

Gifft Hill School

Student and Parent

Handbook



Gifft Hill School Mission Statement

Gifft Hill School offers the families of our island community an inclusive, experiential education that sees each child as an individual and inspires each to excel. We support and challenge our students to approach complex problems resourcefully, to understand and advocate for the environment, and to honor the culture and history of Caribbean peoples. Our graduates are resilient, caring community leaders at home and abroad.

Gifft Hill School Board of Trustees Diversity Resolution

The Trustees of Gifft Hill School believe that a diverse and inclusive learning environment is integral to achieving academic excellence. We recognize and value the experiences that diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, family structure, age, and ability contribute to Gifft Hill School.



Dear Giff Hill School Families:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Giff Hill School, a place where we honor the history and heritage of our community and celebrate who we are individually, and who we can be together. During your time at Giff Hill, teachers will challenge you to be both innovative and creative. You will learn how to work independently and in teams as you acquire the knowledge and skills needed to solve complex problems resourcefully. And, perhaps most importantly, you will have the opportunity to be seen as an individual and to make valuable contributions to the greater good of our community.

We believe that an experiential education means focusing less on reciting a list of facts and figures, and more on applying knowledge and skills to solve modern problems. Our goal is to inspire each child to excel so that he or she can become a resilient, caring community leader at home and abroad. We are also committed to building and maintaining a diverse community that encourages respectful discourse and the sharing of each individual's unique experiences and perspectives.

Every year, Giff Hill School graduates compassionate, capable, confident students who attend some of the best colleges, universities, and technical schools in the country, and who become the innovators, designers, and doers we need.

As you read this handbook and learn more about our policies and procedures, I invite you to take pride in yourself, your school, and the opportunity your family has provided for your future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Elizabeth Kinsella". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first initial "J." being particularly prominent.

Liz Kinsella
Head of School

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I. INTRODUCTION

Our Role on St. John

Giffit Hill School has a long history of providing experiential education to the children of St. John and St. Thomas. The following is a brief history of the school's development:

- Four devoted community members founded Pine Peace School in 1978 as a preschool serving a handful of students. The school grew quickly and eventually settled onto donated land on Giffit Hill, where the campus remains today. Through the 1980s and 1990s, the school expanded to include 6th grade, gained accreditation, and greatly enlarged its campus facilities.
- Coral Bay School was founded in 2000, serving 13 students in grades 7-9. Over the next four years, the school grew to 85 students in grades 7-12, gained accreditation, and graduated the first senior class in St. John's history—achieving 100% college acceptance.
- In 2004, Coral Bay School purchased land on Giffit Hill allowing Pine Peace School and Coral Bay School to merge and become Giffit Hill School—the only preschool-12th grade school on St. John. The creation of GHS provided families with educational continuity that emphasized experiential learning, community involvement, and high standards in both character and academic development. As an independent school, GHS was committed to maintaining access and affordability to break down financial barriers to educational opportunity—a commitment that continues today and is reflected in the socioeconomic diversity of our student body.
- In 2005, GHS broke ground for the Upper Campus building, led by Fred Trayser.
- In 2009, Glen and Jo Ann Hall donated a four-acre parcel of land joining the Lower and Upper Campuses, allowing the school to sit on 14 contiguous acres.
- 2010 brought the dedication of Trayser Field and completion of the playground and green-top renovation at the Lower Campus. In addition, GHS initiated a partnership with Iowa State University to form the EARTH program. Accreditation was renewed for K-12th grades, and the Nekwan Sprauve Memorial half-court Basketball Court was created.
- In 2016, GHS was awarded the EPA Environmental Champion Award in recognition of our commitment to environmental sustainability and for leading by example in the Virgin Islands.
- In September 2017, Giffit Hill School opened its doors just five days after the second of two category five hurricanes hit St. John. The Board of Trustees waived tuition for the 2017-2018 school year and welcomed all students on St. John to attend.
- Even as GHS rebuilt during the 2018-19 school year, GHS ambitiously enhanced its curriculum with an increased number of STEAM opportunities. Spanish Immersion was introduced to the Early Learning Center.
- In December 2020, GHS was recognized as a Bronze level Eco-School by the National Wildlife Federation.
- In 2020-21 GHS expanded its programs to include a toddler program, aquaponics, engineering,

and seminars for students taking AP courses. During this year the school also completed the NAIS Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism (AIM), a year-long study to evaluate areas of strength and opportunities for improvement with regard to diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

- In 2022, the Board of Trustees adopted a new mission statement and a diversity resolution citing, in part, “A diverse and inclusive learning environment is integral to achieving academic excellence. We recognize and value the experiences that diversity of gender, race, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, family structure, age, and ability contribute to Giffit Hill School.”

Foundation Documents Giffit Hill School

Mission Statement:

Giffit Hill School offers our island community an inclusive, experiential education that sees each child as an individual and inspires each to excel. We support and challenge our students to approach complex problems resourcefully, to understand and advocate for the environment, and to honor the culture and history of Caribbean peoples. Our graduates are resilient, caring community leaders at home and abroad.

Diversity Resolution:

At Giffit Hill School we believe that a diverse and inclusive learning environment is integral to personal growth and achieving academic success. Our school community is strengthened by the presence of different cultures, genders, races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, socio-economic status, family structures, ages, and abilities.

Core Beliefs:

At GHS, we *believe*:

- The purpose of education is to foster the skills, talents, and creativity of the individual.
- Education includes the development of critical reasoning, character, and the ability to invent and adapt in response to the surrounding environment, in addition to academic and testing success.
- Every student deserves the opportunity to pursue a rigorous and meaningful education.
- Our small size allows us to honor each child's contributions and passions and provide the challenge and support required by each individual.
- Collaboration, cooperation, and mutual respect provide the context for learning, support, and success.
- All community members are responsible for leading by example in creating a sustainable school, island, and world.

At GHS, we *live* these beliefs by:

- Ensuring that all decision-making at the school, from the Board of Trustees to the classroom, is

based on what is best for children.

- Hiring and supporting teachers who have content expertise, an interest in collaborative learning, and a willingness to lead by example.
- Offering a wide range of courses, including college preparatory and workforce development opportunities that draw children toward balanced lives.
- Creating educational opportunities for students and the community to promote sustainability and seek solutions for complex problems facing our island and the world beyond.
- Implementing an application process that is inclusive and promotes access across diverse backgrounds.
- Offering financial aid to families with financial need and a willingness to support their children and our school.
- Offering college and career counseling that allows each child to develop her/his own path.
- Crafting an individualized educational experience for each child based on her/his strengths and needs.
- Directly instructing and reinforcing the importance of respect, integrity, and cooperation in every daily interaction.
- Understanding that participation in school life by all students, parents, faculty, trustees, and the broader community is crucial to our shared success.

Attributes of a Giff Hill School Students

I am accountable.

I am resilient.

I am curious.

I am kind.

I am grateful.

I have integrity and drive.

I show pride in myself, my school, and my community.

Program Philosophy

Early Learning Center

Giff Hill School's Early Childhood Programs are designed to cultivate a love of learning in every child and help each develop the physical, social, and cognitive skills necessary for the coming stages of life.

Giff Hill School's early childhood programs are based on a few fundamental beliefs about children and learning:

- We believe that each child is born with a natural potential to learn.
- We believe that a comfortable, creative environment can greatly enhance a child's curiosity and motivation to discover.
- We believe that by helping students discover the joy of learning early on, they will be prepared to

embrace the new challenges that await them in elementary school and beyond.

- We believe in educating the whole child with respect to all areas of development: emotional, social, physical, intellectual, and aesthetic.

Primary and Secondary Programs

As a fully accredited school, GHS is a permanent fixture in the minds and hearts of the families it serves. Giffit Hill School's low student/teacher ratio, combined with our talented faculty, establishes a nurturing, stimulating environment for our young learners and ensures the delivery of a complete and challenging college and career preparatory curriculum for our older students. True to the school's founding philosophy, our faculty members know that an active, involved student learns best when engaged in their own education. Our students know they are cared for, know their input matters, and enjoy being a part of the school.

Affiliations

Giffit Hill School is a member of the following educational organizations:

- American School Counselor Association (ASCA)
- Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- Interscholastic Athletic Association (IAA)
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA)
- National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)
- National Honor Society (NHS)

Partnerships

Giffit Hill School partners with the following organizations:

- Community Foundation of Virgin Islands
- Engineering for Us All (e4usa)
- Friends of Virgin Islands National Park
- Iowa State University
- Island Green Living
- Love City Strong
- National Park Service
- New England Youth Theater
- St. John Rescue
- St. John School of the Arts
- Society 340
- Virgin Islands Department of Education
- Virgin Islands Department of Human Services
- Virgin Islands Fire Service
- World Ocean Schools, STV Roseway

II. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Legalities

Giffit Hill School is a nonprofit, 501(c) (3), independent day school serving toddlers through students in grade 12 on the island of St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The school makes admissions decisions independent of sex, color, race, creed, national origin, ancestry, religion or religious affiliation, marital status, political belief, sexual orientation, gender expression, genetic predisposition or carrier status, veteran status, or any other legally protected status.

Board of Trustees

The school is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees which exercises all corporate powers and makes all necessary policies governing the business of the corporation and the management of Giffit Hill School. The Head of School reports directly to the Board of Trustees, serves as the chief executive officer, and is responsible for managing the institution on a daily basis and directing its academic vision. Members of the Board of Trustees are not compensated for their time nor their services. They have a personal commitment to quality education and specifically to the continuing development of Giffit Hill School.

Grievance Policy

Giffit Hill School's Board of Trustees is primarily responsible for setting the overall direction of the school. This includes a review of policy, assessment of the school's performance, and policy changes or additions required to maintain the school's philosophy and mission statement. To ensure open communication throughout the school community, a grievance procedure has been developed to allow for understanding, evaluation, and determination of a process for resolution in the event of a conflict.

While the ultimate responsibility of governance belongs to the school's Board of Trustees, the Board trusts the administration's judgment, fairness, and openness in all matters. It is not the provenance nor the responsibility of the Board to mediate grievances that arise from parents, students, or faculty. That responsibility lies with the administration.

The following procedures should be used in addressing all concerns and grievances:

1. Grievances between students/parents and teachers should first be discussed amongst the parties involved.
2. Unresolved issues should be brought to the direct supervisor.
3. If the parties have not resolved the issues after discussions with these administrators, a letter addressed to the Head of School shall be written detailing the issues and the discussions up to this point.
4. The Head of School will then meet with the parties and determine the outcome of the issue. A written response will be returned. The decision of the Head of School is final.

