

**Garden School**  
**Community Handbook**  
**Lower Division**  
**2021-2022**



Garden School 33-16 79<sup>th</sup> St, Jackson Heights, NY. 11372 718-335-6363

[www.gardenschool.org](http://www.gardenschool.org)

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## **MISSION**

Garden School, in the independent tradition, affirms the primacy of learning. We empower every student in our educationally diverse community to responsibly meet the challenges of everyday life by promoting academic achievement, personal development and social involvement. We further believe that by recognizing each student's individual identity, Garden School fosters the self-worth necessary to succeed.

### **We Believe That:**

- the greater the institutional effort, the greater the chance for student success
- the desire to succeed is inherent in every student
- all children can learn; some learn in different ways
- all members of the school community share in the responsibilities of learning
- providing developmentally appropriate challenges elicits creative and critical thinking
- high academic expectations encourage maximum personal achievement, promoting self-esteem and self-confidence
- the more actively a student participates in learning, the richer the experience
- responsibility and freedom are essential to the development of internal structure and self-discipline
- it is a primary objective of the school to understand, address and respond to the identity and the needs of all members of our community
- technology plays a supportive role in the educational process
- providing students with a comprehensive educational experience increases social, personal and academic development.

## **COMMUNITY NORMS**

### **Purpose**

In effort to facilitate our mission in a way that impacts all interactions and engagement across our community, Garden School adopted guiding principles to serve as a tool for interaction as well as the foundation of our character education program. As an organization, we aspire to push our organization towards these ideals and also forgive ourselves when we fall short. These principles are tools to support our ability to reflect, and they serve as an informal contract for holding one another accountable to the culture in which we want to operate.

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**Inclusion.** We are an inclusive community that recognizes the uniqueness of individuals. We celebrate one another and provide a safe space for exploration and discovery, and create the enabling conditions for every community member to be their authentic self. The range of learning styles, teaching methods and interests are reflective of the inclusive attitude of our school. Small by design, we are able to foster the individual growth of everyone.

**Empathy & Compassion.** We cultivate an environment filled with compassion and empathy. We accomplish this by working to understand where others are coming from and giving benefit of the doubt. In order to truly understand one another, we assume the best in others and look beneath the surface to ask questions, especially when it is most difficult to see things from another individual's perspective.

**Integrity.** Achieving our mission requires consistent competence and a high standard of integrity as it relates to all endeavors and in all our interactions with one another. We recognize the continuing need to develop professionally as individuals and as an organization to best serve our community. We aim to work on everyone's behalf with the best of intentions, always seeking the "high road." We should be honest with ourselves and others at all times.

**Accessibility & Transparency.** Trust and confidence are built through transparency. We are not a school with unnecessary obstacles to accessing individuals or information. While we aspire to be a community of open doors, we also recognize there are instances which demand confidentiality and boundaries with respect to the time and conversations of others.

**Reflection.** Garden is a reflective and thoughtful community that recognizes we are imperfect. It is through reflective practice, self-evaluation, and a genuine interest in ongoing improvement that we will grow as a community. In order to do this, it is necessary to partner with others to engage in mindful decision making.

**Flexibility & Responsiveness.** Embracing our independence, we are able to make informed choices and be flexible. Based upon the most relevant information, we can pivot when called for while staying true to our mission, traditions, and identity. By surveying the landscape ahead, we strive to anticipate, prepare, and be responsive to a multitude of obstacles and opportunities.

**Appreciation & Gratitude.** We appreciate and value each individual and the role they play by way of their talent, time, and commitment to our community and mission. We

regularly seek the opportunity to recognize and honor the support given to each other as we move towards our centennial and beyond.

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## **HANDBOOK OVERVIEW**

This Handbook was developed to answer commonly asked questions students and families may have during the year. Because the Handbook contains information about student rights and responsibilities, families and students are responsible for knowing its contents. Please take the time to become familiar with the following information. This Handbook can be a valuable reference and a means to avoid confusion and when questions arise. The School reserves the right to interpret the content of this Handbook, including the rules governing the academic and non-academic conduct of students. This Handbook is not a contract and The School reserves the right to modify and/or amend the content during the year. Naturally, changes will be shared with families. Students who reach 18 years of age while enrolled in the School are bound by all student and family obligations in this Handbook. If you have any questions about the Handbook or policies, please contact William Vogel, Lower Division Head.

