

Gaudior Academy Family Handbook

I. HISTORY AND GOVERNANCE

History of School

Gaudior Academy opened in September, 1991, with 14 children and 6 staff members. The teachers formed the school to offer children an opportunity to learn in an environment that fostered respect, cooperative learning and use of the multiple intelligences, as defined by Howard Gardner in his book *Frames of Mind*. The teachers believed in the power of teaming and established the school based on those principles. The school was administered by the teaching team, classrooms were run with the students and teacher working as a team, and the families were part of the school team, offering their expertise whenever possible.

In 1996, when the charter school movement gained a stronger foothold in Michigan educational offerings, the school became a charter school with Eastern Michigan University as its authorizer. It grew from 70 students to 170, and finally to approximately 230 students. The staff has grown proportionately, so that the 10:1 student ratio can be maintained.

The school is divided into five levels that are multi-aged groupings instead of grades. These grade level distinctions are approximate. The multi-aged concept allows the school to look at the academic and social development of the child, not only the chronological age, to determine placement. Most children spend two years in a level, except for Level 1 - kindergarten.

The school moved three times in its first three years to accommodate the growing student population. Its present location on Avondale became home in March, 2003 when the school bought the building. The children are divided into 5 Levels. Level 1 is comprised of kindergarten students. The remaining levels are multi-aged classrooms with Level 2 consisting of 1st and 2nd graders, Level 3 has 3rd and 4th graders, Level 4 has 5th and 6th graders, and Level 5 has 7th and 8th graders. Levels 1 through 4 have two adults in each homeroom and core classes, a certified teacher and an educational partner. Level 4/5 students rotate for all their subjects. Homeroom teachers in these levels teach Social Studies and Language Arts with separate teachers for Math and Science. Specialists teach Art, Music, Physical Education, and Spanish. All teaching staff are highly qualified as defined by the "No Child Left Behind" legislation.

When the school bought the building in 2003, it created the opportunity of opening a Child Care/Preschool wing. The Gaudior Early Childhood Center, the GECC, began operations in September of 2003 as a licensed childcare provider and early learning center. The center accepts children from 3 months to 5 years, offering not only childcare, but also 3-year-old and 4 year-old preschool programs.

Mission Statement and Philosophy

Gaudior Academy is a diverse community committed to high standards while meeting individual needs in a joyful educational environment. Together we become successful learners who take pride in ourselves, our school, and our world.

The name Gaudior, which means "more joyful" in Latin, reflects the school's philosophy that children learn best when they are happy, secure and actively involved in the learning process. At Gaudior Academy, teachers work in teams to create a cooperative and nurturing learning environment designed to draw forth each child's natural curiosity and love of learning. A curriculum, which emphasizes investigative studies, challenges all members of the Gaudior educational community, both children and adults, to become active explorers of the world of knowledge.

Gaudior Academy is an inter-generational educational community. Small student:teacher ratios and an emphasis on thematic, cooperative learning create a family atmosphere that fosters self-esteem and enables Gaudior teachers to identify and cultivate the unique abilities of each child. Because the teaching team recognizes the integral role families play in the educational process, families are encouraged to participate in all aspects of school life. Families are invited into the classroom to share their interests and expertise with the children and are encouraged to

volunteer to fill specific needs as they arise. Daily interaction with a racially, culturally and economically diverse group of schoolmates reinforces a curriculum designed to celebrate individual and cultural differences and provides direct personal experience that promotes tolerance and helps children develop a strong self-image and skill in conflict resolution.

As leaders of a learning community that includes students, families, and the neighboring public, the Gaudior staff is expected to model the knowledge, skills, values, and qualities of mind they hope to instill in their students. Rather than relying upon single subject-area textbooks, each teaching team draws upon and integrates materials from multiple sources to create a curriculum that serves the unique needs of their classrooms and the school community-at-large. To succeed in this process, Gaudior teachers must go beyond the standard professional training to learn administrative skills and gain proficiency in curriculum development.