School Day

The school day for grades K-12 begins at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. A class schedule is provided on the first day of school. Students may also be involved in school-related activities before or after school, such as academic support, clubs, and sports. In order to accommodate drop off traffic, the school offers an arrival window from 8:00 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. and a dismissal window from 3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Students who are transported by bus (when bus service is available) will not be marked tardy due to the timing of the bus arrival.

The ELC drop-off window in the morning is from 8:00-8:15 just like the rest of the Lower Campus, but the pick-up window is from 3:15-3:30, which provides our youngest students a little more time to transition from naps to the pick up line and gives our staff more time to help students buckle into car seats without holding up the rest of the line.

The school calendar can be found here: [School calendar](#).

Admission

To maintain an effective student/teacher ratio, space is limited at each grade level. The Board of Trustees determines class sizes. Waiting lists are kept when enrollment is full. Students currently enrolled in the school have priority for class enrollment, though re-enrollment of current students is not guaranteed and can be denied at the school's discretion.

The Giff Hill School Early Learning Center houses a toddler program (2-year-olds) as well as preschool (3-year-olds) and pre-kindergarten (4-year-olds) classes. To enter preschool, students must be toilet trained and be able to follow the reasonable directions of an adult.

The kindergarten program is for students who turn 5 by the first day of school.

Students are admitted to 1st-12th grade based on past achievement and academic fit. Applicants must complete an application and take a placement test before application materials are reviewed. Students applying for admission at younger levels will be interviewed by their prospective teachers or a member of the leadership team. The admissions committee determines acceptance following the completion of the application process. Giff Hill School uses a "need-blind" admission process whereby a family's application for financial aid does not influence the admission decision. Giff Hill School does not discriminate against applicants based on race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Admissions preference may be given to the siblings of currently enrolled students, the children of faculty and alumni, and to applicants that help the school build a diverse student body consistent with the school's mission. All new and returning students must be in good standing (academic, behavioral, and financial) and/or have a history of compliance with school expectations in order to be considered for admission.

Enrollment Requirements

- Submission of application forms and past academic records, including the most recent transcript or report card and standardized test scores, when applicable
- Site visit, a placement test (as appropriate), and interview
- Application to TADS for evaluation of financial need and financial aid eligibility if desired
- Notification of acceptance and financial aid award (when applicable)
- Submission of the signed tuition agreement, registration fee, medical forms, enrollment in TADS Tuition Management Plan, and *Student and Parent Handbook* acknowledgment form signed by the student and parent or guardian
- Submission of immunization records or certified exemption letter
- When required, documentation for guardianship/custody.

Enrollment is dependent upon the completion of all the above steps. Students with missing documentation may not be allowed to attend school until all documentation is provided.

Special Learning and Social Emotional Needs

Giffit Hill School employs learning strategists and school counselors who can provide basic academic and social-emotional support. The school is not staffed, nor is it funded, to meet the educational needs of children with moderate to severe needs. The first 45 school days of a child's enrollment are a trial period. Should the school leadership determine that the needs of a child cannot be met by the school for academic or behavioral reasons, the parents will be asked to meet with the school to discuss options, and the child's enrollment contract may be withdrawn. If the school terminates the contract within the 45-day period, the parent/guardian tuition obligation will be limited to a prorated amount based on the days of attendance and materials used.

At any point during the year, should a student require attention and support beyond what the staff can provide with reasonable accommodations, the school's leadership team may determine that GHS is no longer appropriate for the student. In this event, the enrollment contract, after discussion with the parents, will be terminated. Parents will be kept informed of concerns and efforts being made to accommodate the student.

Financial Aid

Giffit Hill School strives to keep education accessible for all students by meeting the demonstrated financial need of each family. The school offers financial aid for full-time students. All awards of financial aid are made consistently and objectively. GHS contracts with an external agency, TADS, to evaluate the financial need and the ability of each family to contribute to their child's education.

Eligible families must complete the TADS Financial Aid application and submit supporting documentation. The TADS Financial Aid application is available online at www.mytads.com.

Financial aid is awarded only after the TADS application and all supporting documentation is submitted. These documents will be audited by TADS and reviewed by the GHS Financial Aid Committee. Financial Aid is evaluated on an annual basis. Families must reapply for financial aid each year. Families are responsible for paying an enrollment deposit plus all charges and fees independent of financial aid.

The Financial Aid Committee reviews applications and makes aid awards on a rolling basis beginning in March for the upcoming school year. Awards for late applicants, who qualify for financial aid, are made only if funds for financial assistance are still available.

More details about Tuition and Fees may be found at www.giffthillschool.org under the [Admissions](#) tab.

Eligibility for student financial aid, in any form, is based on the student maintaining satisfactory academic, attendance, and citizenship records, otherwise described as being a “student in good standing” and on the family’s history of making timely payments according to their agreement. The school reserves the right to revoke or not renew financial aid should student or family not meet the expectations of the school. These expectations include:

- Maintaining a satisfactory academic record. If a student is placed on academic probation for two consecutive trimesters, financial aid may be discontinued.
- Meeting obligations and doing so on time. For the students this includes, but is not limited to, attending classes and completing assignments. For the family this includes responding to communication from the school and meeting financial obligations in a timely manner.
- Maintaining community standards of conduct put forth in the Handbook and as articulated by the staff, faculty, and school leaders.

Financial aid is not automatically renewable from year to year. A new application for financial assistance must be completed annually.

Financial Obligations

All families at Giff Hill School are required to pay tuition through the TADS Tuition Management portal. Families may elect to pay monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually and may do so using either a credit card or automatic deduction from a bank account. Credit card payments will be assessed a processing fee by TADS. Instructions for registering with TADS are available in the school office or on the GHS website. If you need assistance using TADS, please call 1-800-477-8237 or email support@tads.com. A penalty will automatically be assessed for declined credit card charges.

Families who are or anticipate having difficulty meeting financial obligations should contact the business office. Depending on the details of the situation, the business office may develop an alternative plan for meeting financial obligations. Following two written warnings, any student who has a delinquent TADS account may not be allowed to attend school or receive grades until the account is brought current. School

records, including report cards and transcripts, will not be released to families or institutions making requests for these records for students whose accounts are past due.

Students with an outstanding account balance will not be allowed to re-enroll or begin school until accounts are fully paid. Once an enrollment contract is signed, the family is committed to full payment of the year's tuition, even if a student leaves school or is dismissed by the school. Families are reminded they have the option of purchasing tuition insurance when signing the enrollment contract.

Record Keeping

Basic student information and enrollment applications are kept on file, along with written records of previous education and communication between the parent(s) and the school, in the administrative offices of both campuses. Additionally, official transcripts and yearly standardized testing scores are kept on file for at least as long as the student is attending Giffit Hill School. These records may be reviewed by parents/guardians by appointment. Requests for viewing these records should be made by contacting the main office.

III. FACILITY

The GHS Upper and Lower Campuses are located on Giffit Hill next to Bellevue Terrace on approximately 14 acres of land contiguous with the Virgin Islands National Park. The school is near a VITRAN stop and on the local school bus route so that students can access the school from any part of the island.

The Upper Campus contains 12 classrooms, including lab space, separate art and music classrooms, extensive school gardens, an aquaponics system, and a professional kitchen to support the culinary program. The Upper Campus building includes a meeting area with bleacher seating and a movie theater projection screen. A fitness center, half-court basketball facility, and a dining patio are located on the first level of the Upper Campus building. Classrooms are air-conditioned for student comfort. Offices for the Head of School, Business Office, and the Upper Campus Principal are located on the Upper Campus.

The Lower Campus of Giffit Hill School is located on 1.5 acres of land donated to the school by the Bass family. The Lower Campus has been developed to meet the specific needs of our curriculum and enrollment, as well as current health and safety standards. The campus currently contains four separate buildings, housing an early learning center, classrooms, administrative offices, a resource room, counselor's office, art room, a multi-purpose room (the Great Room), and two playground areas.

Educational Technology

Giffit Hill School follows a technology model wherein each student in grades K-12 has access to a school-owned device that includes developmentally appropriate learning apps. In grades K-4, devices are used to supplement or reinforce *but not drive* regular instruction in learning centers. In grades 5-12 devices are considered primary learning tools to support creation, collaboration, communication, and organization across disciplines. Students in grades 6-12 will receive an email address hosted by GHS. Students are

responsible for the care and safekeeping of all equipment, materials, textbooks, and electronic devices. The cost to replace lost, stolen, or damaged school equipment will be billed to each student's account.

IV. SCHOOLWIDE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance Policy

Giffit Hill School believes that the educational activities offered as part of the daily instructional program of the school are essential to student learning. We also believe that students learn best when they are actively engaged with each other during class discussions.

There are times when students become ill, or an unexpected event prevents a student from attending classes. If a child will miss classes for a day or will be late to school, a parent or guardian is required to contact the school. Parents/guardians should call 340-776-1730 to inform the school when their child will be tardy or absent.

If the school does not hear from a parent/guardian and the child is absent from school, the school will make every effort to contact the child's parent/guardian. Students who miss three hours or more of school will lose the privilege of participating in extracurricular activities on the day of an absence except at the discretion of a member of the school's leadership team.

In the event of planned absences, whether family or school-related (e.g., athletic contests or field trips), students are expected to coordinate with teachers prior to their absence to create a plan for making up any missed lessons or assignments. Late work will be given full credit as long as it is completed according to the schedule agreed upon between the teacher and student. If a student fails to communicate with teachers ahead of time or misses agreed-upon deadlines, it is within the teacher's discretion to apply a penalty for late assignments. Work that is still missing more than five days after the agreed-upon date of submission may be given a zero.

Students with excessive absences/tardies may face sanctions, including but not limited to having privileges revoked, withdrawal from co-curricular activities or student leadership positions, not receiving course credit or loss of financial aid.

In the case of a medical condition that prevents a student from completing coursework, the administration will work with the student's advisor, teachers, parents/guardians, and medical professionals to determine an appropriate timeline for completing missed work. In the case of extended absences due to medical or other matters, a student may need to repeat a grade.

Each reporting period, the school will review student attendance and notify parents if a student has accumulated five or more absences and/or ten or more tardies.

Students who have been suspended for disciplinary reasons and therefore miss school must still complete missed assignments.

Tardiness

All students are expected to report to classes on time. Students should be prepared with the materials required for every class. Students who arrive at school after 8:30 a.m. must check in with the office. Students who arrive after 8:15 will be marked tardy (unless they are arriving by bus). Chronic tardiness

may result in having privileges revoked, withdrawal from co-curricular activities or student leadership positions, not receiving course credit or loss of financial aid.