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## **DIVISION HEAD'S WELCOME**

Dear Garden Families & Students,

Welcome to the new school year! In preparation for it, and as a resource throughout the year, this Handbook has been prepared. While polished, it is a "living document" which we hope to continue to reflect upon. It helps inform our thinking and planning, and guides our actions and interactions.

Bear in mind that the Lower Division includes students in a wide age-range, from 2 through 11 or 12. As such, parts of this document may not seem immediately applicable to your child, and in some instances mention of the Upper Division is made to present a more comprehensive view.

If you have any questions about this Handbook, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email. I welcome your feedback.

Respectfully,

William Vogel, Lower Division Head

## 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

Faculty First Day:	Wednesday September 1 <sup>st</sup>
Faculty Workshop:	Thursday September 2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Labor Day Weekend:</b>	<b>Friday - Monday September 3 –6 (school closed)</b>
Rosh Hashanah:	Tuesday, September 7 <sup>th</sup> ( <i>School open to faculty</i> )
Opening Day:	Wednesday, September 8
<b>Yom Kippur:</b>	<b>Thursday, September 16 (school closed)</b>
Sukkot:	September 21-27 (school open)
<b>Fall Holiday:</b>	<b>Monday, October 11 (school closed)</b>
<b>Faculty Workshop:</b>	<b>Friday, October 15 (school closed)</b>
Diwali:	Monday – Friday November 4 – 8 (school open)
Veteran’s Day	Tuesday, November 11 <sup>th</sup> (school open)
<b>Thanksgiving Recess:</b>	<b>Thursday &amp; Friday, November 25 &amp; 26 (school closed)</b>
Hanukkah Begins:	Monday,, November 29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Winter Break:</b>	<b>Friday, December 17 (noon dismissal)</b>
Christmas Day:	Saturday December, 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Faculty Workshop:</b>	<b>Monday, January 3 (school closed)</b>
<b>Martin Luther King, Jr.:</b>	<b>Monday, January 17 (school closed)</b>
Upper Division Exams:	Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday, January 19, 20, 21
Lunar New Year:	Tuesday, February 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>February Break:</b>	<b>Monday – Fri Feb. 21-25 (school closed)</b>
<b>Faculty Workshop:</b>	<b>Friday, March 11 (school closed)</b>
Purim:	Thursday, March 17 <sup>th</sup>
Holi:	Friday, March 18 <sup>th</sup>
Ramadan Begins:	Sunday, April 3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Spring Break:</b>	<b>Monday – Fri, April 11-18 (school closed)</b>
Passover Begins:	Saturday, April 16 <sup>th</sup>
Easter:	Sunday, April 17 <sup>th</sup>
Greek Orthodox Easter:	Sunday, April 24 <sup>th</sup>
Eid al-Fitr:	Tuesday, May 3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>Memorial Day:</b>	<b>Monday, May 30 (school closed)</b>
Upper Division Exams:	Tuesday, June 7 – Friday, June 10
<b>Closing Day:</b>	<b>Friday, June 10 (noon dismissal)</b>
Summer Camp Begins:	Monday, June 13 <sup>th</sup>
High School Graduation:	Tuesday, June 14 <sup>th</sup>
Last Faculty Day:	Friday, June 17 <sup>th</sup>
Juneteenth:	Sunday, June 19 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Independence Day:</b>	<b>Monday, July 4<sup>th</sup> (school closed)</b>
Eid:	Sunday, July 10 <sup>th</sup>

## **Diversity Statement**

Garden School is committed to maintaining an environment in which all people are respected and valued. To that end, discrimination in any form, such as that based on race, color, national origin, creed, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, or other legally-protected status is not tolerated. The School actively strives to recognize, respect, and celebrate the differences and commonalities that shape the individual and collective identities of its members.

As a member of the National Association of Independent Schools, Garden School admits qualified students regardless of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School. The School does not discriminate on the basis of any legally protected classification in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

## **Accreditation**

Garden School is accredited by the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS). It is a member of numerous national and regional associations including the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and the New York City Guild of Independent Schools.

## **History**

In 1923 a group of neighborhood parents who cared to improve the community and desired a superior educational environment for their children, banded together to organize the Garden Country Day School. The school took its name from the newly conceived garden apartment complexes built by Edward MacDougall, founder of the Queensboro Corporation, in the then-rural community of Jackson Heights. The first classes, grades K–3, met in the Laburnum Court Apartments under the guidance of Mrs. Dorothy Gleen, Mrs. Charles Townshend, and Mrs. Josephine Wech. Two years later, in 1925, grades 4–6 were added and Mr. John Bosworth Laing became the Director. In 1927 Mr. Otis Flower assumed leadership as Head of School. It was during the administration of Otis Flower, and with the help of the Queensboro Corporation, that Garden Country Day School moved to its current location. Here Garden continued to grow, adding grades and then, in the spring of 1929, graduating its first high school class of three students! Within a few years Garden Country Day School became an independent school, with a board of trustees, under the New York State guidelines for not-for-profit schools. At Garden School, we look back with pride in our history;

we look ahead with confidence as we prepare our students for a future of ever-changing learning, technology and expectations.