Notice of Nondiscrimination and Right to Know

Gaudior Academy, within its mission, complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination and with all requirements and regulations of the U.S. Department of Education. All members of the Gaudior Community recognize their obligations and/or rights under existing Michigan Right to Know laws with respect to privacy, health and safety matters. Posters issued by the Federal Government summarizing laws concerning these issues are posted in the office.

Governance

As a Public School Academy, commonly known as a charter school, Gaudior received its charter from a state-recognized entity, the **Authorizer**. Eastern Michigan University is Gaudior's authorizer and has oversight responsibility for the school. In this capacity, Joseph Pollack, Ph.D., as the university's representative, ensures that Gaudior follows the rules and regulations dictated by the state Board of Education and the Michigan Legislature.

At the local level, the Gaudior Board of Trustees governs the school. The school board has fiduciary responsibility for the school. That is, the board has oversight responsibility for the finances of the school. The board also sets policy. The board is made up of seven members, with the restriction that, at most, only three members can have children in the school. A list of the members of the Board of Trustees is attached. The Board of Trustees meets the second Tuesday of each month. All are welcome to attend.

At the school level, the school is governed on a day-to-day basis by the **Director and the Advisory Team** in matters that concern the operational part of the school program. The Advisory Team is made up of one teacher from every level, one specialist, the director and the Student Services Administrator. The staff, as a team, recommends major policy, calendar, budget, etc., to the Board. The Student Services Administrator, working with the Director, deals with behavioral problems that cannot be managed at the classroom level.

At the classroom level, the level teachers provide the direction for the students. Working with the school curriculum and the state educational objectives, the level teachers develop a two-year educational plan for the students in the level. Working as a team, the teachers create an environment in which the children learn to respect themselves, others and the world around them.

At the student level, the **Student Council** meets to address student needs and offer fun activities to strengthen community wellness. The Student Council is made up of a representative from every classroom, and a president that is voted on by the entire student body.

At the family level, the **Family Union** organizes family effort in supporting the school. The Union offers community activities at least four times a year and arranges volunteer assignments. The Union usually meets once a month. The day and time are announced in the weekly Family Updates.

Families are informed that if they have a concern that they are to begin by addressing the team that is most directly involved. Classroom concerns should first be addressed with the level teachers and/or specialists. If questions remain, then they see the Student Services

Administrator or the Director if it is a behavioral problem. All of the staff cares about hearing concerns. Families are told that an appointment is always appreciated so that full attention can be given to them without jeopardizing the children's activities.

Staff's role in Governance

All staff plays a role in the governance of the school. The day-to-day operations of the school are the responsibility of the staff. Gaudior is governed using a team approach, and as such, every staff member serves on different teams and has different responsibilities derived from those various team.

The Level/specialist teams - Every staff member is on one of these teams. This is the team the staff member is most intimately involved with. Decisions about level issues, such as Gaudior Night performances, level field trips, classroom-meeting themes, are made as a team.

The Department team - Teaching staff members are involved with curricular review. The departments meet on a monthly basis to discuss school curriculum in that subject area, readings from professional journals, etc. The department offers recommendations to the full staff about curriculum, staffing, etc.

The Administration Team – This team is made up of the Building Manager, Business Manager, Office Manager, School Director, and Student Services Administrator. This team is responsible for compliance and the overall day-to-day management of the school and building.

Administrative jobs – As a team-directed school, staff also has a responsibility for curriculum and school development. Administrative jobs include, but are not limited to:

- **The Department Chairpersons** form the Curriculum Team. This team reviews testing and assessing data and curriculum goals and requirements so that these are aligned. The Department Chairpersons are responsible for managing and organizing resource materials for that subject area.
- **The Level/Specialist Chairpersons** form the Advisory Team, along with the Student Services Administrator and the director. This team addresses the everyday problems that arise in conducting a school. They are the liaison between their Level/Specialist team and the director. All team-meeting decisions will be reported to the director via minutes and information from the director will be communicated back to the team. Any problems and concerns can be handled through this committee.
- **The School Improvement team** is made up of teachers, families and students. Their goal is to assess progress in meeting the goals specified in the School Improvement Plan.
- **The Planning Team** acts as the staff's social coordinators. They also coordinate clubs and reading month.
- **The Auction Team** plans and coordinates the annual school auction in February.