Leaving school for any part of the school day

If a student will miss any part of a school day, a parent/guardian must notify the school directly. If a student leaves without such permission, the student may face disciplinary consequences.

Parents who are away from home

If parents/guardians are away from home, they must notify the school of the guardian left in charge and provide a phone number where the guardian can be reached.

Medical Aid

The administrative offices on both campuses store basic first aid equipment and supplies. School personnel are not authorized to provide medical care except to the extent they have received training and are not legally permitted to distribute over-the-counter medications without the specific written permission of a parent or guardian. Parents and guardians must provide up-to-date medical records, including immunization records, before students may attend school. A history of each student's medical record is kept on file. All prescription medication, except inhalers and EpiPens (in the case of life-threatening allergies), must be administered by the office staff and kept in the office. Students may carry their own EpiPen or inhaler, but a current prescription for that medication must be provided to the school. A medical alert document will be shared with teachers at the beginning of each year. This document will be updated as new information is provided to the school. In more urgent situations, students may be transported to the Myrah Keating Health Clinic, which is located minutes from the school.

General Illness

People with symptoms of infectious diseases, including the common cold, influenza, gastrointestinal infections, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19 should stay home until symptoms improve. Staying home when sick can lower the risk of spreading infectious diseases to other people. Individuals who are experiencing either of the following symptoms *must* stay home from school for at least 24 hours from symptom onset, and may only return to school if symptom free without medication.

- Fever
- Diarrhea / vomiting

Medical Emergencies

The school administration must be able to contact parents/guardians in case of an accident or illness in school. Therefore, it is required that all parents/guardians provide the school with a working telephone number, and the name and number of a friend, relative, or neighbor who has consent to act as the parent in case of emergency. This information is documented in TADS and must be updated annually or as soon as a change has been made.

When students become ill in school, the parents will be called and are responsible for seeing that an ill or injured student gets home safely. In the event of a serious injury or illness and when parents cannot be contacted immediately, the school leadership team will determine whether or not the student should be transported to the clinic. Communicable diseases or conditions (such as COVID19, chickenpox, strep throat, impetigo, head lice, pinworms, ringworm, scabies, zika, etc.) must be reported to the school. Please see the appendix for more information about school policies related to these conditions.

Cell Phones / Personal Electronic Devices

Giff Hill School is a “phone-free” learning community. We will be partnering with a company called Yondr to help students securely stow their cell phones and accessories (earbuds and smartwatches) during the school day in order to help promote human connectedness and improve the health and wellness of our school community.

Every student will receive a Yondr pouch, which is considered to be school property, but assigned to each individual student to keep in good condition and bring back and forth between home and school.

Daily Process

Arrival

Students will:

- 1) Turn their phone off.
- 2) Place their phone inside their pouch and secure it in front of school staff.
- 3) Store their pouch in their backpack, locker, or other safe place for the duration of the school day.

Dismissal

Students will:

- 1) Tap their pouch on one of the Yondr bases to unlock it.
- 2) Remove their phone from the pouch and put the pouch in their backpack.

Students must bring their pouch to school with them each day. Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch/unpouch their phones in the Main Office.

Noncompliance

Pouch Damage / Lost Pouch / Using Phone During School

- If a student loses or damages their pouch s/he will be responsible for the replacement cost of \$30. The student’s phone and accessories will be turned in to the office daily for the duration of the school day until a new pouch is issued.
- If students are found using their phones or accessories, a faculty member will collect the phone and turn it into the office. A parent will be required to come retrieve the phone. Repeat offenses will be treated as honor code violations and result in escalating consequences.

Forgotten Pouch

If a student forgets their pouch, their phone will be collected and stored in the main office for the duration of the school day. An administrator will call home to remind the parent of the policy. The phone will be returned to the student at dismissal. If a student consistently forgets their pouch, it is considered lost.

Time-sensitive communication between students and parents throughout the school day will be facilitated through the main offices on each campus.

iPads and school issued devices

iPads and Chromebooks are to be used to complete school work. Students are not allowed to stream media including YouTube videos, TikTok, shows, movies, music, or to play video games. Specific areas will be designated on the Upper Campus for students to use laptops and tablets to complete school work. Additional areas on the Upper Campus will be created for recreational and therapeutic use of media and technology.

Field Trips

Giffit Hill School encourages teachers to arrange field trips to locations in the surrounding community to reinforce and enhance classroom activities; however, attendance on field trips is not guaranteed. Teachers with concerns about student safety while on a field trip will work with the leadership team to provide adequate staffing to accommodate the child's needs or alternate arrangements for the student while his/her class is out of the building.

All students presented with the opportunity to take part in a field trip will be given a form that must be signed by a parent/guardian granting permission to attend the field trip. If the school does not have a permission form signed by a parent or guardian before the trip departs campus, the student will not be released from school. All school rules and policies are extended to all field trips.

Giffit Hill School strives to provide students with opportunities to enrich their learning and expand their horizons beyond the traditional classroom. Periodically the school is able to provide students with opportunities to travel off-island. All off-island trips are optional for students and include an additional fee to participate. Only students electing to participate in the off-island field trip are subject to this fee, although it is highly recommended that all students participate. School remains in session for students who do not attend this field trip. School rules are in effect during all field trips unless specifically stated.

Transportation to and from School

The school's location makes VITRAN, public school bus transportation, and St. Thomas ferryboats viable options for students traveling to and from school. An existing VITRAN bus stop is located within a half-mile of the school. Varlack Ventures provides public school bus service between the Lower and Upper Campuses to Cruz Bay and Coral Bay. The school bus serves public school students as well as GHS students. Bus service is offered to students 5 years of age and older. Students are expected to follow appropriate behavior on the bus as outlined in the bus rules. Students who do not follow these rules may

have bus-riding privileges revoked. Please be aware that the school bus follows the public school calendar which does not always align with the Giffit Hill School calendar. On days when the public school is closed, parents are expected to transport their children to and from school.

The Cruz Bay ferry dock is located within two miles of the school. Free student ferry boat tickets are available for St. Thomas students commuting to St. John. A school bus takes these students from the dock to school, and back again at the end of the day.

Student Vehicles

Driving a car to school is a privilege. Students must possess a valid driver's license in order to drive to school. Students will be required to show a valid license if requested by a member of the GHS staff or faculty. Speeding, spinning wheels, reckless driving, or failure to observe any of the following procedures will result in the loss of the privilege of driving to school. Each driver must respect the safety of other persons on campus. Students cannot drive other students to or from GHS sponsored events unless written permission from both sets of parents is received. Students park at their own risk in the gravel lot at the far end of Trayser Field, the designated student parking area. Giffit Hill School is not responsible for damage to student vehicles.

Emergency Closing of School

Occasionally, emergencies such as hurricanes or severe rainstorms may occur and the school may close for the duration of the emergency. In such cases, the school broadcasts information on Radio One, located at 1000 AM and/or 1340 AM. When possible, a school-wide email/text message will be sent and updates will be posted to the school's website and social media accounts. Please note that Giffit Hill School does not necessarily follow the closings and reopening of public and other private schools. When an event forces the school to close after students have arrived, teachers will contact parents to confer about transportation arrangements from school.

Emergency Drills

A number of emergency drills including fire, earthquake, and tsunami drills, will be held during the year. All types of emergency drills are to be treated as though they were real emergencies. Classroom teachers will tell students what procedures to follow. The following guidelines will be strictly enforced:

- There will be no talking by students during the drills
- Students may not use their cell phones
- Students must follow the teacher's instructions and respond promptly to directions from teachers and administrators

Giffit Hill School reviews emergency procedures and conducts drills for active threat situations with faculty, but we do not conduct active threat drills with students. All students are taught that emergency situations may take many forms and the most important thing to do is listen to and follow your teacher's instructions.

Parent / Guardian Meetings with Faculty and Administration

Parent meetings with teachers and administration may take place at a time that is mutually convenient. In all cases, an appointment should be scheduled with the teacher or administrator prior to arriving on campus.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

Our main goal in the matter of drugs and alcohol is to raise awareness about issues surrounding such substances so that students develop an understanding upon which to base personal decisions in the matter. To this end, students take classes in Health during which these topics are directly addressed and discussed and principles for living a healthy life are taught.

As for the levying of consequences regarding student use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol, the issue is one of clear jurisdiction. The school environment is, by law, a drug and alcohol-free zone during school hours. As such, students may not be in possession of illegal drugs or alcohol during school hours, and no student, even those who are of legal drinking age, shall arrive or be present under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol to any school function, including regular classes, dances, sporting events, field trips, or other school-related activities, whether on or off-campus. Field trips, and other school-sponsored trips, both on and off-island, are subject to all school rules. Violation of the school's drug and alcohol policies will result in significant consequences including the possibility of expulsion. GHS will follow all USVI laws regarding the use, possession, and distribution of drugs and alcohol.

With regard to events held off-campus, with no sponsorship by the school, such situations are subject to the jurisdiction of the family and any other relevant law enforcement authority. However, the school reserves the right to invoke a disciplinary response if such activity brings harm to the good reputation of the school or is contradictory to the bylaws of any of the school's co-curricular offerings including clubs and athletics.

Snack / Lunch

All students provide their own snacks and lunches. Designated areas for eating are provided on each campus. After eating, students may go to supervised play areas to spend the remainder of the period.

V. UPPER SCHOOL PROGRAM, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

Curriculum

The Giff Hill School Upper Campus academic program provides a college preparatory and career readiness curriculum with an emphasis on experiential learning. The curriculum for each course or grade level is based on the Giff Hill School Standards for English and Mathematics, the Next Generation Science Standards for Science, and Social Studies Standards adapted specifically for Giff Hill School to integrate a cultural and historic awareness of the Virgin Islands. The curriculum is responsive to the needs of the

students and of the island.

Grading and Reporting

Grading and reporting at Giffit Hill School provides important feedback to students and parents about progress toward mastery of course or grade level content. Graded assignments are used to inform students about how well they have demonstrated understanding of material and how well they have mastered discipline-specific skills. The grading and reporting process provides feedback to students so they can develop self-awareness, identify goal areas, and develop habits that facilitate learning.

Parents will receive feedback on student progress in a variety of ways. In grades 6-12, parents and students have 24-hour access to the GHS Plus Portal (the Portal), which provides students and parents a live view of the grade book for every class. Parents can see grades for individual assignments, a list of missing work, and an overall grade for each course by logging into the Portal with their unique login and password. It is generally expected that all assignments will be graded within one week of their due dates. If more than one week has passed and you do not see a grade entered for work you believe was completed and submitted, please contact the teacher directly. Logins and passwords for the Portal are supplied each year and may be reset by contacting the Upper Campus office if they are forgotten or need to be changed.