### **The Board of Trustees**

Garden School is governed by the Board of Trustees, whose job it is to work on three main areas: the financial stability of the school; hiring and supporting the Head of School; and to engage in long range strategic planning. The Board does so by setting basic policies, hiring and supporting the Head of School, undertaking strategic planning, evaluating the performance of the School, and leading in financial support of the School. The Board entrusts the daily operations of the School to the Head of School, who supervises all programs and personnel and is the final arbiter of any disputes that may arise, including those involving parent issues or student disciplinary actions. Trustees may come from the alumni and current parent body as well as from the outside community. During the 19-20 School Year, the Board shepherded the school through a leadership transition and brought our new Head Chris Herman to Garden. During the 20-21 School Year, in collaboration with Chris Herman, and many community members, the Board adopted the [Road to 100 Strategic Plan](#) which governs our operations for the next 3 - 5 years as it pertains to academic programming, campus renewal, community engagement, and financial sustainability.

### **Governance**

The School has a 501(c)(3) non-profit status and has title and ownership of 33-16 79th Street, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.

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## **GENERAL ITEMS**

### **The School Day**

Lower Division classes begin at 8:30 am and conclude at 2:55 pm. All students should report to their assigned homeroom no later than 8:15 am. There are eight, 45-minute periods each day. All students are required to attend all classes, homeroom and morning meetings.

A typical student's day consists of a homeroom for community-building activities and classes in Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and World Language (Mandarin in grades Nursery through 3 and French in grades 4 through 6.) Programming throughout the week includes Art, Music, and Physical Education. Classes in Performing

Arts and Robotics/Engineering have been added.

Students in grades Nursery through 3 participate in a core classroom while fourth through sixth grade students interact in departmentalized groupings, with some classes of mixed grades. While younger students do have a rest period each day, recess and lunchtime is enjoyed by all – often making use of outdoor campus spaces.

### **Afterschool Activities**

Classes conclude at 3 pm each day, but many students participate in a wide variety of activities available until 6 pm: General Afterschool, Foundations Program, Clubs, and Student-Teacher Sessions.

General Afterschool provides cluster activities for both recreation/socialization and group homework needs in our classrooms, library, gymnasium, and playgrounds. Snacks are offered, and attendance is flexible. Enrollment and fees can be arranged through the Business Office.

For a more in-depth study of topics, skill development, and interests, the Foundations Program provides a platform of scheduled classes in Art, Music, Dance, Science, Chess, Languages, and Sports. New classes are always under consideration to appeal to widening student and family interests.

The extra-curricular club offerings continue to expand. The Daniel Webster Society (Debate) and Lego Robotics are the most popular attractions for students in grades four through six.

Teachers are always available for scheduled afterschool sessions to discuss student progress, hone academic skills, provide individual feedback and guidance, and support student/family needs. This may be a one-time visit or a regular program if necessary. Families and students should contact individual teachers.

### **Athletics**

Presently, we anticipate a return to at least some normal athletic activities in the 2021-2022 school year. In the Lower Division, Athletics offerings are an integral component of the Physical Education Program. We have increased the number of these classes in which students will participate this year. Games of high and low organization can take place during daily recess periods. Soccer, basketball, and martial arts may also be offered through the Foundations Program.

In the Upper Division, Athletics are governed by the ISAL (Independent Schools Athletic League) and they will soon make determinations regarding competitive athletics for fall

sports and the role, if any, that student vaccination status will play in those decisions. We will inform students and families of any such decisions as soon as they are made.

Garden School has a vigorous athletic program that includes 11 teams in the Independent Schools Athletic League (ISAL) and in the Girls Independent Schools Athletic League (GISAL). While we are committed to an open team policy, we do need parent permission and health forms for team eligibility. Please note, a student may not participate in games if they have not attended school that day.

### **Class Trips**

Travel continues to be impacted by the ongoing pandemic. Though rates are low as of the publishing of this community handbook, most children in the lower division are not of age for vaccination eligibility. Therefore, we will likely be continuing our moratorium on field trips for the time being.