II. CURRICULUM AND STUDENT EVALUATION

All-school Curricula Requirements

Gaudior's curriculum is designed to educate the whole child. The faculty uses a balance of individual and cooperative learning environments to help students discover their individual strengths and learn how to use them to achieve their full creative potential. In order to address the multiple intelligences, students are exposed to a variety of subjects and instructional methods. Classes in Spanish, Art, Music, Physical Education, and Computers, supplement the daily core subjects of Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Field trips help to integrate the content of core and supplementary classes. The periodic introduction of school-wide themes provides further opportunities for integration. Throughout the year, students collect samples of their work in portfolios that serve both to summarize their progress and to highlight their accomplishments.

In developing this curriculum, the members of Gaudior's teaching team have drawn upon the guidelines published by the Michigan State Board of Education, current recommendations in education and their own classroom experience.

To ensure that every child has the opportunity to address all areas of the Multiple

Intelligences, Gaudior Academy has established a list of yearly-required projects. These include:

- * Writing and illustrating a book
- * Completing a science fair project (students in Levels 1, 2 & 3 participate in group projects)
- * Submitting at least two works for the Annual Fine Arts Night display
- * Participating in at least two performances
- * Participating in at least one community service project
- * Participating in the Presidential Fitness Tests

A copy of the school curricula is available in every level for your review. In addition, the curriculum specific to a certain level is located in that level. The Specialists' Department Chairperson has the specialists' curriculum.

Every teacher is responsible for keeping a curriculum notebook up to date for the content area he/she is responsible for. This notebook can be found on the level resource shelf. The notebook contains the level curriculum for that subject area, the semester curriculum and lesson plans for that semester. Level curricula are on a two-year cycle; school years ending in an even number are the first year of the cycle. Notebooks contain at least 1 two-year cycle.

Textbooks are not used at Gaudior. Integration of classes makes it difficult to justify using one text. Therefore, teachers need to formulate their own units. Every level has various resource materials. These can be found in the level. In conjunction with the classroom resources, there are resource centers. The Math and Science resources are found in the Math and Science rooms. Language Arts and Social Studies materials are found in the Teacher Resource Room. Specialists also have materials in the resource room in their respective classrooms. All staff members can share resource materials. Common courtesy is expected when materials are borrowed – a request is made to the staff member in possession of the needed resources, materials are returned promptly and in order, etc. As role models to the children, the staff needs to show how to respectfully handle others' resources.

Along with academic subject matter, staff is also expected to help the children grow socially. Using Jane Nelson's *Positive Discipline* and Jeanne Gibbs' *Tribes* and other age-appropriate activities, teachers conduct conflict resolution lessons, class meetings and team-building activities to bring about a caring community. Sex Education and Communicable Diseases Education are subjects that are included in the Physical Education/Health curriculum. Letters informing families of the dates when sex education will be discussed and the material used will be sent home for their review and consent.

Community Time

The last two (2) periods on Fridays are devoted to community activities. These range from multi-age clubs to completing curriculum requirements.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of the Gaudior philosophy. There is at least one (1) all-school field trip every year and numerous level trips. Families are encouraged to be drivers and/or accompany the class on these trips. **REMINDER: Michigan Booster Seat Law, effective July 1, 2008 - Children must be in a booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4'9" tall. Children who fall under this law are asked to bring their booster seats when their class is scheduled for a field trip.**

All school trips include a cultural experience in the fall and roller-skating in December.