In addition to providing data about scholastic achievement, Giffit Hill School is committed to providing feedback to parents about students' academic strengths, areas for growth, and overall effort. The following is a chart detailing what you can expect at each reporting interval.

<i>Reporting Tool</i>	<i>Upper Campus</i>
1st Term Progress Report	Advisors generate combined progress reports. Parent conference includes grades, work samples, and MAP data. A hard copy of grades, MAP scores, ILP (if appropriate) given to parents, or mailed by office for no-shows. Academic support emails to students and parents for those earning C- or below in core class. Confirm placement in all AP/honors/standard course levels. Review existing Individual Learning Plan if applicable.
1st Term Report Card	1st trimester grades close and report cards generated through Admin+. Academic support emails sent to students earning C- or below in any core class. Individual Learning Plan updates provided for active goals.
2nd Term Progress Report	Advisors generate combined progress and detailed narrative comments. MAP summary letter included in mailing. Academic support emails to students earning C- or below. Individual Learning Plan updates provided for active goals.

2nd Term Report Card	2nd trimester grades close. Report card generated using Admin+. Academic support emails to students below C-. Individual Learning Plan updates provided for active goals.
3rd Term Progress Report	Advisors generate combined progress reports. Detailed prescriptive plans written by relevant teachers included for students who have documented areas of concern (C- or below in academic classes and/or repeated discipline referrals). Course selection sheet included in mailing. Individual Learning Plan updates provided for active goals.
3rd Term Report Card	Final report card and transcript generated in Admin+. HS students have course selections confirmed. MAP data included. Recommendations for summer skills remediation and/or credit recovery options included as necessary.

Academic Support

At the Upper Campus, students who are earning a grade of C- or below in any core subject(s) will be placed on Academic Probation at any of the above reporting intervals and will be expected to stay after school for support. Students, parents/guardians, and advisors will receive an email from the learning strategist detailing which courses are areas of concern and which day(s) the student is required to stay for extra help. Students may of course also stay after for extra help voluntarily at any time.

Upper Campus Grade Calculation

Grades 6-12 use specific grading categories to describe the types of activities students engage in during a grading period. These categories are weighted differently at the middle and high school levels according to developmentally appropriate instruction and assessment practices. The category weights describe what portion of the student's total grade is attributed to tasks of each type. The assignment categories used by Giffit Hill School to track student progress towards mastery in grades 6-12 are as follows:

- **Guided Practice:** Assignments that allow students to practice newly introduced skills/interact with newly introduced knowledge. Examples include teacher-guided in-class practice, group work, class discussions, and guided oral response.
- **Independent Practice:** Assignments that allow students to practice newly acquired skills/knowledge independently. Examples include homework, independent in-class assignments, and call and response questioning.
- **Formative Assessment:** Assessments that measure student progress toward mastery of small subsets of information or skills within a larger unit of study. Examples include quizzes, first drafts, and small projects.
- **Summative Assessment:** Assessments that measure students' ultimate mastery of the skills/knowledge contained within a given unit of study and/or their ability to generalize or apply those skills and knowledge to other situations. Examples include unit tests, long projects, papers, lab reports, oral presentations.

Category Weighting

	Guided Practice	Independent Practice	Formative Assessment	Summative Assessment
6th-8th	25%	25%	20%	30%
9th-12th	10%	25%	30%	35%

Final Exams

In addition to these categories, students in grades 6-11 take final exams. These exams measure cumulative mastery of content and are calculated into the student's final course grade. Weighting of the final exam differs by developmental level. In middle school, final exams make up 5% of the final course grade, and in high school 10%.

Senior Capstone Project

A capstone project encourages students to synthesize the knowledge they have acquired across different subjects and apply it to a real-world context. It helps students see how their learning is interconnected and relevant to their lives beyond the classroom. Capstone projects can help students develop essential skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, research, communication, and time management. These skills are valuable for success in both higher education and future careers. The specific nature of the capstone project will vary depending on the student. All capstone projects must be approved by a member of the educational leadership team and must include clear timelines, objectives, and measurement standards. The senior capstone project will be a graded, stand-alone course included in the final transcript of each graduate who successfully meets his/her objectives.

GPA Weighting

Giffit Hill School uses a 5.0-point system for GPA calculation. GPA is calculated by adding fractional points to the grade values to indicate a student's strength of schedule. A half-point is added to every grade earned in an Honors class and one full point is added for Advanced Placement classes. Giffit Hill School does not rank its students.

Grading and GPA Weighting Scales

Grade	%	Standard	Honors	Advanced Placement
A+	98-100	4.34	4.84	5.34
A	94-97	4.00	4.50	5.00

A-	90-93	3.67	4.17	4.67
B+	88-89	3.34	4.84	4.34
B	84-87	3.00	3.50	4.00
B-	80-83	2.67	2.67	3.67
C+	78-79	2.34	2.84	3.34
C	74-77	2.00	2.50	3.00
C-	70-73	1.67	2.17	2.67
D	65-69	1.00	1.50	2.00
F	64 and below	0.00	0.00	0.00

High School Course Offerings

High school courses at Giffit Hill School are designed to address the instructional needs of each student. Due to the small size of our school, courses are generally heterogeneously grouped, with extensive differentiation implemented by each teacher.

Standard Courses

Standard courses provide students with the opportunity for reading, critical thinking, discussion, analysis, and independent study. Students enrolled in this college preparatory sequence complete assignments with little assistance from the instructor, have demonstrated effective organizational skills, and have developed strategies to help them prepare for assessments and turn in quality work.

Honors Courses

Honors courses provide students with the opportunity for considerable intellectual challenge, particularly in the areas of conceptual and analytical reasoning, research, and independent study. Students enrolled in honors courses have demonstrated superior work ethic and dedication to their studies. These students are innately curious, work independently, and seek out and initiate opportunities to expand their knowledge base. Students may be asked to complete additional assignments or extensive reading as part of the course. Content mastery may be assessed by qualitatively different tools or by common tools, which are held to a higher standard. Honors GPA weight is assigned to all honors courses and high school courses taken by middle school students.

Advanced Placement Courses

Advanced Placement courses, which are certified by the College Board, are courses that offer college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. American colleges and universities often grant placement and/or course credit to students who obtain high scores on the examinations which are administered by the College Board and developed, published, and scored by the Educational Testing Company (ETS). Students may take the AP test for a course even if they are not enrolled in the course itself.

College Level Examination Program

The College Board's College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) has been the most widely trusted credit-by-exam program for over 50 years, accepted by 2,900 colleges and universities and administered in more than 2,000 test centers. This rigorous program allows students from a wide range of ages and backgrounds to demonstrate their mastery of introductory college-level material and earn college credit and is an alternative option to the AP exam. Students can earn credit for what they already know by getting qualifying scores on any of the 34 exams.

College and Career Counseling

The school will provide college and career counseling. These services will be offered primarily to juniors and seniors by a combination of faculty and administrators.

Student Support Services

Giff Hill School is committed to the academic success and emotional well-being of all students and expects students to maintain a C or better in all classes. GHS believes that when an academic concern persists, or a serious incident occurs, a team approach can often best meet a student's needs. If a teacher has tried several strategies and made parent contacts, but a student still is not progressing as expected, or if the student is earning a C- or below at any of the formal reporting periods, students will be required to attend after school academic support sessions and may be referred for monitoring by the Student Support Team. A student experiencing academic difficulties may also be restricted from participation in co-curricular school activities until all of that student's teachers agree significant, lasting efforts to improve have been made.

Emotional Support

The school employs professional and experienced counselors to support the emotional and behavioral needs of students. A counselor can meet with students individually and in small groups to build coping skills and provide guidance. The school counselor's role is to provide short-term therapeutic intervention and assess student needs within the school setting. School counseling services are not a substitute for individual, private counseling when a student requires ongoing clinical care.

Transfer Credits

High school courses (defined as courses taken when the student was registered in grades 9-12) taken at schools other than Giffit Hill School will be accepted and recognized towards Giffit Hill School's graduation requirements. These courses will be listed on the sending school's transcript, which will be attached to the student's GHS transcript. The cumulative GPA, which will be displayed on the GHS transcript, will be calculated using only courses taken at GHS.

Honor Roll

Honor Roll recognition will be awarded each trimester based on a student's grades and GPA across all courses according to the following guidelines:

High Honor Roll	GPA of 3.7 or higher and grades of A- or above in every class
Honor Roll	GPA between 3.0 and 3.69 and grades of B- or above in every class

Trimester GPA

Unweighted trimester GPA calculations will be made for National Honor Society eligibility decisions, college application processes, and as requested by individual students or parents.

Cumulative GPA

An overall average of student performance in high school will be updated and reported on the report card (and transcript) at the end of each year, based on the total number of credits taken to date and the grades received in each course. This weighted cumulative GPA will begin in 9th grade and will continue to accrue until graduation or transfer from the school.

Valedictorian / Salutatorian / Class Speaker

Recognition of graduating seniors who have experienced academic success and/or contributed significantly to the school during their years of attendance will be determined as follows:

Valedictorian: This honor will be awarded to the graduating senior with the highest cumulative GPA above 3.5, as calculated as of the third-trimester progress report date. The student must also have met or exceeded the graduation requirement for community service hours, be in good standing, and have attended high school at GHS for at least six out of 12 trimesters.

Salutatorian: This honor will be awarded to the graduating senior with the second-highest cumulative GPA above 3.3 as calculated as of the 3rd-trimester progress report date. The student must also have met or exceeded the graduation requirement for community service hours, be in good standing, and have attended high school at GHS for at least six out of 12 trimesters.

Class Speaker: If a graduating class has neither a Valedictorian nor a Salutatorian, or if the Valedictorian or Salutatorian do not want to speak at graduation, the members of the senior class will vote on a member of the class to speak for them during the graduation ceremony. The student must also have met or exceeded the graduation requirement for community service hours and be in good standing.

