that school approval for educational trips be obtained prior to finalizing trip plans (i.e., plane tickets, hotel reservations, etc.). Failure to submit the request prior to ten (10) days in advance may result in denial of the trip by the administration.*
- The Principal will approve the request based on the date of submission, attendance record, current student academic standing, the student's previous trips.
- If the trip is scheduled during the State Assessment window, the trip will be denied by the Principal.

- Students in grades K-8 may not spend more than a total of five (5) school days on approved educational trips in any given school year.
- Failure to get written administrative approval for an educational trip will result in the absences for the trip being declared unexcused and where appropriate, unlawful.
- Once approved, the family is expected to make arrangements with teachers to obtain and complete work missed. Work is to be presented to the appropriate teacher within three (3) days of the student's return.

Unexcused / Unlawful Absences

All other absences not identified as Excused Absences, which occur without prior administrative approval, will be considered unexcused and unlawful.

Truancy

Three unexcused/illegal absences: The student is considered truant and a "Notice of Truancy" will be issued to the parent/legal guardian by the School.

Six unexcused/illegal absences: If the student continues to be truant and incurs additional absences after this notice has been issued, the child is considered to be "habitually truant" if they have six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year an additional notice will be issued to the parent/legal guardian by the School.

Within ten (10) school days of the child's sixth unexcused absence, HGMICS must, as required by Pennsylvania Law, do one of the following:

1. Refer the child to a school based or community-based attendance improvement program;
2. Refer the child to Lackawanna County Children and Youth Agency for services or possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act; or
3. File a citation against the parent/legal guardian of a habitually truant child in magisterial district court.

In all cases where a school refers a habitually truant child to Lackawanna Children and Youth Agency or magisterial district court, HGMICS must hold a student attendance improvement conference, with or without the participation of the child's parent or legal guardian.

School Attendance Improvement Conference

School attendance improvement conference is defined by Pennsylvania law as a "conference where the child's absences and reasons for the absences are examined in an effort to improve attendance, with or without additional services".

Dropping a Student Due to Truancy

Students who are at any time, in the school term, absent from school for ten (10) consecutive school days without any communication with the school, shall thereafter be removed from the active membership roll unless the school has been provided with the evidence that absence may be legally excused or compulsory attendance prosecution has been or is being pursued. When this occurs, the student's parent/guardian will be notified along with the student's district of residence.

Excessive Absences

Upon exceeding ten (10) absences in a given school year, a written excuse from a licensed physician or physician's assistant is required for any additional absences beyond ten (10) days in duration. The written excuse must include the name of the physician or physician's assistant, the date of the visit, the date(s) the student was under physician's care. The total number of absences include days for an excused educational trip.

HGMICS will offer the student and parent/guardian a student attendance improvement conference.

The parent/legal guardian and the student will be invited to participate in a School Attendance Improvement Plan meeting (SAIP) with Administration. Failure to attend this meeting will result in a plan being made without any parental input.

If there is no cooperation and/or the student continues to be absent without an excuse following the SAIP, a Summary Citation will be filed with the local magistrate's office where the proposed SAIP will become court ordered. Failure to comply with this court order may result in a maximum fine, approximately \$300.00 plus court costs, community service, and/or loss of driver's license. The case will also be sent to Lackawanna County Truancy Court.

Notification of Accumulated Absences

A parent/guardian will be provided written notification when the following occurs:

1. A Student has three (3) unexcused absences and is considered Truant
2. A Student has six (6) unexcused absences and is considered Habitually Truant
3. A Student accumulates ten (10) or more absences (excused or unexcused) and is considered Excessively Absent

Parents/guardians can view their child's current attendance online through the Sycamore information system. A link is available on the school's web page at www.howardgardnerschool.com

Leaving Early

Parents/guardians should make every effort to schedule appointments for their children outside of the instructional day. However, there may be times when students must be excused from school during school hours. Students who are to be released early must present their teacher with a written request from their parent/guardian upon arrival at school so school staff are prepared for the student's early departure. No student will be permitted to leave school before the end of the school day unless a parent/guardian comes into the main office to sign the student out.

If your child will be released early, the child must be picked up by 2:30 PM, except for Tuesdays when the child must be picked up by 1:30 PM. This ensures that the parent/guardian is able to enter and exit school property without interference from the car pickup line.

- Students leaving for an appointment and returning within the school day will be considered in attendance for a full day.

- Students leaving between 8:30 AM and 11:30 AM will be considered in attendance for $\frac{1}{4}$ of the school day.
- Students leaving between 11:31 AM and 1:14 PM will be considered in attendance for $\frac{1}{2}$ of the school day.
- Students leaving after 1:15 PM will be considered in attendance for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the school day.

Late & Tardy

Being late/tardy to school interferes with a student's educational program and is disruptive to the school day. A student who arrives to school after 8:15 AM is considered late/tardy for school. Students must be accompanied to the Main Office by their parent/guardian to be signed in.

Students arriving between 8:30 AM and 11:30 AM will be considered in attendance for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the school day.

Students arriving between 11:31 AM and 1:14 PM will be considered in attendance for $\frac{1}{2}$ of the school day.

Students arriving after 1:15 PM will be considered in attendance for $\frac{1}{4}$ of the school day.

Make-Up Work

Students who have been absent from school will be required to contact each teacher upon their return to receive all missed assignments. At the very least, students will be allowed as many days to make-up the work as days they were absent from school.

If a student is absent for two (2) days and it is anticipated that they will miss a third day, parents/guardians may contact the office to arrange for missed class work to be collected from teachers so that it can be picked up at the office. Parents/guardians must call in the morning of the third day and pick work-up in the late afternoon in order to give teachers time to gather assignments. Due to the demanding academic schedule teachers are not able to gather assignments on the spur of the moment.

For absences less than three (3) days, the student can check Google Classroom for class assignments and should make arrangements for other make-up work when they return.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Class Organization

Except for Kindergarten classes, all classes at HGMICS are comprised of approximately 24 students. To support the school's commitment to personalized learning, K-2 classes are assigned an instructional assistant.

Schoolwide Title I

Schoolwide Title I is a federally funded program that enables schools to provide resources designed to reform the regular education program and instruction in the areas of mathematics and literacy. Its purpose is to help all students attain grade-level proficiency, improve achievement, or engage in advanced academic skills.

To support student achievement and family involvement, annual Schoolwide Title I Family

Engagement Events are scheduled pertaining to interests as identified in the annual Family Engagement survey.

Schoolwide Title I School-Family-Student Annual Compact

As part of the School's Title I programming, an annual Schoolwide Compact is released as required by Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The Compact is an agreement that outlines how the staff, families, and students share the responsibility for improved academic achievement and the means by which the school and families will build and develop a partnership that will help children meet or exceed Pennsylvania's high standards.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

HGMICS actively works to ensure students thrive and adequately progress through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework. The HGMICS MTSS framework guides the administration, student support services, schoolwide Title I Specialists, teachers, and families to provide the strategies all students need to be successful. This holistic program emphasizes the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional well-being of all students.

Each domain of student development is supported by three key aspects within the schoolwide framework: the academic program, the PBIS school wide behavior expectations, and the social-emotional curriculum.

HGMICS formally utilizes the results of three universal screeners to benchmark and monitor student academic and social-emotional progress. Behavioral progress is monitored through the school's discipline data.

- Amplify and Acadience for Reading
- Amplify and Acadience for Mathematics
- Social-Skills Improvement System (SSIS) for Social-Emotional Learning

In addition to the schoolwide benchmark assessments and screeners listed above, students may be screened or assessed with other assessment programs to better understand their targeted needs for Tier support.

The HGMICS framework proactively identifies students based on the results of universal screeners, and teacher and parent input to ensure students are keeping up with developmental milestones and academic expectations; if students are not meeting these expectations, students are provided with appropriate interventions based on the area of need and targeted support.

The key components of the Schoolwide Title I MTSS culture at HGMICS are that we:

- Create School Wide behavioral expectations and supports
- Identify schoolwide universal screeners
- Identify tiers of interventions in response to data
- Continually monitor student progress with ongoing data collection
- Ensure family involvement

An MTSS framework comprises three tiers or levels of intervention that acknowledge the fluidity of cognitive, social-emotional, and behavioral development. It is paramount to the framework that everyone understands that students can easily move between tiers based on their individual needs and response to interventions.