We do not yet know the status of our many travel programs this year. Our hope and intention is to return to regular trips including domestic and international travel. However, we will be guided by the most current information provided from local, state, and federal officials. If we are able to do so, Upper Division students at Garden School will travel to Nantucket this year and will make an international trip over February Break. As the details emerge and travel restrictions further ease, we will share relevant information regarding travel with students and families.

Once we return to regular local field trips, these will be scheduled by teachers to supplement and enrich the classroom curriculum. For regular field trips:

- Families receive information in advance of trips and may be required to sign permission forms or provide supplemental fees for trips. All fees can be added to your Smart Tuition account through Blackbaud.
- If a child requires medication during a class trip, the families are asked to contact the school nurse at least one week in advance.
- During trips, the classroom is “mobile” and students are expected to follow all school rules.
- For class trips that extend beyond the regular school day, arrangements will be made to pick up children at school at designated times.
- The specific destinations classes visit dictate the number of required chaperones. Interested family members should speak with the classroom teacher.

Field trips for younger students may be very localized (walking trips to the fire department or library), or stretched to the city’s museums or zoos. Developmentally appropriate overnight trips for students in grades four through six may be scheduled to environmental centers and cities and sites of historical significance.

## **Garden Family Association (GFA)**

The Garden Family Association (GFA) is an organization for the families of the Garden School community that works alongside teachers and administrators to foster a sense of community through regular engagement, communication, and activities. The Association and its committees exchange ideas, disseminate information, support fundraising, sponsor activities, and serve as an important advisory resource to the administration. Updates on the progress of the GFA will be shared via school newsletters.

- **GFA Co-Chairs** Monica Liriano and Stacey Galitos
- **Lower Division Coordinators** Natalie Commons and Dr. Liz Crum
- **Lower Division Grade Level Representatives** N: Hayley Faba; PreK3/4: Victor Soria, Adrian Cepeda, Paola Rivera; K: Peri Kurshan; 1: Gabriel Rhoads and Lauren Lickus; 2: Leslie Ellman; 3: Niamh Moloney; 4: Jackie Barlis; 5: Christine Reyes; 6: Lisette Gurevich
- **Upper Division Coordinators** Robyn O’Sullivan and Maria Mastromarino
- **Upper Division Grade Level Representatives** 7th: Mireya Quezada-Castro; 8th: Stephanie Walker; 9th: Kelley Arau; 10th: Evelyn Zamora; 11th: Monita Pichardo; 12th: Christine Marengo

Any family interested in supporting the efforts of the GFA is encouraged to reach out to [GFA@Gardenschool.org](mailto:GFA@Gardenschool.org) or to contact any of the officials or representatives listed above.

## **Volunteering**

At Garden School, family support through volunteering is essential to our success. We encourage all families to give of their time when possible to support teachers, classrooms, fundraising activities, off-campus events, etc. If you wish to volunteer, please contact [GFA@Gardenschool.org](mailto:GFA@Gardenschool.org), any of the officials or representatives listed above, or your Division Head (Bill Vogel – Lower; Brad Battaglia – Upper).

## **Walk-A-Thon**

The Annual Walk-A-Thon, held each May, is one of Garden School’s biggest community events. Student walkers collect pledges from family and friends to support their participation, and the GFA reaches out to corporate and individual sponsors for the event. It is a chance for students, faculty, families, and friends of the school to come together to work and walk toward a common goal and share it with the Jackson Heights Community. The Walk-A-Thon lasts approximately an hour and a half, during which students walk from campus to Junction Boulevard by way of 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue and back. Roads are blocked off from regular traffic to ensure safety.

## **Curriculum Night**

In order to plan for ongoing disruption as a result of COVID, we will hold our fall curriculum night virtually again this year. This year’s Virtual Curriculum Night will be held on Tuesday, September 28 and details for joining will be shared in the newsletters. Curriculum Night provides families with an opportunity to meet with teachers, learn about curriculum, class

goals and academic plans for the year. The night begins with brief remarks by Chris Herman, Head of School, followed by logistic information from Division Heads including a schedule so families can visit every class. Unlike Family Conferences, Curriculum Night is not a time to discuss individual students and their work, but rather an opportunity to showcase each year's academic opportunities and goals, and bring the community together with faculty.