Graduation Requirements

The high school curriculum is departmentalized. High school students will meet with a member of the administration to ensure they are making sufficient progress towards meeting the necessary requirements for graduation. In order to graduate from high school, students must meet the following high school level credit requirements:

Subject Area	Credits	Must include
English	4	
Social Studies	3	U.S. History required, and two additional Social Studies credits
Science	3	2 years of lab sciences
World Language	2	
Mathematics	3	
Physical Education / Health	1.5	9 th Grade Health
Elective Credits	4.5	At least 1 credit from Fine Arts offerings, and 1 from A/C/T offerings
Community Service		100 hours *up to 28 hours may be satisfied by school events occurring within school hours such as Giffit Hill School Gives Back Day.
MINIMUM TOTAL	22	

*A/C/T = Academic/Career/Technical offerings

Transcripts and School Records

School transcripts/records include academic and standardized testing information. A student's disciplinary record is not part of a transcript. However, many college applications ask the student applicant and the school if a student has ever been suspended or placed on probation for disciplinary reasons during high

school. *Both the student and the school are required to answer these questions honestly.* In these cases, Giff Hill School will work with the student to explain to college admissions offices the facts of the case and how the student has grown from the experience.

Incomplete Grades

Under special circumstances, and at the discretion of the school leadership, ‘incomplete’ grades for a trimester or final exam can be made up. The student will meet with a member of the school leadership team, the advisor, and teacher to determine an acceptable timeframe to complete the work. If work is not completed in the timeframe established, the ‘incomplete’ will be recorded as a failing grade.

Parent / Guardian Conferences

Parent/Guardian-Teacher-Student conferences can be scheduled at any time prompted by the Parent/Guardian, the student, a teacher, or the administration. To request a conference, please contact your child’s advisor.

Promotion Policy

All students are expected to show satisfactory comprehension of the course material before progressing to a higher-level course. Should a student receive a final grade of D or F on a trimester or year-long course (see grading policy above), then a conference between parent/guardian, student, teacher, and administration will be called to discuss the following possible options:

- The student may be given a list of course objectives from which he/she can base a course of study during the summer months, in an approved summer school program.
- The student may be scheduled to repeat the course in the subsequent school year either through GHS offerings or through an approved online course.

Standardized Assessment

To ensure that our curriculum is meeting its goals, Giff Hill School utilizes both traditional and performance assessment tools. In addition to trimester report cards, the school administers standardized assessments to measure how our students compare to their peers around the nation and to track individual skill gains. These tests help the administration and faculty assess the strengths and weaknesses of the school’s overall academic program and the specific needs of each child. Furthermore, these tests provide our students with invaluable test-taking practice.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

The Measures of Academic Progress test is an adaptive, web-hosted assessment tool that provides both diagnostic and prescriptive data on student achievement. It contains four sub-tests: Reading, Language, Mathematics, and Science, and is administered to students in grades 3-12 three times a year. Individual student scores are shared with parents (and students in grades 6-12) during parent conferences and used to set instructional goals for gains throughout the year.

Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)

The PSAT will be administered to all 10th and 11th-grade students in the fall. Sophomores take the PSAT to gain experience in standardized test taking and to evaluate their areas of strength and weakness. Scores are for student use only and are not reported to colleges. Juniors take the test to qualify for National Merit recognition. They have the option of reporting their scores to colleges. All 10th and 11th-grade students will be scheduled to take these tests as part of the regular school program.

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

The SAT is required for admission to some colleges and is offered without cost to all GHS juniors (spring) and seniors (fall).

American College Testing (ACT)

The ACT is accepted by many schools instead of the SAT. It is a curriculum-based test that includes reading, writing, math, and science subtests. Students are advised to take this test during the spring of Junior year and/or the fall of Senior year.

Dress Code

Giffit Hill School has a dress code designed to help students keep their focus on learning by minimizing distractions within the educational environment. Students are expected to wear the school uniform Monday through Friday unless a special dress day has been specifically approved by the school. The GHS uniform consists of a collared, solid color, polo shirt embroidered with the school's seal on the left side of the shirt. If a student or parent chooses not to purchase uniform shirts provided through the school office, he/she is responsible for ensuring that the shirts meet the above requirements and that the overall appearance of the shirt meets a professional standard of workmanship. The bottom half of the uniform consists of khaki (tan in color, regardless of style) or black pants, shorts, and skirts. Uniform bottoms should meet a professional standard for length and fit similar to what is appropriate for the workplace or church. Clothing should be free from rips, tears, or holes and worn such that undergarments are not visible. Students who are not in uniform will be given the opportunity to contact a parent to bring them the appropriate clothing or select a shirt/shorts from the clean, recycled uniform bin. If they refuse these options, they will be referred to the office for non-compliance with the dress code policy. The school staff and administration are the ultimate authority on whether clothing meets the above standards. In addition to the above uniform standards, the following applies:

- Hats, caps, hair picks, and sunglasses are not to be worn inside the building.
- Cell phones, smart watches, and personal headphones must be secured in the provided pouch during instructional hours. If an educational activity requires the use of headphones, the teacher will provide them.
- Socks and sneakers must be worn during Physical Education, in the gardens, and in the kitchen, unless the instructor specifies otherwise.
- Outerwear, such as sweatshirts, must be a solid color and must display the Giffit Hill School logo.

No other logos may be visible. Hoods may not be up within the school grounds and during school hours.

Lockers

Every middle and high school student receives a locker at the beginning of the year in which they store their books, school supplies, etc. It is requested that students keep their lockers locked at all times as the school will not be responsible for any personal items that are lost or stolen. Student claims that books or materials are missing from their lockers will not be an acceptable excuse for the student not being prepared for class. Although the school respects the privacy of its student body, law gives school authorities the right to search student lockers at any time.

Textbooks / School Owned Connected Devices

Textbooks and other instructional materials such as classroom technology are the property of Giff Hill School and are loaned to students for use during the school year. While some wear is expected, equipment must be returned in approximately the same condition in which it was issued, free of writing or other markings with pencil or pen, or other internal or external damage. Students are expected to cover books to protect them and avoid fines or the replacement cost of the book. Self-adhesive book/case covers are prohibited. Students who fail to return materials in good condition will be charged the cost of replacing the book.

Senior Privileges

An active and involved senior class is essential to the spirit of the Upper Campus. We depend on our seniors to set the proper example and provide leadership for a successful year. If seniors accept these responsibilities, it is appropriate that they have privileges that recognize their maturity. Privileges are earned and not guaranteed. At the beginning of the year, members of the senior class are invited to initiate a discussion of senior class privileges with the school leadership, and the senior class advisor.

VI. LOWER CAMPUS PROGRAM, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

During the elementary years, students discover the delight and satisfaction of learning. After mastering the introductory skills of the primary years, students are challenged by pursuing subject areas in greater depth through a challenging curriculum that is sensitive to the needs of the students and of the island. Specifically, the curriculum:

- provides an integrated, experiential approach to learning
- takes advantage of small class sizes to maximize learning potential
- incorporates the latest technology to support and enhance classroom learning and to link our students with the global community
- emphasizes community involvement
- utilizes the resources of the island

- addresses the overall physical and social-emotional growth of the child

Giffit Hill School's elementary curriculum is based on the Giffit Hill School Standards for English and Mathematics, the Next Generation Science Standards for Science, and Social Studies Standards adapted specifically for Giffit Hill School to integrate a cultural and historic awareness of the Virgin Islands through all grade levels. Special subject teachers provide additional instruction in Physical Education, Mindfulness, Art, Music, STEAM and Spanish.

Core Disciplines Overview

Reading: The development of critical reading skills is key to understanding in all subject areas and everyday life in general. The reading program at Giffit Hill School is based on a combination of phonics instruction in grades K-2, word study in grades 3-5, and fluency and comprehension in all grades. Students are exposed to various forms of literature and nonfiction writing from which vocabulary, comprehension, and analysis skills are drawn.

Expressive Language: The ability to express oneself clearly and accurately in a variety of formats is a key to success in school and throughout life. In this program, students acquire skills in writing, spelling, verbalization, and the use of grammar. Students experience the use of language in a variety of genres, including creative writing, poetry, research writing, letters, journals, and oral presentations.

Mathematics: The development of mathematical skills and conceptual understanding are of great importance in the elementary years. Students are introduced to mathematical concepts through activities and manipulatives using Singapore Math methodology. Math instruction emphasizes mathematical reasoning, problem-solving, and communication. Throughout the grade levels, students use a concrete-pictorial-abstract progression to internalize new skills. Emphasis is also placed on graphing, measurement, estimation, fractions, decimals, and geometry through integration with the EARTH program.

Science: This curriculum is largely based on hands-on experiences that allow students to question, explore, and infer meaning about the world around them. Units in this core area of study are integrated with other areas of the curriculum whenever possible. In the upper elementary grades, units emphasize the scientific method and engineering design principles, allowing students to develop their personal learning skills while using the teacher to help focus and develop their own ideas. Experiments, models, projects, and group discussions are all essential parts of this process.

Social Studies: More than a simple exploration of history and geography, the social studies program aims to develop students' critical thinking skills. Students not only learn where and when events happened but are challenged to discover why they happened and what effects they had. Maps, music, stories, texts, current events, and in-depth classroom discussions are all tools the students will use throughout the year. Social studies units are integrated with other areas of the curriculum whenever possible and feature a

special VI Spotlight theme each year. By achieving an understanding of the human role played in both the historical and modern worlds, students will be better prepared to participate in and contribute to their own future world.

Grading and Reporting

Grading and reporting are essential components of the instructional cycle and offer important forms of feedback for students and parents. Assessment data and specific feedback on assignments help shape teachers’ instructional planning and provide students and their parents important information about progress toward mastery of grade level content and skills.

Lower Campus teachers use a standards/skills-based grading approach that describes student performance in terms of progress towards mastery of grade-level content. The following mastery key is used to describe student performance:

Progress Toward Mastery Key	
M	Student consistently demonstrates mastery of this standard. She/he successfully performs tasks using the knowledge or skill described at least 80% of the time with independence.
T	Student is making appropriate progress toward demonstrating this standard. At the current rate of progress, the student is likely to show full mastery of the skill by the end of the current school year.
G	Student is working on a standard associated with a lower grade level, but making progress at a rate that will result in at least one year’s growth in one year’s time.
L	Student is working on a standard associated with a lower grade level, and not showing sufficient growth to begin closing the skill gap.
Y	This standard has not been introduced yet.
E	Student has mastered this standard, and is working on a standard associated with a higher grade level and/or enrichment area.

Communication About Academic Achievement

Giffit Hill School considers parents a critical part of the educational team. Communication between home and school fosters consistency and helps students maximize their potential. Throughout the year, communication between home and school happens in a variety of ways, all of which help build the home-school relationship.

