

Howard Gardner Community School Family Handbook

Version 8
2018-2019



Where learning is fun, talents are nurtured,
and amazing things are expected!

Mission

Howard Gardner Community School will provide students with a unique, and supportive learning environment based on the tenets of multiple intelligence theory, facilitate the development of 21st century skills, and create an atmosphere where ALL students reach their highest potential.

Vision

- We will create and foster a community of lifelong learners who are primed for success in the 21st century.
- We pledge to thoughtfully educate students of all academic and developmental levels using Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences as our framework.
- We continually strive to improve our instruction through professional development and cutting-edge, research based practices.
- Our rigorous and progressive curriculum will foster student engagement and our teachers will facilitate and promote the qualities of passion, imagination, adaptability, perseverance, courage, self-awareness, and curiosity.
- We will utilize the data obtained from formative and summative assessments to help guide our instruction.
- We believe children are most successful when staff, students, and families work together.
- We will ensure that our students will flourish in a highly supportive environment that values the "whole child" educational experience – from academic rigor to creative expression and leadership development.

About our Charter

Charter schools are independent public schools that offer rigorous curricular programs and unique educational approaches. In exchange for operational freedom and flexibility, charter schools are subject to higher levels of accountability than traditional public schools. Students at HGCS will participate in all statewide assessments such as the ELPAC (English Language Proficiency Assessments for California), and the California Assessments of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP).

The "charter" establishing each school is a contract detailing the school's mission, program, goals, students served, methods of assessment, and ways to measure success. Charter schools are accountable to their authorizer (CVESD), and to the students and families they serve. They must both produce positive academic results and adhere to the charter contract. Our school's charter can be viewed on our website at www.hgcschool.org or by requesting a copy from the school office.

Schedules	TK/Kindergarten	1 st -8 th grades
Regular Weekly Schedule (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday)	8:30 am - 3:00 pm	8:30 am – 3:30 pm
Wednesdays – Minimum Day	11:20 am – 3:00 pm	11:20 am – 3:30 pm
Early Release Schedule (See calendar on website for specific dates)	8:30 am – 12:00 pm	8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Attendance

Research shows that student attendance is directly related to overall student achievement at school. HGCS students are expected to attend school every day and to be on time. Parents/guardians are responsible for reinforcing the importance of, and ensuring that their children are attending school on regular basis. It is also important to note that like every other public school, the funding of HGCS rests on the average daily attendance (ADA) of each child. The State pays close attention to our attendance rate and holds us accountable in making sure that each child attends school regularly and on time.

- If a child is going to be absent from school, parents are required to notify the front office staff of the reason for the absence at (619) 934-0300.
 - Absences are only excused for illness, doctor’s appointments or family emergencies (bereavement). Students who are absent must make up school work.
 - Please schedule doctor’s appointments during school breaks or after school if it is possible.
 - Your child will not be given an excused absence for vacation time. Therefore, we suggest that family vacations should only be scheduled during school breaks and holidays.
 - ***If, however, there are extenuating circumstances and your child must have a leave of absence during the school year, please let the school know two weeks in advance and we will provide school work that your child must complete while he/she is out, so that they won’t fall behind.***
 - If the attendance office is not notified, the absence will be considered “unexcused.”
 - Three (3) “unexcused” absences in the course of the school year is

considered a “truancy.” Students who are truant will be required to meet with the Student Attendance Review Team (SART) and sign an attendance contract.

- A child who is ABSENT or TARDY for any reason will not be eligible for a Perfect Attendance Recognition.
- Tardies:
 - Children are expected to be in their seats prior to 8:30 am at the beginning of each school day.
 - Children who arrive at school after the 8:30am start time (11:20 am on Wednesdays) will be required to report to the office to pick up a late pass. Children will not be admitted to the classroom without a late pass.
 - Three or more tardies of more than 30-minutes is a “truancy.”
- Children may be assigned to an Intervention Group that meets after school to address language or academic needs. If a child is assigned to an Intervention Group for additional assistance, their attendance is **mandatory** and subject to this Attendance Policy.