The area of study the level is concentrating on determines level trips. Trips have been to the Detroit Institute of Arts, Henry Ford Museum, a trout farm, the library, etc.

A blanket permission form is on file for every student. This eliminates any need for a permission slip for every trip. Teachers will send home notes with students explaining the details of any trip. Field trips are also mentioned in the weekly update.

The Eighth Grade graduation trip is a 2-night stay at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island in May. The grads fundraise all year to cover the costs of this trip.

Library

All classrooms have their own libraries that include books for research and pleasure reading. The school has a main library to supplement the classroom offerings. The students are encouraged to use the school library during the day as needed.

The Family Union sponsors a Book Fair in the spring that helps to build the school library offerings. Donations are always accepted. Families are asked to volunteer to work in the library on a regular basis.

Silent Reading

The entire school observes a half hour of silent reading every day at 12:30pm. Homeroom staff is expected to establish ways of holding students accountable for reading at this time.

Student Evaluations

Teacher Observations and classroom testing

Teachers should keep a record of student progress, both academic and social. This can be done by observations, testing, conferencing with students, etc. Student portfolios are a powerful tool in evaluation of student progress. Every student has a portfolio that moves with the child through the various levels. These portfolios form a basis for conferences.

Portfolios

Portfolios are a compilation of student's works. Teachers and students can include pieces in the portfolio. Every student has a portfolio that remains with his records as the student moves from academic level to level. The portfolio is presented to the student at the graduation ceremony.

Student/Family/Staff Conferences

Families may request to schedule a conference when they feel it necessary. Regular conferences will be scheduled after the first quarter and again after the third quarter. Forms will be sent home prior to conferences giving each family the opportunity to schedule a convenient time to come in. At the first conference, the family and level staff review progress. At the second conference, the student joins the family and level staff, and leads the discussion. Conferences are opportunities for the members of the learning team, student, and families to come together and evaluate progress. By using their portfolios as a guide, students show families what they see as their personal strengths and weaknesses, how they met goals and what areas need improvement.

Standardized Testing

The Gaudior community is involved in the taking of two main sets of tests: MEAP (Michigan Educational Assessment Program) and IOWA, a standardized national test. MEAP testing is done in October and is given to 3rd through 8th graders. The test, though, really involves the whole school since the preparation for the test is done in the earlier levels. This is a statewide testing program initiated by the State Board of Education to assess students' knowledge, skills and attitudes. MEAP test results have been designed to enable individual school districts to conduct assessment of their curriculum's ability to meet the educational needs of students, to judge the effectiveness of school programs in providing quality learning opportunities for all students and to identify objective areas in need of further study and improvement. The staff at Gaudior sees MEAP as just one way of assessing a child.

To involve the whole community in this testing, we make a MEAP message board. On this board, everyone can write an encouraging note to the students taking the test.

The entire student body participates in the IOWA testing. Every effort is made to match the child with the test that matches his/her ability. Depending on the test, areas evaluated include math, language arts, reading, social studies, science, and study skills. These tests are more thorough than the MEAP.

Whenever the school conducts a standardized test, breakfast is offered to the test-takers.

The Staff agrees with current research that it is difficult to concentrate if you are hungry or tired. Staff is encouraged to have a positive outlook on testing. Although our charter requires standardized testing, it is not overemphasized. Testing techniques are reviewed, but curriculum is not determined by the test.

Progress Reports

Written progress reports are sent home after the first semester and then again at year's end. The teachers share their observations of progress made and their goals for future growth of the students. Level reports include description of the social progress of the child. Academic reports include semester goals and how well the child did in meeting those goals.

Technology

Every classroom has an Internet hook-up. Classrooms have computers for student use. There is a computer lab with 24 PC's. The computer lab is used on a rotating basis.

Before graduating, every student must fulfill the state's technology requirements.