Tier I is the universal tier of school and class-wide expectations and interventions fundamental to a successful learning environment. Typically, 80% of students or higher respond positively to these instructional, behavioral, and social-emotional strategies. Student progress is monitored with the school's benchmark assessments, which are typically administered three times a year.

Tier II is a bridge for approximately 10-15% of students who may need more target interventions to learn within the said domain/s of development successfully. Progress monitoring for students who receive Tier II interventions is conducted weekly. If students make positive progress, they may transition back into Tier I. However, if they are not responding well an intervention will be adjusted, or the student may be moved to Tier III.

Tier III is for students that need the most intensive interventions which may require push-in or pull-out support from an interventionist: a Literacy or Mathematics Specialists, Dean of Students, School Counselor, and School Psychologist that targets the specific skill/s the student is struggling with. Approximately 5% of students may need this level of intervention. Students receiving Tier III intervention are progress monitored weekly. The MTSS Committee supervises students that receive this level of support: the Principal, Dean of Students, Director, Student Services, member/s of the Interventionist Team, teachers, and the family.

General Coursework

Families may find a more thorough overview of the School's K-8 Competency-based Curriculum and K-8 PA Standards-aligned Academic Curriculum documents posted on the school's website.

- Multiple Intelligences, surveys, research, and projects.
- Literacy - phonics, reading comprehension and text dependent analysis. Poetry, literature, and informational text. Writing: conventions, style, and organization. Modes of writing: informational, opinion, and narrative.
- Social Studies – community, development of civilization, local, state, and national history, world history. Civics and economics. Physical features of the state, nation, and world. Cultural and political relationships.
- Mathematics – numbers and operations in base ten and fractions. Operations and algebraic thinking, geometry, measurements, and data. *Algebra I. Standards of Mathematical Practice.
- Science – STEEL standards including earth, life, and physical sciences. Environmental education.
- Applied Arts & Music – voice, instruments, perspective, TABs art framework.
- World Languages – Spanish and Ukrainian.
- Physical Education and Health – Games, Sports, and health education.
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) – School Counselor leads class wide lessons on mindfulness, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making.

**All Grade 8 students enrolled in Algebra I are required to participate in both the Grade 8 Mathematics PSSA and the Algebra I Keystone.*

Please note that the School is unable to print student homework, projects, or reports.

Grading and Progress Reports

Student Progress Reports and Scaled Ratings

HGMICS operates the school using a trimester grading system that emphasizes “learning” over “earning” by utilizing a standards-based progress report in addition to numeric grading for grades 3-8. Standards-based reports enable student growth to be the focus of the educational program. Information contained in the reports mark student progress through academic standards.

Progress through the standards is recorded using attribute descriptions aligned to Dr. Howard Gardner’s Apprentice educational model. Student progress is designated as *Novice*, *Apprentice*, *Journeyman*, or *Master*. These attributes also align to PDE’s Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced.

HGMICS Grading Criteria	
N-Novice Below Basic <i>Grades between 68-73</i>	Student demonstrates basic understanding of key concepts, processes, and skills. Student requires additional instruction, practice of skills, extended time to produce or complete work.
A-Apprentice Basic <i>Grades between 74-82</i>	Student demonstrates emerging ability to apply strategies to express key concepts, process, and skills. Student requires additional reinforcement or support to produce or complete work.
J-Journeyman Proficient <i>Grades between 83-91</i>	Student demonstrates consistent understanding and application of key concepts, processes, and skills. Student works independently and produces and completes work with minimal support.
M-Master Advanced <i>Grades between 92-100</i>	Student demonstrates advanced thinking and understanding, an ability to apply and extend concepts, processes, and skills. Student works independently and collaboratively and requires no support to produce or complete work.

Student progress is reported at the completion of each trimester as:

- Kindergarten & Primary progress reports document progress through standards-aligned attributes and skills for academic and specials programming.
- Intermediate, Upper, and Senior progress reports document progress through standards-aligned attributes and include numeric grades for academic and specials programming. *Specials programming is weighted at a quarter of an academic class.*

The following grading scale is used for middle school students:

Grading Scale		Honor Roll	
92-100	Excellent	90-95 % cumulative average	Honors
83-91	Outstanding	96-100 % cumulative average	Distinguished
74-82	Satisfactory		
68-73	Marginal		
67 and below	Failing		

Retention

Overall, the School does not espouse the retention of students as an effective or acceptable educational practice. While academic and grade level progress is essential to the overall success of each student, there are many factors that contribute to a student's portfolio of success. In addition, the School has a strategic MTSS framework that ensures all student progress is monitored and appropriate supports and interventions are provided so that students advance with their peers with the necessary supports.

Student Recognitions and Awards

Middle school students are eligible to receive recognition for Honors and Distinguished Honors based on their cumulative GPA at the conclusion of each trimester.

Students that demonstrate perfect attendance throughout each Trimester are awarded with a Perfect Attendance Recognition at the end of each trimester.

To be eligible for the honor of Valedictorian, the student must have the highest cumulative grade point average for the year. To be eligible for the honor of Salutatorian, the student must have the second highest cumulative grade point average for the year.

Senior Class Achievement Awards are given to graduating 8th grade students. To be eligible for an Achievement Award the student must be current with all assignments and homework, be able to work independently and with others, is an active participant in class discussions, have fewer than 10 absences and maintain at least a 96% cumulative grade average in all three trimesters.

Field Trips

HGMICS views field trips as a vitally important component of the educational program that provides a valuable learning experience for students. Teachers specifically design such experiences to complement and enrich those units of study that occur within the classroom and therefore, out-of-class excursions are normally arranged at the classroom level. It is the general policy of the school that participation in classroom field trips should be limited to the students who are involved in that specific classroom.

Field trips are designed to be a specific part of the curriculum and are not considered optional. Parents/guardians are encouraged to allow and encourage their child to participate, although in some instances parents/guardians may elect not to allow their child to attend. On occasion, if circumstances make this policy difficult for a family to follow, please contact the individual teacher to make an alternative arrangement.

Student cell phones are not permitted on field trips.

Students must have current, up-to-date medical files, including any medication guidelines, on file at the school in order to attend a school-related field trip.

After School and Summer Programs

HGMICS offers a variety of after school and summer programs such as sports, band, enrichment and tutoring. Program offerings are subject to the availability of staff and will vary accordingly.

Student Competitions

Annually students have the opportunity to participate in a number of regional and state competitions. While most competitions are geared toward middle school students, some are available for the elementary level. Competitions are always announced to the students. Some competitions may include and are not limited to:

- K'Nex STEM
- PA Media and Design Competition
- NEIU Reading Competition
- Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS)
- Scranton University Earth Day Writing Competition

HGMICS Back-to-School Night

Back-to-School Night is held in partnership with the Parent Forum's Ice Cream Social scheduled the Thursday before school begins. This event is an opportunity for families to meet teachers, see classrooms, and engage in community support.

Teacher Conferences

HGMICS schedules bi-annual teacher conferences (please see current school calendar for dates). Prior to the conference date, parents receive a notice to schedule a conference through the Sycamore information system.

We feel teacher conferences are invaluable aids for parents/guardians as well as the teachers, and this type of communication between home and school is beneficial for children. Teachers and parents/guardians have the option of scheduling additional conferences as needed, during mutually agreeable times, in order to facilitate the student's continued academic progress.

Teacher Appointments

It is the policy of the School that our staff facilitate the highest degree of cooperation and interaction between parents/guardians and teachers. Please do not let a problem approach crisis proportion before you reach out to us.

In fairness to all staff members, and in the spirit of open and direct communication, it is highly recommended for parents/guardians to first direct any concerns regarding their child's academic program directly to the teacher. In this way, parents/guardians can gather information and teachers have an opportunity to respond to a concern, and as in most cases of effective communication, a resolution is usually achieved. If the parents/guardians concern has not been satisfactorily addressed, then contacting the Principal is the next appropriate step.

Understand that professional educational decisions are made in the best interest of children and are based upon sound educational standards. Parents/guardians certainly may have input into these decisions and may dispute some decisions made by administration and staff. However, the school reserves the right to assign students to classrooms, teachers, and grade levels at its discretion.