Arrivals

Since school starts promptly at 8:30 am on Monday, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, . students may be on campus **no earlier than 8:00 am**. On Wednesday Minimum Days, school starts promptly at 11:20 am, therefore, students may be on campus **no earlier than 11:00 am**.

There will be no staff on supervision duty before or after these times. Students may not ‘hang out’ on the playground or in the parking lot outside of these hours. Also, though children may use wheeled vehicles (bikes, scooters, skates, skateboards) in order to get to campus, wheeled vehicles are to be walked and/or carried once on campus grounds. Please be on time to drop off and pick up your child.

Drivers will enter the E Street’s west parking gate and proceed to the drop off point. Students will exit the vehicle, safely and quickly and go to their dedicated area in the parking lot. Once there, they may drop off their backpack in their designated lines and proceed to the cafeteria, where **breakfast is served from 8:00-8:20 a.m.** Breakfast at school is voluntary for all students. Teachers will arrive to pick up their classes at **8:25 a.m.** in the dedicated areas and parents are expected to leave campus once their child’s teacher has picked them up. Parents are not allowed to follow the teacher to the classroom unless they have already arranged to do so in advance.

Departures

Elders siblings of students at HGCS should pick up their younger sibling(s) and wait at the eldest siblings pickup spot. All students will wait with a teacher outside in a designated area for pickup by parents/guardians. All guardians/parents must be on the authorized pickup list.

- **For the safety of your child, if you need to have someone else them up on particular day or an ongoing basis, please call the school to receive clearance.**

- **Students not attending the intervention sessions and/or other after school activities (i.e. sports) must be picked up no later than 3:45pm. Otherwise, the school will charge a late pickup fee of \$5 (0-30 min), \$10 (31-60 min), etc.**
- **Please note that California law requires all children under the age of 8 years old to be in booster seats.**

Flow of Traffic

Both volunteers and teachers assist in the flow of traffic at busy times. Please be polite and remember these are volunteers and are here to help your children stay safe while getting everyone to and from school on time. Also, please remember it is against the law to be driving and texting or talking on the phone.

Morning Drop-Offs and Afternoon Pick-Ups: All vehicles must enter through E Street's west gate then proceed to the the Jefferson Avenue cul-de-sac where they **must make a right turn and loop around** prior to exiting. Please observe the posted traffic signs as this is a high-traffic area. Vehicles will not be permitted to turn around in the parking lot as this will cause a backup in the line of cars.

Parking: After Drop-Off, and during school hours, parking is NOT permitted on the west side of the parking lot. This area is designated for Staff only. Visitors can park on Jefferson Avenue or at La Quinta Restaurant during school hours. The east side of the parking lot will be closed for recess and physical education classes.

Walking: Please inform your child that E Street is a very busy street and many drivers do not pay attention. Remind them to stay on designated sidewalks and only cross at the pedestrian crosswalks at our neighboring intersections.

Biking: Students who ride bicycles to school must use extreme caution around the heavy traffic in the area. We recommend students ride bikes on the sidewalk (yielding to pedestrians) for added safety. Bikes should be locked to the permanent fences in the parking lot. Howard Gardner Community School does not assume any responsibility for bikes parked at school.

Visitor and Release of Students Policy

HGCS is a closed campus. Children, including middle school age children, are not allowed to leave campus for lunch or any other time during school hours.

HGCS does not allow uninvited solicitations of any kind on campus.

All visitors, including parents must go through the office before entering any part of the campus and sign in. Upon leaving, visitors are required to sign out. Children will only be released during instructional hours to parents, legal guardians and people listed on the child's Emergency Card.

Observations of a classroom or child must be pre-arranged with the Executive Director. Observations will be accompanied and are limited to a maximum of 45 minutes. While observing, the observer is not allowed to interact with the child or other children in the classroom. It is expected that the observation be as non-disruptive as possible. Only one observation per month per child is allowed. Other restrictions on observations of children may be implemented at any time without notice as the Director sees fit.