Tribes

"*Tribes*" is a democratic process for forming communities. Using the four community agreements (appreciation/no putdowns, attentive listening, mutual respect, and participation/right to pass), students and staff develop caring relationships that foster academic and social growth.

Grad tribes – Every 8th grade student (grad) has a tribe consisting of one (1) student from each classroom and a staff member. These tribes meet periodically throughout the year to encourage the grad as (s)he completes graduation requirements.

III. School Policies

Discipline

Discipline Overview - The small student/staff ratio at Gaudior Academy allows for frequent individual exchanges between the staff and student. This enables students to be involved in setting their own educational and personal goals. This close personal attention coupled with the school's integrated, investigative curriculum and its goal to develop a caring community, serves to avert many problems before they arise. When problems do arise, the following disciplinary measures will apply, not necessarily in this order:

- * Children are given time to refocus with a time-out and then re-join the class
- * Children spend time in another classroom (Round-Robin/in-house suspension)
- * Children will stay after school to complete assigned tasks
- * Family-teacher conferences with the Student Services Administrator and/or the Director to discuss formulating a behavioral contract
- * Suspension, either in-school or out-of-school, reserved for infractions involving fighting, destruction of property
- * Expulsion, as required by the State of Michigan, for possession of controlled substances or weapons (or toys that look like weapons)

Some problems occasionally occur because there are different definitions of "play": what is one person's play is another person's hurt. Therefore, the staff at Gaudior has developed this definition of "play": **if contact is made or if there is an obvious intent to harm, playing is not going on. Such activity results in a visit to the office and possible in-house suspension. Families will be called if a child is sent to in-house suspension. In-house suspension includes working on class assignments and community service.**

Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated in any class, including Art, Gym, Music, Spanish, and Enrichment classes. Families will be notified when their child's behavior does not meet classroom expectations.

Classroom rules are made in conjunction with the students and elements of *Tribes* and

Positive Discipline in the Classroom. Staff and students review the principles explained in these books and then write a set of classroom rules during the first weeks of class. Students are also reminded of effective methods used at Gaudior as reminders to students to make good choices. These include, but are not limited to:

“Giving five” – The staff member raises his/her hand and announces, “Give me 5!” The children respond by holding up their hand and stopping all talking and movement.

Giving five is a summary of what you would do: Eyes on the speaker, listen to the speaker, silence, hand up, respect others’ space.

“Taking five” – The student can ask for a short break to remove him/herself from the class activity by going to a designated place in the room or out in the hall for a maximum of five (5) minutes.

Code of Conduct

Major Infractions

1. Inappropriate physical contact
2. Physical intimidation
3. Verbal threats
4. Insubordination
5. Offensive/sexual language
6. Destruction of school or personal property of others
7. Theft
8. Leaving school grounds without proper consent
9. Additionally, those described in the Michigan School Code

Committing a major infraction of the Code of Conduct will result in a student’s immediate withdrawal from the classroom/community, and placement in the Student Services Administrator’s office. The teacher/staff member who remands the student to the Student Services Administrator’s office will submit a written incident report, a “pink slip.” A student who commits any one, or combination of these offenses, shall be subject to the consequences that will be determined by the Student Services Administrator.

If needed, a Discipline Review Committee will review concerns that have not been resolved through the above-mentioned avenues. The Discipline Review Committee will consist of six members: one teacher from the lower levels, one teacher from the upper levels, one specialist teacher, one family volunteer, the Director, and one Board member. The Director would only vote if a tie occurs. The Committee’s responsibilities will include, but will not be limited to, review of major infractions of the Code of Conduct, suspensions and expulsions.

Minor Infractions

1. Disruption of the classroom
2. Classroom tardiness
3. Failure to follow classroom rules

If a student is sent to the Student Services Administrator on three different occasions for minor infractions of the Code of Conduct, a meeting may take place between the student, family(s)/guardian of student, and the Student Services Administrator. At this meeting, consequences will be established for repeated infractions.