If a parent/guardian needs to meet with a teacher, they must email that teacher directly to schedule the meeting. If a parent arrives at the school without a meeting scheduled, the

teacher cannot accommodate the unscheduled request. The front office will direct the parent to email the instructional staff to schedule a meeting.

Classroom Observations

Parents/guardians are welcome to observe in their child's classroom when visits are scheduled **ahead of time with the classroom teacher**. Although teachers will be happy to answer any questions, please be aware that students' needs are the teacher's first priority, and visitors may need to wait until teachers are able to respond.

The School has agreements with local colleges and universities to host students in education programs for classroom observations and student teaching. All appropriate clearances are on file for these students.

HGMICS's behavioral expectations, which are based on the principles of self-respect and self-control, apply to our students and staff, as well as to our visitors.

School-wide Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School Board of Trustees designates the administration to adopt and implement a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) framework consistent with the best practices promoted by PDE. While not mandated, PBIS is widely recognized as an effective framework for cultivating a safe, respectful, and inclusive school environment that promotes positive behavior among staff and students.

PBIS establishes a social culture and the behavior support needed to improve social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for all students. The foundational elements of PBIS include locally-meaningful and culturally-relevant outcomes, empirically-supported practices, systems to support implementation, and data to monitor effective and equitable implementation and to guide decision-making.

A positive school climate is associated with staff and student well-being and achievement, and supports effective teaching of school-wide and systemic behavior expectations. Research indicates that effective behavior support systems use proactive strategies to prevent problem behaviors, including a continuum of interventions and supports based on best restorative discipline practices and cultural responsiveness.

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School PBIS framework:

- Defines, teaches, and reinforces clear expectations for staff and student behavior that contributes to academic and social success.
- Supports staff and students in learning and applying the skills necessary to enhance a positive school climate and avoid negative behavior through meaningful instruction and guidance.
- Provides consistent, equitable, and restorative practices across all domains of the school.
- Defines, teaches, and communicates clear expectations for staff responsibilities based on effective, evidence-based, restorative, and developmentally appropriate practices that prevent problem behavior and promote student achievement.
- Facilitates students, staff, families, and the community in working together to provide academic and social emotional, and behavioral supports and skills to students.

HGMICS Behavioral Expectations

Students at HGMICS will be STARS throughout the school day by demonstrating the four behavioral expectations:

S	Safe
T	Trustworthy
A	Accountable
R	Respectful

Teacher & Staff Responsibilities

1. Teachers and staff teach, model and practice each of the behavioral expectations throughout the year.
2. Teachers and staff acknowledge student behaviors that meet the STAR expectations.
3. Teachers and staff follow procedures for infractions.

Specific Verbal Feedback

When students are being safe, trustworthy, accountable, and respectful, teachers acknowledge them by providing positive verbal feedback specific to the behavior they are exhibiting.

STAR Cards

Students who are exhibiting STAR behaviors are acknowledged by specific positive feedback along with a HGMICS STAR Card. When a student receives an HGMICS STAR Card they put their name on the STAR Card. The STAR cards can be turned in for various rewards based on a grade-level menu.

Student of the Month

Each month, one student from each class who demonstrates STAR qualities—being **Safe, Trustworthy, Accountable, and Respectful**—is recognized at a school assembly. These students can be nominated by any staff member who observes them consistently modeling these positive behaviors.

PBIS STARbursts

The PBIS Team scheduled STARbursts that all students participate in to celebrate their Pod STAR behavior. Blowouts are often themed and activities are age-appropriate.

Purple Principal Award

Each month, a student may be recommended for the Purple Principal Award for outstanding acts of STAR citizenship within the classroom or school community. Awards are announced at the Student of the Month Assembly.

Handling Infractions of Behavioral Expectations

HGMICS maintains a Hierarchy of Consequences for addressing behavioral infractions. Depending

on the level of an infraction most incidents are addressed by the Dean of Students. The Administration upholds that infractions do not impact times within the school day that provide health and wellness, such as recess; therefore, the school does not use the loss of recess as a consequence

Outlined below is the level system and definitions of behavior.

<u>ELEMENTARY MINOR</u>		
Academic Dishonesty	Non-serious use of another person's work as their own, or engaging in unauthorized use of materials during an academic exercise.	Using a calculator when instructions say "No calculators." Glancing at a peer's answers during an exam.
Profanity	Use of obscene language; swear words.	Swearing, but not directed at someone
Defiance/Non-Compliance	Brief or low-intensity failure to follow directions or talking back.	Work refusal Not transitioning Not following rules
Disruption	Low-intensity interruption of class or school activities.	Talking over others Making loud noises
Disregard for Authority	Challenging the authority for school personnel	Questioning personnel's decisions Challenging personnel's decisions
Inappropriate Language	Low-intensity harmful language.	Saying "butt crack" at circle time Swearing, but not directed at someone
Inappropriate Location	In an area outside of the activity boundaries	Not on the rug during circle time Wandering around and distracting others
Lying	Non-serious, untrue message which violates rules.	Not answering truthfully about homework being complete Not admitting to doing something inappropriate in class
Material/Property Misuse	Low-intensity incorrect use of materials or property.	Firing staples out of a stapler Tearing up papers
Physical Contact	Non-serious, direct contact with another body	Horseplay Pushing/Shoving
Technology Violation	Non-serious use of an electronic device that violates school guidelines.	Cell phone is on a desk in a no-cell-phone space Playing unapproved games on a school-issued tablet

ELEMENTARY MAJOR		
Three Minor Events	Three incidents listed in the minor category within a calendar month.	
Abusive Language	Harmful verbal messages	Name calling Swearing at someone
Bullying/Harassment	Repeated, unwanted interactions in which there is a power imbalance.	On-going teasing Repeated taunting Repeated name calling
Dress Code Violation	Clothing that does not fit within the school dress code guidelines.	Consult the school dress code guidelines for examples.
Fighting	Mutual participation in physical violence.	Two students punching each other A group of students kicking each other
Out of Bounds Area	In an area outside of the school or activity boundaries	Leaving school/grounds during school hours Wandering away during a field trip
Property Damage/Vandalism	Destruction or disfigurement of property.	Graffiti Tearing materials off the walls
Threatening Behavior	Causing fear of injury or harm to people or property.	Social media post about hurting another student Message in the bathroom about fighting another student
Theft	In possession of; or is responsible for removing property that is not their own without permission.	Going into someone else's belongings and taking their possessions Taking school materials without permission

MIDDLE SCHOOL MINOR		
Defiance/Non-Compliance	Brief or low-intensity failure to follow directions or talking back.	Work refusal Not transitioning Not following rules
Disruption	Low-intensity interruption of class or school activities.	Talking over others Making loud noises
Disregard for Authority	Challenging the authority for school personnel	Questioning personnel's decisions

		Challenging personnel's decisions
Inappropriate Location	In an area outside of the activity boundaries	Wandering around and distracting others within the classroom Wandering hallways and in undesignated area without permission
Lying	Non-serious, untrue message which violates rules.	Not answering truthfully about homework being complete Not admitting to doing something inappropriate in class
Material/Property Misuse	Low-intensity incorrect use of materials or property.	Firing staples out of a stapler Tearing up papers
Physical Contact	Non-serious, direct contact with another body	Horseplay Pushing/Shoving
Profanity	Use of obscene language; swear words.	Swearing, but not directed at someone

<u>MIDDLE SCHOOL MAJOR</u>		
Three Minor Events	Three incidents listed in the minor category within a trimester.	
Abusive Language	Harmful verbal messages	Name calling Swearing at someone
Academic Dishonesty	Non-serious use of another person's work as their own, or engaging in unauthorized use of materials during an academic exercise.	Plagiarism Glancing at a peer's answers during an exam. Utilizing smart devices during assessments
Bullying/Harassment	Repeated, unwanted interactions in which there is a power imbalance.	On-going teasing Repeated taunting Repeated name calling
Dress Code Violation	Clothing that does not fit within the school dress code guidelines.	Consult the school dress code guidelines for examples.