Health Concerns

Sometimes it is difficult to know whether a child is too sick to attend classes. HGCS employees are not health professionals, so please consult your doctor or call 911 if there is a medical emergency. Please keep your child at home or consult a medical professional if any of the following following symptoms are present:

- Fever, measured orally, above 100 degrees
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Infestation of scabies or lice
- Undiagnosed skin rash
- Eye infection or “pink eye”
- Flu-like symptoms including body aches, fever, headache

Dress Code Policy

In order to meet HGCS dress code requirements, students must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Solid-colored slacks, shorts, jumpers, skirts, or jeans (no holes or ripped).
**Note: shorts, jumpers, and skirts must be mid-thigh in length*
2. Solid, burgundy, white, gray, or black collared shirts with sleeves.
3. Only official school logo t-shirts may be worn.
4. Comfortable shoes (no boots, heels, wheeled shoes, open-toe sandals or flip-flops)
5. Hats should only be worn outdoors and should only be worn forward and straight.
6. Solid, burgundy, white, gray, or black leggings allowed ONLY if worn under a skirt, dress or long shirt/tunic that is mid-thigh in length.
7. Chains, wallet chains, and spiked jewelry not permitted.

If a student has earned a free dress pass, students must wear clothing appropriate for school and adhere to the following requirements:

1. Free dress passes can only be used on Fridays.
2. No crop/backless/see-through/halter tops are allowed.

3. Exposed midriffs or tops with low necklines are prohibited.
4. No strapless and/or thin strapped tank tops allowed.
5. Comfortable shoes (no boots, no heels, wheeled shoes, open-toe sandals or flip-flops)
6. No sagging pants
7. No pajamas.
8. Clothing with inappropriate images are prohibited (i.e. promote drugs/alcohol, weapons, vulgar, suggestive or pornographic in nature)
9. Chains, wallet chains, and spiked jewelry are not permitted.
10. Leggings allowed ONLY if worn under a skirt, dress, or long shirt/tunic that is mid-thigh in length.

Students will be asked to contact parents/guardians if they do not meet the dress code requirements so proper clothing can be brought from home.

Official HGCS uniforms can be purchased by placing an order online at www.frenchtoast.com and entering our school code: **QS5USMR**. Official HGCS logo t-shirts can be purchased at the front office. Many items can also be found at Sears, K-Mart, Target and Walmart.

Meals

Please provide your child with a reusable/refillable water bottle that they can use every day. No food or drink should be transported in a glass container, and no other beverages should be provided (Gatorade, sugared drinks, etc.) Please inform the office if your child has any food allergies or special needs.

Classroom Birthdays and Special Occasions

There are many special occasions where we are inclined to bring a treat into the classroom for the kids. However, we ask that you bring in only healthy treats. This is a golden opportunity for parents and teachers to demonstrate healthy choices. PLEASE DO NOT SEND foods with minimal nutritional value such as frosted cupcakes, candy, most cookies, jellies, candy-coated popcorn, gummy candy, chewing gum and juice.

The following are ideas for classroom celebrations that are fun for the kids, modest in size, and reasonably healthy:

- Consider a non-food treat – pencils, erasers, a new class book, mini notepads, rulers all make great treats. Ask your child; he or she may have another suggestion of something inexpensive that he could give to his classmates to celebrate a special day.
- Utilize Fresh Fruit – Sweet, tasty, healthy and kids love it. Mix fruit into yogurt. Make fruit kabobs. Spoon berries over a tart. Make fruit smoothies. You get the idea!
- Modest Serving Sizes – Bigger is not better! Keep the portions small. Try to create modest serving sizes that are appropriate for a mid-morning or afternoon snack.