### **Family-Teacher Conferences**

Family Conferences are scheduled once a year in the Lower Division and provide an opportunity for families to learn about their child's progress and review classwork and other important information. Though this formal time is provided, Garden School encourages any family, parent, or guardian to reach out to faculty or administrators with questions, thoughts, ideas, or concerns. We discourage families from waiting until the conference to share concerns and similarly, faculty are asked to communicate any concerns with families and students as they arise. Family Teacher Conferences will be held on Tuesday, October 12.

### **Lockers**

Each student is assigned a cubby (grades N through 3) or locker (grades 4 through 6) and must provide their own key or combination lock for lockers. The lockers are school property and may be opened by staff at any time if there is reason to do so. Likewise, lockers should be treated with the same care and respect of any piece of Garden owned furniture. Therefore, while students may personalize the inside of a locker, they must do so in a manner that can be easily removed. No stickers, paint, markers, etc. may be used to personalize the inside of a locker and no personalization of any kind is permitted on the outside of lockers.

### **Lost & Found**

Staff collects loose/lost objects and places them in a central location regularly. Jewelry, keys, glasses and phones, however, are held in the main office. Unclaimed items are donated to charity periodically throughout the year. To view lost items, please inquire at the main office.

### **Safety & Security**

All students in the Lower Division are asked to enter and exit from the 78th Street gate. For the foreseeable future, students will continue to be required to present a passing health screener before entering and may be subject to temperature checks. Once again this year, we will limit the adult presence on campus. The front and rear gates will be locked, and any family wishing to enter campus may buzz in and check in with the staff at the front door on 79th Street. Both entrances and all common areas are monitored by 24-hour video surveillance. Our back gate (78th Street) is open weekdays between 8am and 8:30am, after which it is locked and cannot be opened unless someone has the key or is recognized and allowed in by Garden staff. Garden School's safety plan includes monthly

fire drills, maintenance of an emergency plan, and regular lockdown and lockout drills. Our building has an interior fire alarm and multiple carbon monoxide alarms. We also possess three AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) devices on site.

## **Communication**

Garden School strives to provide thorough communication in ways that are easily accessed. Therefore, we funnel all important information through several sources:

- The Griffin is a monthly newsletter from the Head of School which provides highlights across the school as well as updates for Garden Alum. This is emailed on the first Friday of the month to the addresses listed in our Blackbaud database. If you do not receive your issue of the Griffin, please contact the main office.
  - The Courtyard is a bi-weekly newsletter from the Upper Division Head which provides highlights across the Upper Division and often includes pertinent and essential logistical information for families. This is emailed on the second and fourth Friday of the month to the addresses listed in our Blackbaud database. If you do not receive your issue of The Courtyard, please contact the main office.
  - The 79th Street Gate is a bi-weekly newsletter from the Lower Division Head which provides highlights across the Lower Division and often includes pertinent and essential logistical information for families. This is emailed on the second and fourth Friday of the month to the addresses listed in our Blackbaud database. If you do not receive your issue of The Courtyard, please contact the main office.
  - Blackbaud Portal will be a place to find necessary information, grades, and forms. Training sessions will be held to help all families acclimate to the new Student Information System.
  - The Garden School Website is a place where you can find a wide range of information about the school. This is not a place where you should expect to find necessary forms, but rather a place where you can learn more about our programs.
  - Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) is updated consistently. Our Director of Enrollment Management and Marketing does their best to keep the content interesting and interactive. Please visit often, like posts, forward positive news stories to friends, and help spread the word about all that is happening at garden School.
  - REMIND App is a tool for emergency communication. This App is used in case of a weather related closure and will also be a tool for informing you if there was a lockdown drill that day so you can make sure your children feel safe afterwards. We will share information for registering for that App in the fall.
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## **SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

### **Attendance (Absences & Lateness)**

It is critical that we know who is on campus each day. Regular and reliable attendance of every student is expected. Students who are ill should remain home, but otherwise, students should be in attendance each day in order to fully benefit from the high quality program offered by our faculty. Regular attendance is critical to academic success, as the foundation of our work is done in the classroom. Repeated absences and late arrivals, regardless of the reason, will negatively impact a student's ability to learn material being presented, leading to academic struggles. Therefore, excessive absences will most certainly adversely impact a student's course grade. The same can be said regarding excessive lateness. Students who miss class due to lateness or absence are responsible for making up all assignments. If a student is ill or cannot come to school for any other reason, or must necessarily be late, the family is asked to call the school by 9:00am.

### **Phone Policy**

Headphones, electronic games, and cell phones may be carried in the Lower Division but not used during class, unless specifically allowed by the classroom teacher or in accordance with a school approved accommodation.