Fighting	Mutual participation in physical violence.	Two students punching each other A group of students kicking each other
Out of Bounds Area	In an area outside of the school or activity boundaries	Leaving classroom/ school grounds during school hours Wandering away during a field trip
Property Damage/Vandalism	Destruction or disfigurement of property.	Graffiti Tearing materials off the walls
Technology Violation	Inappropriate (as defined by school) use of an electronic device.	Texting in class Cell phone is on a desk in a no-cell-phone space
Threatening Behavior	Causing fear of injury or harm to people or property.	Social media post about hurting another student Message in the bathroom about fighting another student
Theft	In possession of, has passed on, or is responsible for removing property that is not their own without permission.	Going into someone else's belongings and taking their possessions Taking school materials without permission

SAFE SCHOOLS

Anti-Bullying & Anti-Hazing Policy

The Board of Trustees (“Board”) of the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School (“Charter School”) recognizes the importance of providing all students and employees with a safe school and learning environment in order to promote the educational process. The Board has determined that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards as well as to promote positive interaction among students through participation in Charter School sponsored groups or organizations.

Bullying, cyberbullying and hazing like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student’s ability to learn and participate in the School community and the Charter School’s ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Therefore, in order to ensure and promote a safe learning environment, it shall be the policy of the Charter School to maintain an educational environment that is intolerant of bullying, cyberbullying or hazing in any form.

Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers are directed to demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect and to refuse to tolerate bullying, cyberbullying or hazing. This policy pertains to all students and staff, regardless

of their status. This policy also applies to all students and staff whose conduct out of school materially and substantially interferes with the educational process at the Charter School.

Teachers should discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Students who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Training will be provided to teachers, administrators, and staff on an annual basis during pre-service training. Trainings will also reinforce the Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) program, which is in alignment with this policy.

Please see the complete Policy on the School's webpage under Resources, Policies.

Safe2Say Something (S2SS)

Safe2Say Something (S2SS) is the state-mandated program whose mission is to create safe schools and communities by teaching students, educators, and administrators how to recognize signs of an individual at risk of harming themselves or others. The program provides an anonymous reporting system for students, educators, and administrators to submit or report their concerns or tips to a Crisis Center who then informs the appropriate school and possibly law enforcement. The school is responsible for investigating the claim and reporting outcomes to the Crisis Center.

Security Drills

For the safety of our students and staff, we conduct planned security response drills such as fire, lockdown, evacuation, and lockout drills throughout the school year. Fire drills are unannounced and security response drills are announced.

Tobacco & Vaping

Please note that Pennsylvania has expanded its prohibition of tobacco items in a school setting to include vaping devices, also known as electronic nicotine delivery systems or "ENDS."

Under Act 93 of 2019, it is now a summary offense for students to possess or use "nicotine products or ENDS" in the school building, on a school bus or on school property owned by or under the control of a school. "ENDS" is a product or device used to ingest a nicotine product, including electronic cigarettes. Electronic cigarettes are defined as "an electronic device that delivers nicotine or other substance through vaporization and inhalation." As a result of this smoking ban expansion, students who vape or bring vaping products onto school ground may be charged with a summary offense as documented in the School's PBIS Hierarchy of Consequence.

Howard Gardner MI Charter School was recognized as part of the American Lung Association's Vape-Free Schools Initiative. In light of the startling fact that more than one in four high school students vape and with vaping-related illnesses on the rise, we want to help our school be a healthier space for all of our students and set them up for a lifetime of success. This includes helping our students live tobacco-free lives.

Through this initiative, our school policy has been reviewed and updated to prohibit the use of all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, by students, staff, parents and visitors on campus

and at all times, including in parking lots, all vehicles parked on campus, at all satellite sites and other school-owned or rented properties. This policy extends to all off-site meetings and all school-owned or leased vehicles, as well.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

[Director, Student Services](#)

The Director of Student Services provides oversight for student support services in such areas as special education, social-emotional support, counseling, and psychological evaluation.

[School Counselor](#)

Our full-time School Counselors support academic, social-emotional, and career development of all students. Services include classroom social-emotional learning lessons, short-term individual or group counseling, crisis response and coordination, consultation with families and staff, and the promotion of a positive school climate through character development and targeted support. School counselors work closely with students, educators, and caregivers to help students reach their fullest potential by removing barriers to learning and fostering growth in all areas.

[School Psychologist](#)

The full-time School Psychologist is responsible for completing psychoeducational evaluations, instructional assessments, making intervention recommendations, and conducting appropriate testing in an effort to increase student learning, appropriate behavior and social functioning.

[Student Assistance Program \(SAP\)](#)

The purpose of the SAP program is for early identification of students who may be experiencing personal, school, family, alcohol, or other drug related problems which may create a significant barrier to the learning process, and to provide early intervention using existing in-school services as well as referrals to appropriate community agencies. The program is operated using a team of trained staff members, including the Director, Student Services; Principal; School Counselor; School Psychologist; School Social Worker; faculty; Lackawanna County Drug and Alcohol Program; and Scranton Counseling Center. The School Nurse is consulted as needed.

An anonymous referral process is in place that allows parents, staff, and students to make referrals to the program. Students may also refer themselves. Participation in the program is voluntary and strictly confidential. The referral form can be found on the School's website on the home screen.

[Identification of Homeless Students](#)

HGMICS complies with the McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act. When notification is given or a homeless student is identified during enrollment or during the course of the school year, the School's Homeless Liaison will facilitate the enrollment or intake process, and determine appropriate services needed. Generally, homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. When homeless status is determined, the School Liaison will consult with the Regional Homeless Coordinator to provide necessary services to assist in meeting the needs of the student. Faculty and staff are also

trained and given guidelines to identify homeless students.

Dispute Resolution Procedure

Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, procedures must be in place for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding homeless children in the state of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) promotes a two-tier process for resolution of disputes regarding complaints about the educational placement of homeless children and all related requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act. Disputes involving the enrollment, transportation and other barriers to the education of children experiencing homelessness are also addressed under this procedure. Students should be provided with all services for which they are eligible, while disputes are being resolved.

Level I

HGMICS' Homeless Liaison is our School Counselor and should be contacted regarding any disputes pertaining to the homelessness of students. Should the complaint not be made to the Liaison, the complaint should be forwarded to the Liaison as soon as possible. The School's disposition of the complaint shall be made in writing within 20 business days after the Liaison is notified of the complaint/dispute. The School will use and maintain copies of PDE's "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" form that ensures that
a) families are informed of the basis of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment; b) families are notified of their right to remain in their school of choice pending resolution for the dispute; and c) families are informed of the procedures for challenging the decision of the school.

Level II

If the parent or guardian is dissatisfied with the School's disposition of a dispute or would like to raise any issue of McKinney-Vento Act noncompliance, they may file a complaint or appeal with the PDE regional coordinator. The regional coordinator will notify the state coordinator immediately. Upon being notified, the state coordinator will review the complaint or appeal and assign it to a regional coordinator for disposition. The coordinator to whom the appeal is assigned may contact, interview and accept documentation from any individual as well as the school. The disposition will be provided to the school and parent or guardian within 20 business days after the assignment of the complaint/appeal.

Self-Injurious Behavior or Suicidal Ideation

Self-injurious behavior includes, but is not limited to, observed and/or reported threats of suicide, purposeful self-injury, suicidal ideation, and other forms of self-harm. Faculty, staff, or students who suspect a student to be participating in self-injurious behavior or demonstrates suicidal thoughts should immediately notify the School Counselor, School Social Worker, Principal, or other school administrator. If the aforementioned actions, thoughts, or statements pertaining to these topics are confirmed and intent is shown, the student's parents/guardians or guardians will be notified. Student confidentiality is not applicable in life-threatening situations; therefore, confidentiality must be broken when the student becomes a threat to himself/herself and/or others.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Notice of Special Education Services and Programs

In compliance with state and federal law, Howard Gardner MI Charter School will provide to each protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related services, supplemental supports and services, or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities.

If you believe that your school-age child may be in need of special education services and related programs or may be in need of screening and evaluation processes designed to assess the needs of the child and his/her eligibility, please contact the CEO, Principal, or Director of Student Services. These services are available to you at no cost, upon written request. You may request screening and evaluation at any time. Requests for evaluation and screening are to be made in writing and sent to, 1615 East Elm St. Scranton, PA 18505.