Personal Belongings

Please help us keep our school a safe and productive place by reminding your child to leave the following types of personal property at home:

- Toys, radios, iPods, iPads, video game players, games, pets and other items which may distract students from the learning process (such items may be brought to classrooms for "show-&-tell" purposes with the teacher's permission only);
- Gum, candy & any food other than items packed as part of a student's lunch or snack. Careless disposal of gum on furniture and floors presents sanitation and cleaning problems. Therefore, gum chewing is **NOT** permitted.
- Other prohibited items by law, are: possession or use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, firecrackers or weapons of any kind. For students caught with or using an unlawful substance or in possession of a weapon, district policy requires that severe consequences be imposed which may include automatic suspension and notification of police.

Lost and Found

We have a lost and found bin in the main office. Lunch containers, jackets, backpacks and uniforms should be clearly labeled for easy identification. All unclaimed items will be donated to charity at the end of each semester.

Cell Phone Policy

Display and use of cell phones and other electronic devices is prohibited during school hours. Students may bring cell phones in their backpacks for use AFTER school only in the front office or with a staff member present. If you need to contact your child during school hours, please call the front office.

*****Please note any of the items on the previous list and/or cell phones are subject to search and may be confiscated by a staff member at any time (and returned to parent/guardian) as they are distracting to other students.*****

Internet Policy

The following internet policy is to be signed by all students and their parents upon admission to HGCS. It is the policy of Howard Gardner Community School that everyone in our school community use the Internet in a responsible manner and **only for educational purposes and to conduct the business of the school**. Accordingly, the school has established a policy for the use of the Internet along with rules governing the behavior of those who access the Internet. Those who do not comply with the standards of behavior outlined in this policy will lose their privilege of using the Internet at the school and/or be subject to other disciplinary action.

Acceptable Use

HGCS will allow a student to access the Internet for educational purposes only, provided their parent or legal guardian and the student sign this form.

All members of the HGCS community are expected to follow the measures cited in this policy to ensure the safety and security of the Internet and the school's online community.

Responsible use of the Internet includes abiding by all laws, including copyright laws. It is unethical and unlawful to use or alter any data or communications posted on the Internet without the owner's or author's permission. In addition, it is unethical and unlawful to alter, disclose, use, or disseminate anyone's personal information without their permission. Similarly, it is unethical and unlawful to commit fraud (like sending messages under an assumed identity) or harassment on the Internet.

Certain materials contained on the Internet are inappropriate to minors such as our students, and may be inappropriate for any user at this school. HGCS has taken measures on the shared student account to restrict access to materials harmful to minors, including:

- Implementing Internet filtering;
- Requiring adult supervision during student use of the Internet, and
- Requiring parent/guardian and student signatures on this **Internet Acceptable Use Policy Form**. This form, or an updated version of it, must be signed each school year.

All users shall:

- adhere to the same standard of conduct expected and required in a classroom or other professional environment. This includes using only appropriate language when online and being careful to avoid any website which may contain inappropriate contents and/or language, such as obscenity or pornography;
- follow appropriate procedures for care of computer equipment, such as proper opening and closing of programs, handling CD-ROM drives and electrical plugs;
- report violations of these rules to a member of the school's staff
- understand that all contents of files located on HGCS equipment are considered the property of HGCS and may be searched by the school's administration at any time and for any reason without prior notice, and
- follow proper formats for citations of material from Internet sources.

In addition, Students shall:

- follow rules for using resources, time limits and printing instructions provided to them by their teachers;
- log off the system as soon as they are finished to provide others with the opportunity to access the system;

All users shall **NOT**:

- use the network for purposes other than what is intended, such as playing games, listening to music, watching videos, etc.
- transmit (for example via email or on social networking sites) any information, opinion, or photograph which might be construed as representing the school, staff, other students, or volunteers in any way without specific written authorization from the school's

- administration,
- send chain letters, or
- tamper with equipment;

In addition, Students shall **NOT**:

- lend their login and password to anyone who is not a member of our school community;
- interfere with the ability of other users to make effective use of the school's computer resources;
- intentionally damage the system;
- damage information belonging to someone else;
- access anyone else's files or programs;
- install any applications (including computer programs) onto a HGCS owned computer without permission and supervision from a member of the school's faculty or staff, and
- communicate with other persons via computer without the express permission and supervision by a staff member.