### **Gender Identity**

Gender Expansive and Transgender students may access restrooms or changing rooms consistent with their asserted gender identity. Any student may also use a non-gender single occupancy restroom. Students may discuss and express their gender openly and decide how much of their private information to share. In accordance with the Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) only staff with a legitimate educational interest have access to student records. We do not share private information without consent or in the event of a health emergency. We will make every effort to use the names and pronouns corresponding to a student's asserted gender identity.

## **DISCIPLINE**

### **Disciplinary Philosophy**

We believe in a "One size fits one approach" to discipline. As an educational institution with a mission of seeing the whole child, rather than resorting to punitive measures, we seek to provide activities and resources to assist students in exploring the question, "How am I going to learn and grow from this?" Our expectation is that Garden students behave in accordance with our mission, philosophy, norms, and core values of Respect, Kindness,

Honesty and Civility whether on campus, at school sponsored events, off campus or in the online and digital space.

### **Dress Code**

It is ultimately every student's responsibility to come to school respectably dressed. In an effort to not over prescribe what that means, please use the notes below as a general guide.

The following items are inappropriate for school:

- Excessively torn clothing, whether intentional or through wear and tear.
- Tank or spaghetti-strapped tops; midriff-exposing or low-cut tops.
- Excessively tight clothing.
- Clothing with inappropriate text or logos (sexually suggestive, alcohol related etc.).
- Sleep wear attire.
- Leggings and tights-unless paired with a skirt, shorts, long sweater, or long shirt.

Students may wear baseball hats, hoodies and headphones to school. But these items must not be worn during or in between classes. Students may wear clothing specific to their religious affiliation and in observance of their religious beliefs (ex: head scarves, burkas).

Note: If you are unsure about the appropriateness of a particular outfit or item of clothing, it is best to ask a parent/guardian or not to wear it that day and instead snap a photo of it and seek guidance from your teacher or cluster dean.

## **INTERACTIONS**

### **Public Displays of Affection**

Regardless of age, caring for others and showing affection are important parts of life. However, overt displays of affection between two people may cause discomfort or embarrassment to others. Being overly affectionate in school creates an environment that is not conducive to concentration and learning. Therefore, students should refrain from inappropriate contact or behaviors on campus or at school related events and activities. Students are expected to show good taste and conduct themselves respectfully.

### **Bullying**

Garden School is committed to providing all students with a safe and nurturing environment. Garden School does not tolerate bullying which is defined as an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student in a school setting. The act is severe, persistent or pervasive and has substantially interfered with a student's education, creating a threatening environment, or disrupting the operation of the school. "School setting" is defined as the school grounds, vehicles, or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

Students who engage in bullying behavior will be disciplined. This may include detention, suspension, or in severe cases, expulsion. Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional,

is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power. Bullying takes various forms. Physical bullying is when one engages in physical force against another, such as by hitting, pushing, or kicking. Verbal bullying is when someone uses words to hurt another, such as by belittling or using hurtful names repeatedly. Relational bullying is when one person manipulates a relationship to harm another. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, gossip, or intimidation.

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is the use of electronic technology to torment, tease, and or humiliate others. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets, as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

Since every Garden student is a representative of the school at all times, it is expected that students reflect community values when on line. Students who are in violation of the Acceptable Use Policy or the Cyberbullying Policy, whether on or off campus, during or outside of school hours, and at any time of the year, may be subject to disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may range from team meetings, to detention, to referral to appropriate authorities including police, to expulsion.

Example of Cyberbullying include sending hurtful messages to someone through email, text, Instagram, Tik-Tok, Twitter; sharing insensitive, hurtful, untrue, or defamatory statements online about other students in Social Media posts or in private messages; taking or sharing photos or videos without consent from the people in the photos or videos; logging into another student's account. Generally speaking, behavior that is unacceptable in person, is also not acceptable on computers, phones, or online.

### **What parents can do to help:**

- Learn about the internet - know what tools are available for use and misuse by your child and their peers.
- Talk about your values - the technology may have changed, but kindness and decency should still be at the top of everyone's list.
- Guard passwords - tell children not to share and change passwords frequently.
- Talk to your child - make sure your child comes to you when targeted for abuse.
- Keep copies - print out and save any offensive e-mails, IMs, etc. Report any incident.
- Stress the internet's impact - an e-mail sent to one person, can be resent to hundreds. Old e-mails and posts may resurface and get even a well-meaning person in trouble.
- Remind your child that even though they may feel anonymous online, they are not.
- Encourage your child to think before clicking, posting, or sending.