Confidentiality: All information gathered about your child is subject to the confidentiality provisions contained in federal and state law. The School has policies and procedures in effect governing the collection, maintenance, destruction, and disclosure to third parties for this information. For information about these policies and procedures, as well as about rights of confidentiality and access to educational records, you may contact the school or visit our website.

Nondiscrimination of Qualified Students with Disabilities Policy

The Board declares it to be the policy of this school to ensure that all school programs and practices are free from discrimination against all qualified students with disabilities. The Board recognizes its responsibility to provide academic and nonacademic services and programs equally to students with and without disabilities.

The school shall provide to each qualified student with a disability enrolled in the school, without cost to the student or parent/guardian, a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). This includes provision of education and related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to afford each qualified student with a disability equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits from education programs and extracurricular activities without discrimination, to the same extent as each student without a disability, consistent with federal and state laws and regulations.

The Board encourages students and parents/guardians who believe they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment to promptly report such incidents to designated employees.

The board directs that any complaints of discrimination or harassment shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action be taken for substantiated allegations. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the school's legal and investigative obligations.

The school shall not intimidate, threaten, coerce, discriminate or retaliate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by this policy.

For complete policy information, please see our webpage.

Child Find & Outreach

Each school district, along with other public agencies in the Commonwealth, must establish and implement procedures to identify, locate and evaluate all children who need special education programs and services because of the child's disability. This notice is to help identify these children, offer assistance to parents/guardians and describe to parents/guardians their rights with regard to confidentiality of information that will be obtained during this process. The CEO or designee shall ensure that the school annually conducts awareness and outreach programs and activities designed to reach school residents including parents/guardians of students with disabilities who are enrolled in the school.

The School's public awareness activities shall include annual publication of written notice in newspapers and other media notifying residents about child identification activities; available special education services and programs and how to request them; and procedures used to ensure confidentiality of student information.

Identification Activity

Child find refers to activities undertaken by public education agencies to identify, locate, and evaluate children residing in the United States, including children attending private schools, who are suspected of having disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability and determine the child's needs for special education and related services. The purpose is to locate these children so that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) can be made available. The types of disabilities to cause a child to need services are: autism, deaf— blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment due to chronic or acute health problems, specific learning disabilities, speech or language, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment including blindness.

The school is required to annually provide notice describing the identification activities and procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of personally identifiable information. This notice is intended to meet this requirement.

Identification activities are performed to find a child who is suspected of having a disability that would interfere with his or her learning unless special education programs and services are made available. These activities are sometimes called screening activities. The activities include: review of group data, routine hearing and vision screening, assessment of student's academic functioning, observation of the student displaying difficulty in behavior and determining the student's response to attempt remediation. Input from parents/guardians are also an information source for identification. After a child is identified as potentially having a disability, he or she is evaluated, but is not evaluated before parents/guardians give permission for their child to be evaluated.

Early Intervention Identification

The PA Department of education is responsible for providing EI programs and services to eligible young children under Act 212 of 1990, the EI Services System Act. An 'eligible young child' is a child aged 3 to the age of beginners, who has an identified disability or a developmental delay in the areas of speech/language, learning, motor, adaptive, social and or/behavioral and is in need of special education.

Developmental screening for those children determined eligible is available through NEIU 19. To

request screening call 1-800-228-1750, ext. 219 or 570-876-9219, Monday through Friday between 8:30 AM and 4:00 PM. All information gathered is confidential. There is no cost for programs and services. For additional information, contact NEIU 19.

Developmental Screening

The school shall establish a system of developmental screening, including hearing and vision screenings. Developmental screenings shall be conducted at reasonable intervals to determine whether all students are performing based on grade appropriate standards in core academic subjects.

HGMICS will provide ongoing screening services. If you wish to learn more, have questions, or believe your child may need to be identified, please contact

HGMICS
Cathy Opshinsky, Director, Student Services
570-941-4100

Recording of Meetings

Except as specifically provided for within this policy, the school prohibits audio, video and electronic recording of meetings between parents/guardians and school teachers, paraprofessionals, program specialists, consultants or administrators.

An attempt to record a meeting by a parent/guardian after a verbal prohibition by school staff shall result in immediate termination of the meeting and may result in ejection from school property and possible prosecution. The school shall permit audio recording of a meeting when a participant submits, at least five (5) days prior to the meeting, documentation that substantiates:

1. Participant has disability or limited English proficiency that significantly limits his/her ability to meaningfully understand or participate in the meeting's intended decision-making and recording is the only feasible means of accommodating the limitation.
2. Individual has a legitimate interest in attending the meeting but for good cause is unable to do so, and recording is the only feasible means by which s/he can meaningfully understand and participate in the decision-making.

The school may permit videotaping of a meeting when all participants at the meeting give written consent.

When an exception to recording a meeting is granted, the school employee responsible for the meeting shall arrange to record the meeting by similar means. Such recording shall be considered part of the student's educational record and be subject to relevant laws and regulations.

Program Compliances

The Director, Student Services establishes procedures to ensure that HGMICS complies with all federal and state laws and regulations and program requirements for special education. HGMICS may coordinate with Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit No. 19 to establish procedures, fulfill reporting requirements, and participate in applicable programs.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec 502, 1371, 1372

State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec. 4.13, 4.28, 12.1, 12.4, 12.41, 14.101, et seq.,
15.9 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1400 et seq.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act – 29 U.S.C. Sec. 794 Americans with Disabilities Act – 42 U.S.C. Sec. 12101 et seq.

Individuals with Disabilities Education, Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations – 34 CFR Part 300 Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network – www.pattnan.net

Confidential Communications of Students Policy

The Board of Trustees directs school personnel to comply with all federal and state laws, regulations and Board policy concerning confidential communications of student.

Information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parent/guardian, CEO, Principal or other appropriate authority by the staff member who received the information when the health, welfare or safety of the student or other persons clearly is in jeopardy.

Use of student's confidential communications to school personnel in legal proceedings is governed by laws and regulations appropriate to the proceedings.

In qualifying circumstances, a staff member may reveal confidential information to a student's parent/guardian and other appropriate authorities, including law enforcement personnel.

Questions relating to the policy should be directed to the CEO.

Student Records Policy

The educational interests of students require the collection, retention, and use of data and information about individuals and groups of students while ensuring the individual's right to privacy. HGMICS will maintain educational records for students for legitimate educational purposes.

The Board recognizes its responsibility for the collection, retention, disclosure and protection of student records. The Board also recognizes the legal requirement to maintain the confidentiality of student records and prohibits the unauthorized access, reproduction, and/or disclosure of student education records and personally identifiable information from such records.

School Administrators shall adopt a comprehensive plan for the collection, maintenance and dissemination of student education records that complies with federal and state laws and regulations and state guidelines. Copies of the adopted student records plan shall be maintained by the School and revised as required by changes in federal or state law and regulations.

The CEO shall be responsible for implementing and monitoring procedures to ensure they meet all legal requirements and shall establish safeguards to protect the student and their family from an invasion of privacy when collecting, retaining and disseminating student information and providing access to authorized persons.

HGMICS staff shall compile educational records in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.

In accordance with law, each teacher shall prepare and maintain a record of the work and progress of each student, including the final grade and recommendation for promotion or

retention.

The school's procedures for compilation, retention, disclosure and security of student records shall provide the following:

1. Informing parents/guardians of their rights and procedures to implement those rights, annually and upon enrollment;
2. Permitting appropriate access by authorized persons and officials, describing procedures for access, and listing copying fees;
3. Enumerating and defining the types, locations and person responsible for student records maintained by the school: Establishing guidelines for disclosure of information and data in student records;
4. Maintaining a record of access and release of information for each student's records;
5. Assuring appropriate retention and security of student records;
6. Transferring education records and appropriate disciplinary records to other school districts.

Procedures for disclosure of student records shall apply equally to all school district, military recruiters, and postsecondary institutions.

Upon request of the Secretary of Education, a copy of the student records plan shall be submitted to the Department of Education.

Homebound Instruction

HGMICS also referenced as Local Education Agency (LEA) and school district.