Classroom Chromebooks

Students at HGCS have access to classroom chromebooks on a regular basis. These computers are only for academic purposes and will be monitored regularly by the teachers and administrators. Students have an assigned HGCS email address that they will use to access their chromebooks. Both on-campus and off-campus use of this email address will be monitored by the teachers and administrators. Misuse of the Chromebooks and/or email address will result in a loss of Chromebook privileges.

Misuse of Privileges and Consequences

Users are held responsible for their actions and activity. Unacceptable use of the network will result in the suspension of all user privileges and may also result in further discipline. Reinstatement of privileges will be made at the discretion of the Administration.

Student Leadership

(Elections in early September.) Students who choose to take on a leadership role at school do so because they recognize that there is more to being successful in school than simply doing homework. Having a positive atmosphere during the school day where students feel wanted and accepted is critical to their success. To that end, the officers and appointed representatives of the ASB focus on providing engaging activities that ensure a well-rounded elementary school experience. Students in ASB plan, organize, and participate in such activities as informal dances, Spirit Week, grade-level competitions, community awareness projects, cultural events, and Staff Recognition throughout the year.

Student Leadership Positions:

To be elected and serve in a leadership position at HGCS, students must meet the following criteria:

- Maintain high academic performance (A's and B's or 4's and 3's).
- Strong attendance record (no more than 1 unexcused absence per month).
- Good behavioral record (as determined by teachers and staff).

Advisor(s): Tracy Kraft

Grievances

It is important that families understand that HGCS is an independent school and is not subject to most CVESD rules and regulations regarding grievances. We appreciate, respect and welcome the voice of parents/guardians and their views pertaining to the progress their children are making towards academic excellence at HGCS. Parents and guardians who wish to report a grievance must do so in the following order:

1. Contact the student's teacher: Please contact your child's teacher to discuss grievances first. Many grievances result from a misunderstanding between parents and teachers or students. If a discussion with your child's teacher is not satisfactory or appropriate, then:
2. Contact the school's director: Please contact the school director to report your concerns and have a discussion regarding possible solutions. If a discussion with the school's principal is not satisfactory or appropriate, then:
3. Appeal to the school's board of trustees: If a parent or guardian is not satisfied with the outcome or decision pertaining to the incident, the parent may appeal to the school's board of trustees. The board meets publicly on a regular basis. Parents should contact the board to schedule items on the meeting agenda.

Behavior Expectations

The Behavior expectation of students at HGCS is in line with our mission and vision of a school that has high expectations of all of its students and is, at the same time, nurturing and caring. Each student will be able to grow as an individual and develop as a respectful pillar of society, both within school and beyond. That respect is reciprocal, as teachers model good choices and develop respectful relationships with the students as well.

If the student is physically damaging the learning environment, harming another student or interrupting the right to learn, they will be sent to the principal's office. The student will be getting a phone call home and their reflective consequence will be with the principal. Parental support is encouraged.

Your signing of the parent contract is an agreement that you will do whatever it takes to ensure that your child follows these rules and you will also agree to the consequences your child may face for not following the school rules.

Student Behavior Expectations:

In order to maintain a safe, positive, and inclusive learning environment, HGCS students are expected to follow the “3 B’s”:

- 1. BE Respectful**
- 2. BE Responsible**
- 3. BE Safe**

Behavior Consequences

Please be aware of the following consequences your child may face if the classroom or playground policies mentioned above are not followed. The complete formal policy and administrative procedures can be accessed on the school’s website in the “charter petition” or can be requested at the school office. In addition, students who are having trouble in their individual classroom with behavior may also be subject to the following consequences:

- Meeting between Director, Student and Family to discuss problems and possible solutions
- Behavior contract to encourage student to improve behavior.
- Mandatory attendance in Social Skills group.
- In school suspension or at home suspension
- Suspension or expulsion: Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school-related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.

Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students

A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at HGCS or at any other school or a Charter School sponsored event at anytime including but not limited to: a) while on school grounds; b) while going to or coming from school; c) during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

Offenses

A student may be suspended or expelled for any of the following acts when it is determined the student:

- Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person or willfully used force of violence upon the person of another, except self-defense.
- Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the students had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Director/Administrator or designee’s concurrence.

- Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any HGCS Petition controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
- Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
- Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
- Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
- Possessed or used tobacco or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel.
- Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia.
- Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
- Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
- Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault or committed a sexual battery.
- Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
- Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- Engaged in or attempted to engage in hazing of another.
- Aiding or abetting the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person.
- Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property.
- Committed sexual harassment.
- Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence.
- Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting classwork, creating substantial disorder and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment.

Alternatives to suspension or expulsion will first be attempted with students who are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from assigned school activities.

Suspension Procedure

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

1. Conference (if possible) between the director, parents, student, and teacher.
2. Notice to parents/guardian will be given (with reasonable effort) by phone or mail.
3. Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion, shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per suspension.

Expulsion Procedures

Only the Executive Director may recommend expulsion of a student or refer a student for an expulsion hearing. Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. Unless postponed for good cause, the hearing shall be held within thirty (30) school days after the Director or designee determines that the student has committed an expellable offense. There are special procedures for expulsion hearings involving sexual assault or battery offenses. Please refer to the HGCS charter petition for a complete list of the procedures.

In the event an administrative panel hears the case, it will make a recommendation to the HGCS Board of Trustees for a final decision whether to expel.

Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student's parent/guardian. Upon mailing the notice, it shall be deemed served upon the student.

The student shall have no right of appeal from expulsion from the Charter School as the Howard Gardner Charter Community School Board of Trustees' decision to expel shall be final. Please see the HGCS charter petition for details on rehabilitation and readmission of expelled students.

Enrollment Procedures

All students will be admitted to HGCS, space permitting, and not determined according to the place of residence of the pupil or of his or her parent or guardian. HGCS will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations; and will not charge tuition nor discriminate against any student based on ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability or any other reason disallowed by law.

The application process for the Howard Gardner Community Charter School is comprised of the following:

- Completed Student Enrollment Form
- Copy of Child's Birth Certificate
- Copy of Immunization Records, all up to date
- Copy of Proof of Residency - Dated within 60 days of the application
- Parent/student signatures on the Home and School Commitment Contract
- Completed Home Language Survey & Lunch Application
- Completed Emergency Contact & Medical Information Form
- For Students Entering Kindergarten and First Grade:
Completed Physical and Dental Evaluation Forms
- For Students with IEPs or 504 Plans: Copy of Most Recent Plan

Enrollment applications are available in our school office. Applications cannot be accepted or approved, and students cannot begin class, until all of the supporting documentation has been received and reviewed by our Attendance Clerk and Director.

Lottery Procedure

Once HGCS reaches a number of applications exceeding the number of spaces available within the school, the school will conduct a random public lottery. Applications for the following school year will be accepted at the beginning of January.

New students and parents must sign an agreement stating that, if drawn, they are choosing to come to the school of their own free will.

Preferences will be extended to potential students in the following order:

- Children of the Charter School employees;
- Children of the founding members of the Charter School (no more than 10% of the student body)-Founders are defined to be the group of people responsible for drafting of documents and for efforts, which resulted in the petition being approved and opening the school;
- Siblings of students who are currently enrolled or have their names pulled during the lottery.

Those individuals whose names are drawn after all spaces have been filled will be placed on the waiting list in the order drawn, except if the preferences described above require otherwise. Potential students on the waiting list shall provide contact information to be used in the event space becomes available.