Informal Communication

At the Lower Campus, teachers use Class Dojo to communicate directly with parents about student progress. Teachers are expected to communicate about individual student performance using text, photo, and/or video posts at least twice a week; and to provide updates about classroom events, class learning goals/instructional themes, and special projects at least once a week.

Formal Communication

Giffit Hill School formally reports on student progress six times a year (three report cards and three progress reports) according to the trimester calendar. Report cards are issued at the end of each trimester. Progress reports are issued approximately halfway through each trimester and serve as a “check-in” about student progress toward mastering the learning standards for his or her grade level, his or her work habits, and his or her social-emotional development.

<i>Reporting Tool</i>	<i>Lower Campus</i>
1st Term Progress Report	Parent conference with work samples and MAP and/or F&P data. Review existing Individual Learning Plan if applicable.
1st Term Report Card	1st trimester grades close. Report cards will be generated through Admin+ with brief comments embedded. Attach a new Individual Learning Plan if applicable.
2nd Term Progress Report	Detailed progress narratives and MAP summary letter included. Specials teachers email base teachers with brief summary of units taught and are welcome to contribute individual comments if they have specific praise or concerns to note. Attach a new Individual Learning Plan if applicable.
2nd Term Report Card	2nd trimester grades close. Report card generated using Admin+ with brief comments embedded. Attach a new Individual Learning Plan if applicable.
3rd Term Progress Report	Brief emailed communication with each family celebrating growth and describing goals as the end of the year approaches. Detailed prescriptive plans included for students who have documented areas of concern. Attach a new Individual Learning Plan if applicable.
3rd Term Report Card	Final report card generated in Admin+ with brief comments embedded. MAP data included for grades 3-5. Recommendation for grade placement, and/or summer skill remediation included.

Assessment

To ensure that our curriculum is meeting its goals, Giffit Hill School utilizes both traditional and performance assessment tools. In addition to trimester report cards, the school administers standardized assessments three times a year to measure how our students compare to their peers around the nation and to track individual skill gains. These tests help the administration and faculty assess the strengths and weaknesses of the school’s overall academic program and the specific needs of each child.

Normed Assessments in Grades K-2

Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmark Assessment System

Emerging and novice readers in Kindergarten through second grade are assessed with the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, which determines a student's independent and instructional reading levels and describes them using a leveling system ranging from A to Z. Teachers administer this assessment individually to each student so they are able to observe student reading behaviors one-on-one, engage in comprehension conversations that go beyond retelling, and make informed decisions that connect assessment to instruction.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth Math K-2

The Measures of Academic Progress for K-2 is an adaptive, web-hosted assessment tool that provides educators with student's achievement and growth data. Teachers use this data to develop instructional strategies that address the different learning needs of students. The assessment is given individually by the classroom teacher and takes about 20 minutes to complete. Individual student scores are shared with parents during parent conferences.

Normed Assessments in grades 3-5

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth Reading, Language, Math, Science

The Measures of Academic Progress test is an adaptive, web-hosted assessment tool that provides both diagnostic and prescriptive data on student achievement. It contains three subtests: Reading, Language, and Mathematics, and is administered to students in grades 3-12 at least two times a year. Individual student scores are shared with parents (and students in grades 6-12) during parent conferences and used to set instructional goals for gains throughout the year.

Student Support Services

Giffit Hill School is committed to the academic success and emotional well-being of all students and expects students to consistently demonstrate academic and social-emotional gains. GHS believes that when an academic concern persists, or a serious incident occurs, a team approach can often best meet a student's needs. If a teacher has tried several strategies and communicated his or her concerns to the parents, but a student still is not progressing as expected; or if the student is working on multiple Language Arts or Mathematics standards associated with a grade well below (or above) his or her current grade placement, the student will be referred to the Student Support Team. The team, which includes the parents, will meet to discuss areas of concern and review work samples and any standardized test data available. In most cases, the Student Support Team will then generate an Individualized Learning Plan to be put in place to support the student and foster increased growth.

Promotion Policy

At the elementary school, we are building the foundation for your child's long-term educational success. The decision to promote or retain a student is taken very seriously and is based on several factors. Language Arts and Mathematics skills provide the tools for student success at higher levels. In evaluating student readiness for promotion, the school must evaluate his or her ability to decode, read fluently, and make meaning from reading at a level that is likely to lead to success in the subsequent grade. Similarly, a student must demonstrate appropriate development of number sense and mathematical reasoning. In addition, the student's social-emotional development, maturity, and chronological age may be factors weighed in the decision. While many individual needs can be supported through differentiation and student support services, classroom accommodations and/or modifications to instruction must result in measurable achievement gains for a promotion decision to be supported.

Dress Code

Lower Campus students are expected to wear the school uniform Monday through Thursday. The GHS uniform consists of a collared, solid color polo shirt embroidered with the school's seal on the left side of the shirt. Students in the Early Learning Center (toddler program, preschool, and pre-kindergarten classes) may substitute a solid color t-shirt with the school seal silkscreened on the chest for the polo shirt if needed. If a student or parent chooses not to purchase uniform shirts provided through the school office, they are responsible for ensuring that the shirts meet the above requirements and that the overall appearance of the shirt meets a professional standard of workmanship. The bottom half of the uniform consists of khaki (tan in color, regardless of style) or black pants, shorts, and skirts. Uniform bottoms should meet a professional standard for length and fit similar to what is appropriate for the workplace or a religious occasion. Clothing should be free from rips, tears, or holes and worn such that undergarments are not visible. Students must wear close-toed shoes to Physical Education class. Students who are not in uniform will be given the opportunity to contact a parent to bring them the appropriate clothing or select a shirt/shorts from the clean, recycled uniform bin.

"Free Friday" is a Lower Campus tradition that allows students the option of wearing their own outfits on Fridays. As with the uniform, clothing should be free from rips, tears, or holes and worn such that undergarments are not visible.

ELC students are required to keep an extra set of clothing at school in case of accidents. This set of clothing is given to the teacher at the beginning of the year to store and should be replaced as needed.

Parties

Parents who wish to have birthday parties for their children at school must coordinate any such activity with the classroom teacher. In such cases, the parent must provide all necessary materials for the party, with the approval of the classroom teacher. The general idea behind children's parties at school is to keep it simple. Please do not provide presents, gift bags, piñatas, and balloons.

If a student is having a private party at his/her house or somewhere off school grounds, unless ALL students in the class are being invited, invitations are to be sent through the mail. Parents are asked to be aware of the sensitive nature of these activities.

VII. STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Giffit Hill School believes that it is the inherent right of all students to receive a quality education that empowers each student to realize his/her academic potential while fostering a solid self-concept and tolerance and understanding of others. The school's discipline policy has been founded on the principles of honor, honesty, and mutual trust. The student responsibilities listed below are essential to the maintenance and continued development of this community spirit. Every student is responsible for obeying this code of conduct and no faculty member or school representative can adopt rules that are contrary to the code of conduct in this handbook.

This code of conduct is designed to benefit both the individual student and the school mutually.

For the benefit of the individual

- To help the student learn from their mistakes
- To prevent the student from repeating the offense
- To teach the value of respect and common decency, and the rights of other people.

For the benefit of the school

- To preserve the physical and emotional safety and academic standards of the school
- To deter others from committing similar infractions
- To make it clear to everyone that certain kinds of behavior are not tolerated

The following student responsibilities will be enforced during school hours and during school-sponsored events on and off school property. Students who, by their actions, choose not to assume their responsibilities will be subject to school discipline.

Student responsibilities

- Conduct oneself in a manner that demonstrates mutual respect, dignity, and safety for all community members both on and off campus
- Respect the rights of others to have a school environment that encourages learning by not interfering with the orderly conduct of classes, not encouraging others to participate in disruptive expression, and not violating the rights of those who disagree with a given point of view
- Understand and abide by all school policies, rules, and regulations
- Show respect for the rights and private property of other students, staff, visitors, and the school
- Attend to all school obligations, including attending school and completing assignments on time

- Complete assignments in a manner that displays honesty and integrity
- Complete make-up assignments within the established time schedule
- Work to the best of his/her/their ability in all academic and curricular pursuits
- Remain quiet during emergencies or drills and listening to and obeying directions from staff
- Conduct oneself in an appropriate manner when being transported to and from school events so as to ensure the health and safety of all passengers
- Observe standard rules of journalism when publishing, including citing sources and refraining from the use of libelous statements and obscenities

Behaviors that Impact the Safety and Security of the School Community

- Obey the directions of all school personnel.
- Respect the race, culture, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, and gender expression of others.
- Respect the health/safety of self and others by settling disagreements in a non-physical way refraining from verbal insults and threats.
- Respect the health/safety of self and others by following school and territorial mandates regarding drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Specifically, students may not possess, use, distribute or sell tobacco products (in any form), alcohol, and other substances, including drug paraphernalia or devices that deliver nicotine or other mood altering substances such as CBD in any form, on or near school property, school buses, or at other school-sponsored events.
- Respect the health/safety of self and others by following school and territorial mandates regarding weapons. Specifically, students may not possess or use firearms or weapons including pepper spray, tasers, or knives of any kind.
- Maintain the physical and emotional safety of the school environment. Specifically, students may not make or help facilitate making a false fire alarm, bomb, or active shooter threat.

Disciplinary Process

Behavior expectations are based on mutual respect between the teacher and student. Teachers have the flexibility to create and enact their own management plans within the classroom structure. Teachers have a wide variety of behavioral interventions available to them within the classroom. Whenever possible, teachers will help the student make a connection between behavior and the consequence.

To create a predictable and safe learning environment for all at GHS, and to guide students in the development of self-discipline, the school has a process in place that includes communication, logical consequences, and reflection.

The following procedures are employed with students exhibiting inappropriate behaviors:

1. verbal redirection
2. logical consequences
3. parent communication

These procedures may happen concurrently, with an emphasis not only on communication but on education. The school views disciplinary infractions as teachable moments; we guide children as they become increasingly aware of others' different ideas, desires, and feelings. Within these three procedures, there must also be a focus or reinforcement of the classroom community, i.e. everybody working together to provide the best environment for learning. In cases where a student's behavior continuously disrupts the ability of other students to learn and the behavioral strategies cited above have been employed over time, the next layer of intervention (referral to the office, referral to the Student Support Team, exclusion from the learning environment) may occur.