A school district may provide homebound instruction for a total of three months without consulting or notifying the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

The reasons for allowing a student to receive homebound instruction in lieu of being physically present at school are defined by regulation as mental, physical, or other urgent reasons. However, the term "urgent reasons" shall be strictly construed and not permit irregular attendance. See 22 Pa Code § 11.25(a).

It is the responsibility of the family to ensure adequate proof is provided or the request may be denied.

Following the initial three months, the district must request an extension from PDE in order to continue to allow a student to be excused from school attendance and to provide homebound instruction for a longer period of time. See 22 Pa Code § 11.25(b).

PDE will not act on any request for an extension until the initial three months has expired. When an extension is requested, PDE requires that a licensed practitioner submit to the school district an updated examination and extension request within two weeks of the impending extension. If an extension is not granted by either the school district or PDE, the student must return to school. Since the goal is to rehabilitate a student so that they can return to school, the district's policy may define what is acceptable as an appropriately licensed professional for a specific type of excusal. For example, if a student suffers emotional/mental illness, the district may require that medical information submitted to substantiate homebound instruction be prepared by a psychologist or psychiatrist. The student's treatment and progress should be monitored by an appropriately licensed professional. School districts may require frequent updates on the

student's progress, from an appropriately licensed professional, as a condition of continued excusal.

It is not necessary to send to PDE the licensed professional documentation with the extension request; the district simply must ensure the excuse is reasonable for absence from school and that the student is being treated actively for the condition necessitating the absence.

A student receiving homebound instruction is counted in both membership and attendance. If a student does not receive homebound instruction during the first three months, then the student is counted in membership but not in attendance. PDE's Child Accounting counts check this as an hour of weekly instruction as equivalent to a day of school attendance. Therefore, five hours of weekly instruction are equivalent to five days of school attendance. However, for every hour less than the total of five hours of homebound instruction provided (or 2.5 hours for half-day attendees), the student is marked as absent – one day for each hour missed. Hours are counted on a weekly basis; a student cannot be counted as present by combining hours from consecutive weeks. For example, three hours of homebound instruction one week and seven hours the next week cannot count as full time for two weeks. The district may, at their discretion, provide more than five hours of instruction per week without requesting special permission from PDE.

A school district may structure homebound instruction for a student such that the student attends school part-time, as his or her condition allows; homebound instruction requests need not be restricted to students who are unable to attend school at all. This is a local decision. If a student attends school for partial days, then homebound instruction would be prorated. For example, if a student attends school half-day, only 2.5 hours of homebound instruction is required for the equivalent of five days of instruction.

A homebound student is required to participate in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). If the student is incapable of participating at the school, the individual who is providing the homebound instruction should be trained to administer the assessment and then administer the test to the student in his/her home. The Board shall provide, pursuant to rules of the State Board of Education and where all required criteria contained in this policy are met, individual instruction to students confined to home or hospital for physical disability, illness or injury; or when such confinement is recommended for psychological or psychiatric reason. Applications for individual instruction shall include a medical doctor's statement certifying the nature of the illness or disability, explaining specifically why the illness or disability prevents the student from attending school, and the probable duration of the confinement. Teachers, counselors, and administrators shall bring cases appropriate for homebound instruction to the attention of the Principal. The parent/guardian's request shall be made to the Principal.

The District reserves the right to require a medical examination by a physician of its own selection in order to make determinations for initial or continued eligibility for homebound instruction. The Principal shall be permitted to require updated medical information as to the student's progress during the period of homebound instruction.

The Principal shall forward the request for homebound instruction to the CEO who shall have authority to grant the request for instruction or to deny it if the request does not conform to the required criteria contained herein. If the request for homebound instruction is approved, the CEO will make arrangements for a certified teacher or teachers to instruct the student while the student is at home or in the hospital. Homebound instructions shall commence within seven (7) calendar days of approval. Any student receiving homebound instruction shall be carried on the attendance records of the school to which the student is assigned.

The program of individual instruction given each student shall be in accordance with the standards established by the Secretary of Education. Students who are receiving homebound instruction and are transitioning back to school, provided that the medical doctor's statement supports the student's participation in the activity, shall participate in extracurricular activities sponsored by the District. Moreover, a student's participation in employment outside of the home shall disqualify a student from eligibility for homebound instruction. Upon written recommendation of a physician and approval of the CEO, students making a transition into full-time school attendance will be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities sponsored by the District.

Exception

The board reserves the right to withhold individual instruction when the instructor's presence in the place of a student's confinement presents a hazard to the health of the teacher or a parent/guardian in authority is not at home with the student during the house of instruction.

Surrogate Parent Policy

Surrogate parents/guardians act on behalf of the designated student in all manners relating to identifications, evaluation, and placement in Special Education. Typically, students enroll at HGMICS at the request of the parent/legal guardian; however, if a student is enrolled with no known parent/legal guardian, the school will attempt to contact the entity with legal custody (i.e., Children & Youth) to determine if the need to locate a surrogate parent is warranted. If this student is a student with an IEP, the Director of Student Services or School Counselor will make the necessary contacts to initiate this process. HGMICS follows the procedure provided by the Northeast Intermediate Unit 19 with regards to determining the need of a surrogate parent.

HGMICS would collaborate with Northeast Intermediate Unit 19, to provide surrogate parents/guardians to students who meet the criteria/requirements. The NEIU 19 is responsible for the training provided to the surrogate parents/guardians that they secure.

HGMICS would make every possible attempt to secure a surrogate parent within the 30-day time limit. The Northeast Intermediate Unit 19 would be contacted to assist in this endeavor.

Parent/Guardian and Visitor Engagement

We encourage active participation of parents/guardians of children enrolled. Frequent communication between parents/guardians and school personnel is essential for the growth and development of each child. It is our strong belief that the home and the school should work together to complement, supplement, and support one another during this important growth process.

Parent/guardian engagement means many things; it may include making classroom visits, attending Parent Forum Socials, or Schoolwide Title I Parent Engagement events. We recognize that time and work constraints may prevent some parents/guardians from participating as much as they may wish. However, there are many ways to contribute and become involved. For instance, parents/guardians may choose to help with fundraising or by contributing to support school programming. Throughout the year, opportunities will arise to help support our programs. Please consider getting involved in at least one project so that your child and others can benefit from your support.

It is important that parents/guardians of children enrolled in the school become familiar with

the general philosophy of the school to provide a total environment that corresponds with the natural development of their children.

Contributions and Gifts

HGMICS is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Therefore, gifts and contributions made to the *HGMICS* are tax deductible – and always greatly appreciated! An annual golf tournament is the major School fundraiser that directly supports the School’s educational mission.

We invite anyone looking to make a charitable contribution to contact us, as we sometimes have specific projects or goals that can be supported.

Parent Forum

The Parent Forum is HGMICS’ “PTA.” They have many roles that tend to be divided into two main functions: first, to build community and encourage school spirit; and second, to run specific fundraising projects with specific goals in mind which directly benefit the school. The Parent Forum sponsors many student activities throughout the year, including planning family fun nights.

Additionally, the Parent Forum enhances the communication process between the school and the member families. The Parent Forum is also an important source of information for the administration of the school in terms of identifying areas of improvement that need to be addressed. Our philosophy is built upon the concept of teamwork, mutual respect and recognition of others’ ideas and talents so that all our students and children can achieve the best education possible.

The Parent Forum invites all interested parents/guardians, grandparents/guardians, etc. to join and be actively involved. Parents/guardians play an active role in the planning and functioning of the school community. Annual events and meetings are communicated through School emails, and posted on the Parent Forum Facebook page.

Parent Volunteers

All parent volunteers are required to have their State Child Abuse, Criminal History, and FBI Fingerprint Clearances/Affidavit of Pennsylvania residency on file in the school office. The Criminal History Clearance & Child Abuse Clearance can be completed online; the FBI Fingerprinting registration is done online, and the fingerprint scans can be done at a local location. Links to all three clearances are available on the HGMICS website.

Clearances must be renewed every three years.