Sexual Harassment - Pursuant to Board policy adopted by the Board of Trustees, January 1999 and effective immediately, sexual harassment of any student, teacher, employee, Board member, volunteer, contractor or applicants for employment by a student or family is prohibited.

Definition of sexual harassment - Sexual harassment is prohibited and is defined as:

1. Unwelcome sexual advance; or
2. Requests for sexual favors
3. Other verbal or physical conduct or communication of an intimidating, hostile or offensive sexual nature when such form of communication has the purpose of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Electronics – Cell phones, gaming devices, music player and other electronic devices are not allowed in school, except during special events such as Level 5 lock-in, camp, etc. The school realizes that families may want their students to carry a cell phone for safety purposes, but during school hours, they may not use it. The phone must be turned off and stored in the student's locker. If a student needs to contact anyone during school hours, they should ask to use the phone in the office. If a family member needs to contact a student for emergency purposes during the school day, please contact the office. The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen electronic equipment.

Homework Policy – For students in Levels 1-3, the majority of homework assigned, is simply material that was not finished during class time. From time to time, special assignments might be given to meet unit requirements. For students in Levels 4-5, homework is assigned on a daily basis. Every Friday, a homework sheet is sent home, listing missing assignments from the week and upcoming tests and due dates. Students are expected to complete all outstanding assignments and bring them, as well as the homework note signed by the family and student, with them to school on Monday. Failure to do so will result in afterschool detention.

Music – Because music on the radio is not always appropriate, and because of the need to shelter students from commercials and potentially upsetting materials, use of the radio will not be allowed in the classroom. Music can be played given the following boundaries:

Each classroom must create an approved music library.

1. This approval is based on the staff member's own discretion and the staff member will be held accountable for his/her music choices.
2. Approved music from this library can be used to supplement the classroom curriculum and may also be played during lunch.
3. If the music is played as background music, the teacher must take into consideration that some students may be distracted and must accommodate accordingly.

The staff member must facilitate the music at all times. Each classroom should create a plan to diversify the genre of music being played.

IV. FAMILIES

Family Participation

"We are parents and guardians dedicated to helping support our children and their staff by participating as actively as possible in their educational experience." - *Gaudior Family Union Mission Statement*

The families are an important part of the team concept at Gaudior. Research has shown that children have a more positive and successful school experience when families support the school and are interested in the child's progress. Therefore, we encourage families to become involved in all aspects of Gaudior Academy life, both inside and outside the classroom. Gaudior has developed a **Family Support Agreement** that sums up what the school feels are essential areas of involvement, and every family is to read and sign at the beginning of the school year. At a minimum, we expect the involvement to include the following:

- * Reading weekly *Updates*
- * Participation in at least one volunteer effort per year
- * Attendance at *all* Gaudior Night programs
- * Attendance at student/family/staff conferences
- * Attendance at quarterly Family Union meetings
- * Participation in at least one school-developed community service project

The opportunities for family involvement are many. Every family member is automatically a member of the Family Union. Every family will receive a Volunteer Form to fill out to help each teacher plan activities for the year. We ask for a 10-hour commitment from each family. This commitment can easily be fulfilled in a number of different ways. You can:

- * Work in the classroom
- * Shop for school projects
- * Teach a mini-class
- * Make phone calls
- * Help with Science Fair
- * Help during lunch hour
- * Be a Room Helper
- * Chaperone on field trips
- * Help with an all-school event
- * Do at-home projects
- * Help with the making of books
- * Attend Family Union and/or Board meetings

Families also can serve on one of these committees of the Family Union:

- * Leadership Committee
- * Environmental Committee
- * School Improvement Committee
- * Fund Raising Committee
- * Grants Committee
- * Family Outreach Committee
- * Calendar Committee
- * Building Committee

V. Students Responsibilities

Students are expected to be active members of the learning team. They are to be contributing members of all classroom and school activities. Activities that students participate in include, but are not limited to:

Class meetings – The classroom students form class rules that are in alignment with the Four Community Agreements, school and state guidelines. Students learn conflict resolution skills, develop leadership qualities, and hone methods for cooperative learning. Students plan fundraising events to help finance class field trips.