### **Identity-based Discrimintaion and Bias**

We recognize students bring intersecting identities to school and to achieve full potential, they require an environment free from identity-based discrimination. When bias-related

incidents are brought to the school's attention, we seek to quickly address them. Garden does not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, disability, neurodiversity, sex, gender identity, faith, sexual orientation, SES, or nationality. While bias itself may not be conscious, and prejudicial words or actions may be unintentional, the impact of bias on individuals is harmful and compromises the safety of our whole community. Thus, we commit to responding to all incidents (e.g. intimidating comments or messages, vandalism of property, use of racial, ethnic, or other slurs).

Importantly, just because the expression of an idea or point of view may be offensive to some, it is not necessarily a bias-related incident. Garden values freedom of expression and active participation in academic discourse, recognizing students must learn to engage respectfully with challenging topics. While this value of openness means discussion of sensitive topics is welcomed, it does not allow for discriminatory language.

Garden addresses identity-based bias (racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia), through education for students and staff. We do this by regularly assessing curriculum to ensure topics and materials reflect racial and cultural diversity; by delivering evidence-informed instruction about topics of equity in a developmentally-appropriate manner to students across all divisions; by providing opportunities for ongoing staff development on the topics of equity and inclusion; by offering relevant resources to families.

With a mission rooted in the value of the individual, Garden stresses the importance of meaningful interventions designed to address the needs of those involved in an incident. With that, Garden's orientation toward responding to any Bias-Related Incident includes thorough investigation, restorative approaches so children can do better, consideration of transformative actions that address root causes, and disciplinary action as needed.

### **Technology & Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)**

The use of technology is critical to a 21st Century education and our policy was developed to guide the use of technology by students.

- Students will use the Internet and all forms of school technology responsibly. School technology includes, but is not limited to, computers, tablets, printers, copiers, cameras, and interactive web resources that serve educational purposes. This agreement extends to use of this technology off campus.
- Students will respect copyright rules by limiting copying to essential materials and providing citations for images and text. Students are expected to avoid plagiarism by ensuring papers and projects reflect their own ideas and thoughts as well as cited paraphrases, summaries and quotations. Students should ask teachers for assistance if they are unclear on the rules.

- In the event that a student is given access to put their personal device on the school network, they may be required to provide information about their device to ensure it can operate safely without disrupting others. All school policies apply to them whether they are using their own or the school's device.
  - The network is a resource for teaching and learning and downloading large files or attachments may compromise speeds. Thus, students will avoid this without permission even when on a personal device.
  - Anything considered inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate in email, blogs, podcasts, on social networks, or other digital tools. This includes, but is not limited to, disrespectful, profane, racist, sexist or discriminatory remarks. Students are expected to promptly inform a teacher or administrator if messages received or material viewed is inappropriate.
  - Students understand Garden's stance on bullying and all forms of harrassment, hazing, discrimination apply online and agree to comply with all policies (see above).
  - School provided access to the Internet has to be filtered. If students need access to a blocked site, they should see a teacher to explore options and should not attempt to bypass blocked sites or filters.
  - Students will not impersonate (or attempt to impersonate) another or use (or attempt to) somebody else's accounts on any device. Students will not tamper with anyone else's files, folders, or work. Students will not let others use their accounts.
  - Files, services, and devices provided by or managed by school are not private. There is no expectation of privacy when students use the school network, devices, and services and anything they do can be viewed by administration at any time.
  - Unless under special circumstances, students are liable for repair/replacement costs for damage to school devices or networks whether intentional or through negligence.
  - Attempts to override, disable, alter, or circumvent security restrictions, management systems, or device firmware will be considered intentional damage.
  - Every student beginning 4th grade is provided with a Garden School email. Students are expected to check their Garden email regularly and to adhere to [commonly accepted email etiquette](#) practices.
  - Students found in violation of this policy may face serious consequences.
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## **ACADEMIC PROCEDURES**

### **Cluster Deans**

Cluster Deans oversee the academic and social progress of an assigned class within the division. Deans meet with the Lower Division Head regularly to discuss the class and devise plans to help the group achieve its highest possible level of success. The Deans assignments for the 2021-2022 academic year are as follows.