Fingerprint clearance ONLY required if volunteers CANNOT meet the following criteria:

- the position you are applying for is unpaid; and
- you have been a resident of Pennsylvania during the entirety of the previous ten-year period

If you meet BOTH those criteria, you do NOT need the FBI Fingerprint clearance, and can instead sign the “Disclosure Statement Application for Volunteers”, available on the Clearance page of the school website <http://howardgardenerschoo.com/about/clearances/>

If you do NOT meet BOTH criteria, you must still obtain the FBI Fingerprint Clearance.

Please plan accordingly if you wish to volunteer or chaperon field trips or other school activities in which parent volunteers help provide student supervision. Clearances are not needed for parent-teacher meetings, classroom observations, teacher-supervised classroom presentations, performances, sports events, or Parent Forum meetings.

Visitor Identification Protocol

Due to the ever-increasing demands to keep students safe while in school, all visitors must fully comply with the visitor protocol. Visitors are permitted inside the building only with approval of the School Administration. All visitors seeking to gain access into the school building must enter through the Main Entrance and report to the Main Office upon arrival. Visitors must present valid photo identification, such as a driver's license, and once approved, will be issued a visitor's badge. The visitor's badge must be worn at all times on school property and when the approved business is complete the visitor is expected to report back to the main office, sign out, and return the visitor badge prior to exiting the building.

HGMICS reserves the right to screen any person attempting to gain entry into a school building, as well as their bags and other belongings. Such screenings may include a search of state and/or federal criminal databases, sex offender registries, the use of metal detection equipment, and the search of packages and belongings. The School reserves the right to refuse any person entry onto the school campus, or into any school building.

HEALTH SERVICES

The Medical Office of HGMICS is staffed by a certified school nurse. The goal is to attain optimum health for all children in a joint effort of home, school and community.

Privacy of Student Health Information

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA) govern all student health records in public schools. These acts allow for adequate security and privacy of all health records as well as allowing appropriate sharing of health information for legitimate educational purposes. There is certain information contained in a child's health record that may be shared with school personnel on a "need to know basis" in order for the optimal level of care to be given. Health information such as having a bee sting allergy; diabetes; asthma; and/or seizures is information that may be disclosed to certain staff. If you have any concerns or questions, please notify the school nurse as soon as possible.

Immunizations

Per the regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health and PA School Code (law), children may not be admitted or permitted to attend HGMICS unless proof of the required immunizations is presented. Proof of immunizations is required upon registering/entering school.

Any child deemed not properly immunized is asked to catch up on required immunizations before the first day of the new school year. If this cannot be accomplished, a 5-day grace period is allowed once school has started in which proof of immunization or a written plan to catch up

immunizations signed by a child's doctor must be provided. After this 5-day grace period students will not be allowed to attend school until one of these are provided to the school.

The following immunizations are required by all children in Grades K through 8th:

- 4 DPT, DT, or Dtap (Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus). The 4th dose must be given after the child's 4th birthday
- 3 Polio (one after 4th birthday)
- 2 MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella – German Measles)
- 3 Hepatitis B
- 2 Varicella – Chickenpox vaccine or documentation of the disease

Children in the 7th grade are required to have the following additional immunizations:

- 1 Meningococcal vaccine (MCV)
- 1 DPT, DT, Dtap (if 5 years have elapsed since the last tetanus containing vaccine)

A child may be medically exempt from the above-mentioned vaccines if the child's physician provides written proof that immunization of the child may be detrimental to the health of the child. When the physician determines that vaccination is no longer detrimental to the health of the child, the child will have to comply with the above stated immunization requirements. If a child must be medically exempt from receiving immunizations the child's physician (MD or DO) must sign the reverse side of the immunization certificate.

If a parent/guardian has a religious belief or strong moral or ethical conviction similar to a religious belief against immunization a parent/guardian must sign a "Certificate of Immunization" available at the school medical office stating the reason for the exemption.

Please be advised that in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease any child who has an exemption for immunizations will not be allowed to attend school for a specific period of time. The HGMICS follows the recommendations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health. In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, the Department of Health will be contacted and a specific number of days for exclusion from school will be given for students who are not vaccinated. The parents/guardians of the children will be contacted with the dates that these children must remain out of school. These absences will be counted as unexcused.

Physical Examinations

A current medical exam is required for all children upon original entry into school, either Kindergarten or 1st grade, and 6th grade. It is preferred that the medical exam be performed by the child's physician in order to maintain continuity of care. **These forms can be completed as soon as possible but need to be returned to the school by December 23 of the current school year.**

Dental Examinations

A current dental exam is required for all children upon original entry into school, either Kindergarten or 1st grade, 3rd grade, and 7th grade. It is preferred that the dental exam be performed by the child's dentist in order to maintain continuity of care. **Again, we ask that dental forms be returned by December 23 of the current school year.**

The physical and dental forms will be sent home at the conclusion of the previous school year in order to provide ample time for completion. They are also available on the school website.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to have all forms completed during their child's regularly scheduled visit.

HGMICS will accept reports of physical examinations and dental examinations conducted by a private physician and dentist completed within 4 months prior to the start of the school year that the physical examination is required. Parents/guardians may contact the medical office with any questions regarding the physical and dental examinations.

Medication Policy

It is the policy of the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School that both prescription and non-prescription medication be given before or after school hours whenever possible. If it is necessary that medication be given during school hours, the following procedure must be adhered to.

1. The medical office must be contacted either by phone or a visit to the school to discuss the child's medication.
2. A consent form for medication administration must be completed by the parent or guardian and child's physician then returned to the medical office.
3. The above consents must be received prior to the medical office being able to administer any medications.
4. Any medication **MUST** be delivered to the school by an adult. The medication must be in the original pharmacy container. A maximum of a 30-day supply of medication may be kept in the medical office at any one time for non-controlled substances. A maximum of a 14-day supply of medication may be kept in the medical office at any one time for controlled substances, for example certain ADHD medications. When a medication that is classified as a controlled substance is brought in, the medication must be counted by the medical office; principal; or his/her designee and the child's parent/guardian or parent designee prior to the parent/guardian or designee leaving the school building.
5. Non-prescription medications (over the counter medications) also require a parent or guardian consent form along with an authorization form from the child's physician. Non-prescription medications must be brought to school in the original container and labeled with the child's name and dose.
6. All medication must be stored in the medical office. Exceptions to this will be made for asthma inhalers and Epinephrine auto injectors (see below).
7. Any changes in type or dosage of medication must be reported, in written form, to the medical office immediately.
8. Medication requests must be renewed yearly. This includes both the parent/guardian form and the physician form.
9. All medications must be picked up by an adult at the end of the school year.
10. Non-compliance with this medical policy will result in non-administration of medication.

If the medical office is unavailable to administer the medication, the student, with approval of the parent, will self-administer the medication under the observation of an unlicensed assistive personnel. If the parent does not approve of self-administration by the student, the parent or the parent's designee will need to administer the medication at school.

Use of Asthma Inhalers and Epinephrine Auto-Injectors

In certain instances, a child who requires an asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector may be allowed to keep such medications with them for self-administration. In order for this to occur the following conditions must be met:

1. The parent/guardian must complete a consent form for medication administration. Included in this consent form will be a statement relieving HGMICS and all employees of any responsibility for the benefits or consequences of the prescribed medication. The consent form will also acknowledge that HGMICS will bear no responsibility in ensuring that the medication is taken.
2. A consent form must be completed by the physician. This consent will also include a statement that the child is qualified and able to self-administer the medication.
3. HGMICS reserves the right to request a statement from the physician for the medication to be continued if the need for the medication extends beyond the specified time period.
4. Request for asthma inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors use must be renewed on a yearly basis at the beginning of the school year. This includes both the physician and parent/guardian consent form. **Asthma inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors must be brought to school adhering to the policy stated above.**
5. Any child whose parent/guardian completes the written requirement for an asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector to be carried by the child and the medication to be competent for self-administering the medication. The child must also demonstrate responsible behavior in the use of the medication. In determining competency for self-administration, the child's age; cognitive function; maturity; and the ability to demonstrate responsible behavior will all be taken into consideration.
6. A child who is allowed the privilege of carrying an asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector is prohibited from sharing, giving, selling, or using the asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector in any manner other than the way it was prescribed for use during school hours; at any time while on the school property; at any school sponsored event; and/or while in route to or from school.
7. A child who is allowed the privilege of carrying an asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector must carry the medication on their person at all times. Keeping the medication in their backpacks or desk is prohibited and will result in the child losing the privilege of carrying the asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector.
8. For any child who has been granted the privilege of carrying an asthma inhaler or epinephrine auto-injector for self-administration the loss of this privilege will be enforced if the school policy pertaining to such self-administration is abused and/or ignored.
9. Per HGMICS Medication Policy, if student medication along with correct forms and action plan is not on file in the medical office, the student will NOT be allowed to attend any field trips or leave school property.