In addition, HGCS shall attempt on at least two separate occasions to contact the parents/guardians of promoted students by telephone. Those families not responding within the 7-day period will forfeit their right to enroll their student in the school for that school year.

Parent Involvement

Volunteer Policy

HGCS welcomes volunteers and parent involvement in our school. Please speak with your child's teacher to coordinate your volunteer activities. You can also inquire at the front office. As part of our parent contract, parents are encouraged to volunteer **thirty (30) hours per school year per family**. These hours may be fulfilled in many ways, working at school, including doing tasks at home or on the weekends. It is our intention to make volunteering for the school a positive experience that takes into consideration the busy lives we all lead. Please check with the front office for volunteer opportunities.

Volunteers who intend who offer their help at school on a regular basis during school hours must submit TB testing and results prior to the first day of volunteer work.

Volunteers who will be supervising children without a staff member present will be required to be fingerprinted and background checked. Forms for the Live Scan can be picked up in the office. All volunteers must sign in at the front desk upon arrival and must sign out as they leave.

It is expected that all volunteers will work as assigned. Volunteers may request an assignment for certain tasks, but these requests may not necessarily be honored. It is not always in the best interest of a child to have a parent or other family member in their own child's classroom. If a volunteer's presence is disruptive in any way to the classroom or work environment of the school, the volunteer may be reassigned to work from home.

School Site Council (SSC)

The school site council is a group of teachers, parents and classified employees that work with the principal to develop, review and evaluate school improvement programs and school budgets.

English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)

Each California public school (grades K-12) with twenty-one (21) or more English Learners is required to form an English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC). The ELAC shall be responsible for advising the principal and staff on programs and services for English learners and the School Site Council on the development of the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). In addition, the ELAC shall assist the school in the development of the school's needs assessment and ways to make parents aware of the importance of regular school attendance.

Statewide Testing Notification

California students take several mandated statewide tests. These tests provide parents/guardians, teachers, and educators with information about how well students are learning and becoming college and career ready. The test results may be used for local, state, and federal accountability purposes.

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress

· Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Assessments

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) computer adaptive assessments are aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics tests are administered in grades three through eight and grade eleven to measure whether students are on track to college and career readiness. In grade eleven, results from the ELA and math assessments can be used as an indicator of college readiness.

· California Science Tests (CAST)

The new, computer-based CAST measures student acquisition of the California Next Generation Science Standards. It is administered in grades five and eight, and once in high school. The new computer-based CAST replaces the California Standards Tests (CST) for Science.

· California Alternate Assessments (CAA)

The computer-based CAA for ELA and CAA for mathematics is administered to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grades three through eight and grade eleven. Test items are aligned with the CCSS and are based on the Core Content Connectors. The instructionally embedded CAA for Science is administered in grades five and eight, and once in high school.

· Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) for Reading/Language Arts

California offers the optional STS for Reading/Language Arts, which are multiple-choice tests that allow Spanish-speaking English learners to demonstrate their knowledge of the California content standards. The California Spanish Assessment (CSA) will replace the optional STS. The CSA will be a computer-based assessment that is aligned with the California CCSS en Español.

Pursuant to California Education Code Section 60615, parents/guardians may annually submit to the school a written request to excuse their child from any or all of the CAASPP assessments.

English Language Proficiency Assessments for California

California will transition from the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) to the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) in 2017–18. The ELPAC is aligned with the 2012 California English Language Development Standards. It consists of two separate English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessments: one for the initial identification of students as English learners and the other for the annual summative assessment to identify students' English language proficiency level and to measure their progress in learning English.

Physical Fitness Test

The physical fitness test (PFT) for students in California schools is the FitnessGram®. The main goal of the test is to help students in starting lifelong habits of regular physical activity. Students in grades five, seven, and nine take the fitness test.

Howard Gardner Community School



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Family Handbook Acknowledgement

I have read, understand, and will support my child in following the policies outlined in this handbook.

Student Name _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____

Parent Name _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

**Please sign and return to your child's teacher