- Early Childhood Cluster Eileen Reyes
- 1, 2, 3 Cluster Paula James
- 4, 5, 6 Cluster Phil D'Anna
- 7, 8 Cluster - Sarah O'Sullivan

### **Grades**

For students in pre-kindergarten through grade six, report cards are given four times per year: first quarter, mid-year, third quarter and year-end. Report cards are emailed home with comments at the conclusion of each quarter. It is important for students and their families to review comments as well as grades whenever report cards are sent home. The grading scale varies according to the grade level of the student. Not all scales are used for all students.

### **Grading Scales**

#### **For Prekindergarten Students**

A...Almost Always; S...Sometimes; E...Emerging; N...Not Yet; X...Not graded at this time

#### **For Kindergarten Students**

A...Almost Always; I...Improving; E...Emerging; X...Not Evaluated at this time

#### **For Students in Grades 1 to 6**

E...Excellent; S+...Very Good; S...Good; S-...Fair; N...Needs Improvement; X...No Evaluation

## Additional for Students in Grades 4 to 6

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Numerical Value</u>
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	65-69
F	< 65

### **Blackbaud**

The entire school has moved to a new online system called Blackbaud. Blackbaud is a comprehensive student and organizational information system which will tie together previously disparate systems like database, directory, thinkwave, etc. This year Blackbaud will replace all existing systems and will be the single login mechanism by which tuition is paid, enrollment agreements are facilitated, calendars are populated, homework is assigned, student performance is documented, etc. Practically speaking, from this site, students and families can monitor homework assignments, test grades, and will find it a source of a lot of need to know information, forms, and documents. Further training information will be forthcoming, and will be age/grade dependent.

### **Homework**

Lower division students can expect regular homework. Students should use Blackbaud to clarify assignments and find out work assigned in their classes during an absence. They should also check in with their teachers.

Beginning at the kindergarten level, homework is assigned with the understanding of work taking place in school, students hearing and understanding an instructional assignment, and then completing tasks to be returned to school in required time. The homework may require the use of textbooks or workbooks, projects and posters, written and creative pieces, studying, reading, and analyzing. It may be for review, practice, studying, or in preparation for future classes. Younger students may spend approximately 20 minutes on these activities; first, second and third grades from 30 minutes to one hour; and fourth, fifth and sixth graders from one to two hours. Should students or families feel overwhelmed or that "it is just too much," conferencing with a teacher may provide additional structure, support, or a modified plan.

## **Extra Help/Additional Services**

If a student is having difficulty with a course, they should avail themselves of the extra help that is offered by all Garden School teachers. This may be a one-time visit or a regular program if necessary. Students should plan to approach their teachers to ask about extra help.

Some families are more comfortable requesting private tutoring for their child. While no formal “tutoring program” exists yet, arrangements between families and teachers are often made through prior family recommendations.

Student progress and individual needs may indicate that more comprehensive testing and evaluation is required to assess growth and present an Individualized Education Plan. Senior Leadership is always available to discuss private or public support services in the best interests of your child. These may include Educational Evaluations, Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT), Speech-Language Therapy, Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS), or Counseling Services.

## **Drills & School Closings**

### **Fire Drills**

Fire drills are held, as required by law, under the supervision of the Division Heads and the Head of School. Upon hearing the alarm, students follow the exit plan posted near the door of their particular room, follow the instructions of their teacher, and remain calm as they move swiftly and safely to evacuate the building.

### **Shelter-In-Place Drills**

Shelter-In Place drills are conducted several times per year with the goal of saving lives in the unlikely event of a building intruder or violent event on campus. During such drills, students remain silent, move up against their room’s safe wall and ensure no electronic devices can be seen/heard. Staff and faculty have been provided with extensive training for how to secure the facility, account for students, and have been given specific instructions for when a locked door should be reopened to the outside. For the sake of keeping our protocols on a need-to-know basis, we do not share these “lock-down” protocols with anyone outside of the staff or local law enforcement. Students are instructed on what to do and where to go in an emergency of this nature and routines are rehearsed regularly to ensure fluency with the process.

### **Weather Related School Closings**

Whenever Garden School is closed due to severe weather or other emergency, information will be announced through emails, a posting on our website, and via the REMIND App.

**Campus Visitors**

All visitors to campus must be buzzed in at the 79th Street gate, checked in at the front door, complete the Visitors

COVID-19 Self-Screening Checklist, have temperature taken, wear the appropriate name badge as assigned by front desk personnel, and must be under the supervision of a Garden School staff member. Though the school has a long history of open doors, we also must be mindful that it is our job to ensure everyone on campus is here with a purpose, known to be in the building, and supervised in their activities. While we strive for a warm and inviting campus, we also must balance the safety of all children in our care.