Injuries

Any student who sustains an injury either at school or outside of school that requires some type of immobilization (i.e., cast, cane, walker, splint) or the use of crutches must submit a note to the school nurse from the physician upon returning to the school. This note must state any restrictions the child is currently under (i.e., gym restrictions, recess restrictions) along with the specific date and length of time of restrictions. If no note is received, student will not be allowed to participate in recess or gym. Once the student is cleared by the physician another note must be submitted to the school nurse stating if any restrictions remain or that all restrictions have been lifted.

Health Screenings

The following health screenings are performed on a yearly basis for the specified grades:

1. Physical examinations: Upon original entry into school, Kindergarten or 1st grade, and

6th grade.

2. Dental examinations: Upon original entry into school, Kindergarten, or 1st grade; 3rd grade; and 7th grade.
3. Height, weight, and BMI (Basal metabolic index): All grades.
4. Vision screening: All grades.
5. Hearing screening: Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 7th grades.
6. Scoliosis screening: 6th and 7th grades. Sixth (6th) grade children will be screened during their physical exam by their private physician. Seventh (7th) grade screening will be done by the Certified School Nurse.

**The above health screenings are considered normal if the school nurse does not send home a referral for further follow-up.

Illnesses

Children who exhibit any of the following symptoms must be kept home from school:

1. Any child with a temperature of 100.4 or greater
2. Any child who has vomiting and/or diarrhea
3. Uncontrollable cough

To return to school a child must be fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of medications. A child must also be without episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. If a student is kept from school for three (3) or more days, they must have a doctor's note upon returning to school.

Rashes

If your child develops a rash at home that you think may be contagious, please do not send them to school until the rash is evaluated by a physician. If your child is sent home due to a rash which develops in school, a note from the physician clearing the child to return is required.

Along with the above-mentioned illnesses the Pennsylvania Department of Health requires a child to be excluded from school for the following conditions. The following conditions also require a physician note to return to school:

DISEASE

- Chicken pox
- Measles (Rubeola)
- Rubella (German measles)
- Mumps
- Hand Foot and Mouth
- Impetigo (Streptococcal/Staphylococcal) bacteria
- Scabies
- Pinkeye (Conjunctivitis)
- Ringworm of the scalp (Tinea capitis)
- Streptococcal sore throat (Strep Throat)

EXCLUSION PERIOD

- **Chicken pox**
When diagnosed with chicken pox you will be excluded until the rash is completely crusted over and no new lesions appear in a 24 hr. period.
 - In outbreaks, exclude unimmunized vaccination from the start of the outbreak (or the

day that it is first recognized) until day 21 after the onset of the rash in the last person diagnosed with Varicella in the affected school.

- Breakthrough varicella, which occurs in appropriately vaccinated persons, may appear just as a rash, without crusting. In these cases, exclude until 24 hours following the appearance of last lesions.

- **Measles (Rubeola)**

If diagnosed with measles II Student/employee will be excluded until 4 days after onset of rash and cleared by a healthcare provider.

- **Rubella (German measles)**

Student/employee will be excluded until 7 days after the onset of the rash.

- **Mumps**

Student/employee will be excluded until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling. All lesions must be dry. Medical note provided to the medical room in order to return.

- **Hand Foot and Mouth**

Student/employee will be excluded while symptoms of fever or excessive drooling is present, which is typical during the first week of illness.

- **Impetigo (Streptococcal/Staphylococcal) bacteria**

Student/employee will be excluded until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been initiated or as long as the lesion is draining AND cannot be covered with a watertight dressing.

- **Pinkeye (Conjunctivitis)**

Students and employees who have a fever, severe eye pain, purulent drainage or are too sick to participate in routine activities will be excluded from school until treated for 24 hours and symptoms improve.

- **Ringworm of the scalp (Tinea capitis)**

Ringworm of the scalp requires oral antifungal treatment. Students and employees must have appropriate treatment initiated to return.

- **Scabies**

Student/employee will be excluded until after appropriate scabicial treatment has been completed (usually overnight).

- **Strep Throat**

If diagnosed Student/employee will be excluded until afebrile and at least 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.

The above mentioned exclusion lengths are the minimum amount of time a student or employee is REQUIRED to be out of school. If a student or employee is still exhibiting signs and or symptoms of the disease, the student or employee should remain home until the illness is totally resolved or cleared by a health care provider and provide a note to the medical room.

Lice Policy

The medical office will inspect any child for lice at any time throughout the school year as the need arises. Parents/guardians are required to contact the medical office if they discover their child is infected with nits/lice.

Upon inspecting any child in the school, if nits or lice are found, the following procedures will be implemented:

- The child will be removed from the classroom and sent to the medical office to be checked then the child will be returned to the classroom.
- The parent/guardian will be contacted and notified that the child has lice and must be picked up at the end of the day. The child will not be allowed to go home via school

transportation (i.e., school bus, school van).

- The proper treatment to rid the child of nits/lice includes but is not limited to (a) using specially medicated shampoos; (b) laundering bedding and clothing; (c) inspecting all family members; (d) using fine tooth combs, tweezers, and/or fingernails to pull nits out of hair.
- The medical office is not responsible for removing nits and/or lice that are found.
- Parents/guardians will be encouraged to reexamine the child's head on days 7, 8, 9, and 10 following the original application of shampoo. A second application of shampoo will be recommended to kill any newly hatched lice if all nits were not killed upon the first application of shampoo.
- No call, letter, or email will be sent out to parents regarding lice in the school.

Department of Health regulations ([28 PA Code, Chapter 27 Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases, Section 27.71](#)). It is recommended that students with live lice be sent home at the end of the day by contacting the parents and notifying them that they must pick up the student and have the student treated before returning to school.

The Medical Office's primary function is that of a screening area and thus will not provide DAY LONG CARE to a child who is ill or has been injured. After initial care is given, the parent or guardian of the child will be contacted in order to make arrangements to pick up the child. If the child's primary parent or guardian cannot be reached the medical office will contact the child's emergency contact(s). In addition, an attempt will be made to contact the parent or guardian of a child who has been hit in the head or abdomen even if that student demonstrates no serious problems from the injury.

HGMICS may disclose medical information to personnel who have a need to know.

Copies of medical forms are available on the Nurse's page of the school website:

<http://howardgardnerschoo.com/academics/nurses-office/>

TECHNOLOGY AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

For the School's comprehensive Acceptable Use for Technology & Network Resources Policy, please find the policy posted on the School's website.

Smart Device Use

The use of Smart Devices during the school day is always prohibited for students. Smart Devices must be turned off and stored in backpacks; if found turned on or in use during the school day, the device will be confiscated, and parents/guardians will be required to retrieve the phone from the school. Students in the Middle School are required to check their devices during homeroom and retrieve their devices at the end of the day.

Parents/guardians that need to contact a student during the school day are advised to call the Main Office, which will call the student to the office phone or distribute parent/guardian messages.

Social Media / Networks

Use of social media sites is relegated to home and parental restrictions. Staff and students will not be allowed to visit such sites (Facebook, etc.) using school computers. Staff and parents/guardians are asked to be mindful of the privacy and the right of all community

members when engaging personally with such social media networks. Staff are not permitted to have social media relationships with students and parents/guardians.

Phone Calls & Electronic Communications

Please attempt to communicate with School employees during school hours. It is the school's goal to respond to communications within 24 hours.

Students may not receive phone calls, text messages, emails or other electronic communications during the school day. If you need to reach your child for any reason during the school day, please call the Main Office; the office staff will be happy to help you speak to your child, or can deliver a message for you.

As is stated in the Cell Phone use Policy, students are not allowed to use cell phones during the school day.