In the Middle and High School divisions, patterns of behavior are tracked by advisors and the principal so repetitive occurrences are recognized. The Student Support Team may also recommend interventions and track their impact. When behavior continuously hinders other students from learning, or teachers' ability to provide instruction, intervention is needed at the administrative level. Below is a flowchart with general examples of how inappropriate behavior will be addressed:

General Behavior Management in the Classroom

1. Teacher warning
2. Break in a supervised space or move seating in the room
3. Reflection snapshot and teacher conference completed during snack/lunch/after school either under the teacher's supervision or in the office. Reflections will be shared with the advisor
4. Call home

Escalation of Behavior Interventions

There are some behaviors that warrant immediate intervention by members of the school leadership team. These include but are not limited to: use of hate/inflammatory language, chronic non-compliance, defiance, verbal threats and physically unsafe/aggressive actions. In these circumstances, students will be referred to the office where they will:

1. Complete a reflection snapshot
2. Meet with a member of the school leadership team
3. Conference with the teacher or student(s) involved
4. Communicate with parents
5. Principal will decide on consequence which may include: restoration/restitution, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion from school if behavior is repeated, or determined to pose a threat to the learning community.

Academic Integrity

Cheating: Cheating is a form of dishonesty where a student attempts to give the appearance of a level of knowledge or skill that the student has not attained. Examples included:

- Copying from another person's work during an examination or while completing an assignment

- Taking an examination or completing an assignment for another, or permitting another to take an examination
- Submitting identical or similar papers for credit in more than one course without prior permission from the course instructors
- Retaining, possessing, using, or circulating previously given examination materials, where those materials clearly indicate they are to be returned to the instructor at the conclusion of the examination
- Continuing work on an examination or assignment after the allocated time has elapsed.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the copying or paraphrasing, without acknowledgment, of another person's writing. Violations include:

- Copying another student's work and submitting it as one's own work. (i.e. homework term papers, group projects, etc.)
- Paraphrasing the thoughts of another writer without acknowledgment. All significant phrases, clauses, or passages taken directly from source material must be acknowledged either in the text itself, in footnotes, or in any other format specified by the teacher
- Citing a source that does not exist
- Attributing to a source ideas and information that are not included in the source
- Taking material from the internet and presenting it as one's own work

A student shall not submit work that is not his/her/their own without proper documentation and references. Also, unless a teacher specifically instructs otherwise, all work must be completed without help from other students and/or unapproved assistance or aids unless the teacher explicitly directs collaboration. All work turned in must be the student's own and completed according to the instructions given by the teacher. This includes all papers, tests, quizzes, projects, and homework assignments given by the teacher.

Other: Other examples of forms of dishonest or unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Falsifying of records and/or official documents: academic records, grade reports, letters of permission, lunch passes, absence excuses, parent notes, etc.
- Pressuring or encouraging another student to participate in any violation of the student code of conduct
- Planning with another student to commit any act of academic dishonesty
- Profiting financially or otherwise from the avocation and/or support of any unethical act

Consequences for Violations Related to Academic Integrity

All students must demonstrate academic integrity. Violations will result in increased levels of consequences, including being required to redo the assignment, losing credit for the assignment, detention, suspension, a formal letter of reprimand, disciplinary probation, exclusion from co-curricular activities, loss of financial aid, and if it is determined to be an ongoing pattern of behavior, may ultimately lead to dismissal from school.

Anti-bullying Policy

We are committed to providing a compassionate and safe environment for all students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. We are a “telling school.” This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

What is bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression or exclusion with the intention of hurting or exercising power over another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g., hiding personal items, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, or any use of violence
- Verbal - use of inflammatory or hate language based on how a person identifies him/her/their self, name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, teasing

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. And students who are the victims of bullying need to know the school cares about their emotional and physical safety. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Student Responsibilities / School Responsibilities:

Students who witness bullying are asked to report their concerns and offer support to the person being bullied.

In response the school will:

- Investigate all reports of possible bullying
- Communicate with the families of all involved
- Work with school staff to craft an intervention that blends reteaching with consequences
- Assign consequences aligned with the severity of behavior which escalate with recurring incidents

VIII. TECHNOLOGY

Giff Hill School aims to provide a proactive learning environment in which all learners will be fluent in the technology skills and tools that allow them to fully access and benefit from enriched, enhanced, and expanded learning experiences. All learners (students, staff, and parents) will be encouraged to use technology resources to become self-directed, interactive, and life-long learners.

Technology Goals

The Giff Hill School community will achieve a shared, realistic, broadly supported, and well-communicated vision of how Giff Hill School uses technology to support and enhance learning. Each student attending Giff Hill School will be provided with the appropriate equipment to ensure that technology can become a learning tool in their daily instruction, thereby building the competencies needed to become a fluent user of technological resources.

All teachers will increase their competency in the use of instructional technology to challenge students and improve student achievement.

Giff Hill School will ensure that appropriate hardware maintenance including reliable site-wide network connectivity, technical support, and training for teachers are available so that all technology resources are utilized to their fullest potential.

Acceptable Use Policy for Connected Devices

At Giff Hill School we encourage the use of technology to explore and create. With access to the internet comes responsibility:

1. to produce original work and cite what is not
2. to behave online in a supportive manner
3. to stay safe and to use tools appropriately

The use of the internet computer network for illegal, inappropriate, unacceptable, or unethical purposes by students or employees is prohibited. With respect to all users, prohibited usage of the network includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Use in an illegal manner or to facilitate illegal activity
- Use for commercial, private advertising, or for-profit purposes
- Use for lobbying or political purposes
- Use to infiltrate or interfere with a computer system and/or damage to data, files, operations, software, or hardware components of a computer or system
- Sending hate mail or email that contains discriminatory remarks, threatening statements, and other antisocial communications generally known as cyberbullying
- Unauthorized or illegal installation, distribution, reproduction, or use of copyrighted materials
- Use to access, view, or obtain material that is obscene, pornographic, including child pornography, or harmful to minors
- Transmission of material offensive or objectionable to recipients or as determined by GHS
- Intentionally obtaining or modifying files, passwords, and data belonging to other users

- Impersonation of another user, anonymity, and pseudonyms
- Loading or using unauthorized software or media
- Disruption or distraction of the work of other users
- Destruction, modification, abuse, or unauthorized access to network hardware, software, and files
- Quoting personal communications in a public forum without the original author's prior consent
- Use of the name "Giff Hill School" or "GHS" and use of written logos or web content provided by Giff Hill School through its website without the written permission of the Head of School
- Allowing an unauthorized person to use an assigned account
- Creation and introduction of computer viruses, trojans, worms, and other malicious programs
- Use of software or hardware to compromise or bypass network security, any attempt to circumvent or disable the filter or any security measure
- Use while access privileges are suspended or revoked
- Use inconsistent with network etiquette and other generally accepted etiquette

To the greatest extent possible, users of the network will be protected from harassment and unwanted or unsolicited communication. Any network user who receives threatening or unwelcome communications shall report such immediately to a teacher or administrator. Network users shall not reveal personal information to other users on the network. All Giff Hill School computers/servers utilized by students and staff shall be equipped with internet blocking/filtering software.

Students Commitments:

- I will not disclose personal information about myself or others including disclosure, usage, or dissemination of any personal identification information of themselves or other students.
- I will not engage in or access chat rooms or instant messaging without the permission and supervision of a teacher or administrator.
- I will not take credit for others' work or ideas.
- I will keep myself and others safe online.
- I will show respect online.
- I recognize that email is not private or confidential.
- I will keep the network secure by protecting my passwords and reporting security problems.
- I will take responsibility for my behavior

The use of the internet and network resources is a privilege, not a right. The network user shall be responsible for damages to the equipment, systems, and software resulting from deliberate, willful, or negligent acts. Giff Hill School administrative staff will deem what is appropriate and inappropriate use and their decision is final.

Consequences of violations may include:

1. Suspension of network access
2. Revocation of network access

3. Suspension of network privileges
4. Revocation of network privileges
5. Suspension of computer access
6. Revocation of computer access
7. School suspension
8. School expulsion
9. Report of violation of local, state, or federal laws to appropriate legal authorities
10. Legal action and prosecution by the authorities

Acknowledgments

By signing the GHS Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy attached to the end of this handbook, I acknowledge that:

- GHS assumes no responsibility or liability for any changes or charges incurred by a user.
- The administration shall have the sole authority to determine inappropriate use.

I also understand that the Head of School or designee shall be responsible for implementing technology procedures to determine whether GHS devices are being used for purposes prohibited by law or for accessing sexually explicit or other inappropriate materials. The procedure shall include, but is not limited to:

1. Utilizing a technology protection measure that blocks or filters internet access for minors and adults to certain visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, harmful to minors, or determined inappropriate for use by minors by the administration.
2. Maintaining and securing a usage log.
3. Monitoring online activities.
4. Providing training to students in appropriate online behavior. This includes behavior when interacting with other individuals on social networking websites, chat rooms, safety and privacy, and cyberbullying awareness and response.

APPENDIX A

Giff Hill School Infectious Disease Policies

Introduction

Giff Hill School has put in place a core set of infectious disease prevention strategies as part of their normal operations. The addition and layering of COVID-19-specific prevention strategies is tied to COVID-19 Community Levels.

Staying up to date on routine vaccinations and taking basic hygiene precautions are essential to preventing illness from many different infections. Vaccines reduce the risk of infection by working with the body's natural defenses to help safely develop immunity to disease. For COVID-19, staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations is the leading public health strategy to prevent severe disease. Not only does it provide individual-level protection, but high vaccination coverage reduces the burden of COVID-19 on people, schools, healthcare systems, communities, and individuals who are not vaccinated or may not develop a strong immune response from the vaccines.

Vaccination Status

For the following sections the term “up to date on COVID19 vaccination” is defined as follows: (the recommendations will be different depending on your age, your health status, what vaccine you first received, and when you first got vaccinated)

- You have received all doses in the primary series and booster(s) when eligible.
- You have completed your primary series—but are not yet eligible for a booster.

Individual ages 5 years and up

- 2 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna or 1 dose of Johnson and Johnson AND 1 booster of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at least 5 months after the final dose in the primary series
- Adults ages 50 years and older can choose to receive a 2nd booster dose of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at least 4 months after the 1st booster but this is NOT REQUIRED to be considered up to date on vaccination

Children ages 6 months to 5 years

- 2 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech given 3–8 weeks apart.

Quarantine and Isolation Rules

Individuals Who Test Positive (regardless of vaccination status)

- In line with updated CDC guidance as of February 2024, those who test positive should isolate until symptoms are mild or improving and fever-free for 24 hours without medication

Individuals Who Have an Exposure (regardless of vaccination status)

- No quarantine is required, test on day five or earlier if symptoms develop.

General Illness

People with symptoms of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and gastrointestinal infections should stay home and get tested for COVID-19. People who are at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 who test positive should consult with a healthcare provider right away for possible treatment, even if their symptoms are mild. Staying home when sick can lower the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including the virus that causes COVID-19, to other people. For more information on staying home when sick with COVID-19, including recommendations for mask use for people experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, see Quarantine and Isolation. Individuals who are experiencing any of the following symptoms must stay home from school until symptoms improve. We strongly encourage at-home testing for COVID-19 when symptoms emerge to help maintain a safe school and an accurate quarantine/isolation clock.

- Fever
- Cough, runny nose, sneezing, headache
- Extreme fatigue
- Aches and pains
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea
- Conjunctivitis
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- A rash on skin, or discoloration of fingers or toes

Hand Hygiene

Washing hands can prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Giff Hill School teaches and reinforces proper handwashing to lower the risk of spreading viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19. Teachers monitor and reinforce these behaviors, especially during key times in the day (for example, before and after eating and after recess) and the school provides adequate hand washing supplies, including soap and water. If washing hands is not possible, students are provided hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

Respiratory Etiquette

Teachers reinforce covering coughs and sneezes to help keep individuals from getting and spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

Masking

Masking will be optional for Giffit Hill School students and staff. Science has shown that wearing a well-fitting mask consistently and correctly reduces the risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Anyone who chooses to wear a mask will be supported in their decision to do so.

At a medium COVID-19 Community Level, people who are immunocompromised or at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 should talk to their healthcare provider about the need to wear a mask and take other precautions (for example, avoiding high-risk activities). Since wearing masks can prevent spread of COVID-19, people who have a household or social contact with someone at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 (for example, a student with a sibling who is at risk) may also choose to wear a mask when the COVID-19 Community Level is medium.

At a high COVID-19 Community Level, the CDC recommends indoor masking in schools, as it is in the community at-large. When the COVID-19 Community Level is high, people at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 should wear masks that provide greater protection, such as N95s or KN95s.

In the event that a GHS student is at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19 the school will ask students and faculty members who are in regular direct contact with that individual to make reasonable modifications including masking to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, are able to access in-person learning.

Because mask use may be difficult for very young children or for some children with disabilities Giffit Hill School may need to consider other prevention strategies—such as cohorting and avoiding crowding—when the COVID-19 Community Level is high. One critical prevention strategy is promoting vaccination among those who are eligible because the risk for people who have not been vaccinated is lower when the people around them have been vaccinated.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Giffit Hill School cleans high touch surfaces frequently to reduce the risk of germs spreading by touching surfaces. In the event that a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 has been on campus within the last 24 hours, spaces where they were known to be will be cleaned and disinfected.

Remote Learning

The school is committed to providing educational continuity for its students should a student need to isolate/quarantine at home. Should a student need to learn from home, his/her teacher(s) will provide both synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (recorded) instruction and digital options for work submission and feedback.

APPENDIX B

GHS Acceptable Use Policy

1. Responsibility and Care:

- You are responsible for the Chromebook issued to you. Any damage caused to the device will be your responsibility, and you will be required to pay \$200 for its replacement.
- We have thoroughly documented the condition of the Chromebook at the time of assignment. Therefore, you will not be held accountable for any pre-existing damage.

2. Appropriate Use:

- The Chromebook is to be used solely for educational purposes in support of your studies and school-related activities.
- Be mindful of your online behavior and ensure that your activities are aligned with the values and policies of our school. Engaging in cyberbullying, harassment, or any form of illegal or inappropriate online behavior is strictly prohibited.

3. Network Monitoring:

- It is important to note that network traffic on the school's network is monitored to ensure the security and proper functioning of the system. This monitoring includes internet usage, website access, and communication through school-provided platforms.
- The purpose of network monitoring is to ensure a safe and secure online environment for all students and staff members, as well as to identify and address any misuse or violations of the acceptable use policy.

4. Personalization:

- Do not apply stickers, markers, or any other physical modifications that may damage or deface the device.

5. Software and Updates:

- Do not install or modify any software or applications on the Chromebook without the explicit permission of the school's IT department.
- By using the school-issued Chromebook, you agree to comply with the guidelines outlined in this document. Failure to do so may result in replacing the Chromebook, disciplinary action, loss of access privileges, or additional consequences as determined by the school administration.

APPENDIX C

Student Cell Phone and Personal Device Policy

Giffit Hill School is a “phone-free” learning community. We will be partnering with a company called [Yondr](#) to help students securely stow their cell phones and accessories (earbuds and smartwatches) during the school day in order to help promote human connectedness and improve the health and wellness of our school community.

Every student will receive a Yondr pouch, which is considered to be school property, but assigned to each individual student to keep in good condition and bring back and forth between home and school.

DAILY PROCESS

Arrival

Students will:

- 1) Turn their phone off.
- 2) Place their phone inside their pouch and secure it in front of school staff.
- 3) Store their pouch in their backpack, locker, or other safe place for the duration of the school day.

Dismissal

Students will:

- 1) Tap their pouch on one of the Yondr bases to unlock it.
- 2) Remove their phone from the pouch and put the pouch in their backpack.

Students must bring their pouch to school with them each day. Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch/unpouch their phones in the Main Office.

NONCOMPLIANCE

Pouch Damage / Lost Pouch / Using Phone During School

- If a student loses or damages their pouch s/he will be responsible for the replacement cost of \$30. The student’s phone and accessories will be turned in to the office daily for the duration of the school day until a new pouch is issued.
- If students are found using their phones or accessories, a faculty member will collect the phone and turn it into the office. A parent will be required to come retrieve the phone. Repeat offenses will be treated as honor code violations and result in escalating consequences.

Examples of damage:



- Deep scratches on the globe and on the green ring around it
- Intentional pen marks on the inside of the Pouch
- Bent pins
- Pin and button not fully recessing, due to pin damage

Forgotten Pouch

If a student forgets their pouch, **their phone will be collected and stored in the main office for the duration of the school day. An administrator will call home to remind the parent of the policy.** The phone will be returned to the student at dismissal.

If a student consistently forgets their pouch, it is considered lost. **Refer to the Lost Pouch policy above.** Time-sensitive communication between students and parents throughout the school day will be facilitated through the main offices on each campus.

iPADS AND SCHOOL ISSUED DEVICES

iPads and Chromebooks are to be used to complete school work. Students are not allowed to stream media including YouTube videos, TikTok, shows, movies, music, or to play video games. Specific areas will be designated on the Upper Campus for students to use laptops and tablets to complete school work. Additional areas on the Upper Campus will be created for recreational and therapeutic use of media and technology.

APPENDIX D

Concussion Policy

POLICY

A concussion is a brain injury that is diagnosed by an appropriate healthcare professional. Students who sustain a concussion must be cleared by a healthcare professional to return to regular school and athletic activities.

PROCESS

Injury Assessment & Initial Reporting

- Athletics
 - If an athletic coach recognizes concussion symptoms, the coach should refer the student to see the Giff Hill School athletic director immediately.
 - The player should not be allowed to return to playing the current game/practice/activity.
 - The player should not be left alone, and regular monitoring for deterioration is essential over the initial few hours after injury.
 - The player's parent/guardian must be alerted and must arrange for transportation of the student from the scene.
 - Return to play may only occur after examination and clearance by a medical professional.
 - The athletic director will contact parents. If an athletic director is not available the coach will contact the parents.
 - The athletic director notifies the coach as well as the Upper Campus principal/HOS.
- Non-Athletics
 - If the student sustains the injury at school and concussion is suspected, Giff Hill School faculty or staff should refer the student to the front office immediately.
 - If the student sustains the injury outside the school, the parent should report the injury to the front office along with directions provided by the medical provider for any accommodations needed for the student's regular activities.
 - Teachers will report to the Upper Campus principal any observations related to concussion.
 - Athletic director will communicate the return-to-play expectations with the parents of student-athletes and the student-athlete.

Giff Hill School Internal Communication

- A record of concussions will be kept in a shared document among the front office and athletic director. The front office manager, athletic director, and Upper Campus principal will notify each

other of all concussions immediately upon initial notification and share any concussion-related paperwork.

- Upper Campus principal will notify the following with verification of concussion, restrictions, attendance updates, and academic accommodations:
 - Student Support Team
 - Teachers of the student (PE teacher may have specific restrictions)
- Athletic director will notify the parent and coach if necessary.
- Athletic director will keep records of return to play progress and any limitations.
- Athletic director will update Power School health information.

Follow–Up for Academic Accommodations

- Upper Campus principal will have regular check-ins with the student until symptom-free and adjust accommodations as needed.
- Upper Campus principal will have regular check-ins with the parent as needed.
- Upper Campus principal will update teachers as needed
- Head of School will become involved if a schedule change or pass/fail option is required.

Return to Play

- No student may return to their sport or activity until they have full medical clearance.
- Written medical clearance from an appropriate healthcare professional is provided to one of the following: athletic director, Upper Campus principal, or front office manager. Copies will be provided to the athletic director, Upper Campus principal, and front office manager.
- If symptoms redevelop after full clearance, the student will cease participation in co-curricular activities. Notification should be provided to the athletic director, Upper Campus principal, or front office manager.

Acknowledgment of Student and Parent Handbook and Acceptable Use Policies for Internet and Connected Devices

Enrollment in Giffit Hill School and the signing of a tuition agreement through the TADS system indicates full acknowledgement and acceptance of all policies and procedures described in this handbook. The digital signature associated with your, or your child’s enrollment indicates the following:

Student:

- I have read the Giffit Hill School Student and Parent Handbook (“the Handbook”).
- I acknowledge that I am responsible for understanding and following the policies set forth in the Handbook.
- I also acknowledge that I may be subject to disciplinary action if I do not abide by the policies and expectations set forth in the Handbook.
- I understand that if I have a question about any policy or any other school matter, I can ask a member of the school leadership team or a faculty member.
- I have read and agree to abide by the GHS Technology and internet Acceptable Use Policies for students as published in the GHS Student and Parent Handbook.

Parent:

- I have read the Giffit Hill School Student and Parent Handbook (“the Handbook”).
- I understand that my child and I are responsible for understanding and following the policies set forth in the Handbook.
- I also acknowledge that my child may be subject to disciplinary action if they do not abide by the policies and expectations set forth in the Handbook.
- I understand that if I have a question about my child, or about any policy, that I may speak to a member of the school leadership team or a faculty member.
- I understand the expectations and conditions around student use of technology, particularly the internet, and support my child’s appropriate use of technology tools at GHS.

STUDENT NAME	PARENT NAME
GRADE	
SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE
DATE	DATE