School activities – At least once a month, the entire school gets together to celebrate the community. Students are expected to help each other and support each other in day-to-day activities.

Role Models – As a K-8 school, Gaudior has a unique opportunity for helping children realize what a role model is and what a role model should do. Older students are expected to give good example to younger students. As families get smaller and more nuclear, children often do not have opportunities to relate to younger and/or older children. Gaudior students are expected to do this. Recess is another opportunity for children to play with different age groups. Older students may read with younger students during Silent Reading Time.

Classes – Students are expected to come to class prepared. That is, with writing utensils, paper, homework, etc. Students are expected to show respect to all individuals - teachers and fellow students, at all times.

Homework – There is a homework policy at Gaudior that is strictly enforced. Homework is expected to be completed by the due date. For Levels 4 & 5, homework sheets go home every Friday. All homework that is not completed by the Friday of the week it was assigned is compiled on a homework sheet that is sent home. Families are to read the sheet and sign it. If homework is listed, that work must be completed by Monday. If the homework is not completed by then, the child will be sent to homework detention after school on Tuesday and Thursday until the work is done satisfactorily. Level 3 sends unfinished work home in a folder with a note from the teachers on Thursdays. Level 2 sends folders home on Fridays.

Field Trips – There are school field trips and level field trips offered every month. Students are expected to act responsibly on these trips. Students are aware that they represent Gaudior to the community at large and act appropriately.

Clubs & Community Time – The last 2 hours of every Friday have been scheduled as

Community Time. At this time, students have opportunities to join various clubs. All-school activities are also planned for this time, such as cleaning the park, roller skating party, bowling, etc.

V. DAY TO DAY

Calendar and General School Events

A copy of the school calendar is included.

Updates are sent home from the office once a week with the youngest child in the family. This is the lifeline of the Gaudior community, so staff is expected to insure they go home every Tuesday.

Ice Cream Social - Attendance is mandatory for all students and their families at this first official Gaudior function, held before the first day of school. It's a time to socialize and also attend general meetings with level teaching teams.

All School Fall Picnic - On the Friday of the first full week of school, the entire school community meets at the park. At this time, a picture is taken with the school community wearing their new Gaudior T-shirt.

Family Open House - An opportunity for families to gain a better understanding of the day-to-day activities in their child(ren)'s classroom(s). Every family should be represented.

Photo Day - Individual photos are usually taken in the early part of the school year and again in the spring. The spring photography session includes Buddy pictures.

Gaudior Nights - Family attendance is mandatory at the following:

*Science Fair in January. Levels 1, 2 and 3 complete group projects in their classrooms. Levels 4 and 5 students present individual projects. The best projects from Level 5 are submitted to the Detroit Metropolitan Science Fair at Cobo Hall in the spring.

*Fine Arts/Young Authors' in the spring. The students' artwork and published books are on display. Students read from their books to an audience.

*Performance in May. This performance is the culmination of an all-school integrated unit.

Winter Holiday Break - The Director arranges skating and/or bowling parties for the school during the afternoon of the last day before break.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - Activities take place to celebrate this holiday as a school community prior to the actual day, as the school is closed to allow families their personal observations.

Charter Schools Spelling Bee - Levels 3, 4 and 5 students participate in a Charter Schools Spelling Bee in the spring.

National Geography Bee - Level 5 students participate in National Geographic's Geography Bee held in January.

National Reading Month - Celebrated throughout March. "Book Bucks" are earned for activities provided for each day. The grads dress up for a costume parade to begin the Reading Month activities. Reading month culminates in a celebration that includes ice cream sundaes for students who earn the required amount of Book Bucks. The student earning the highest number of book bucks in each classroom earns the opportunity to throw a whipped cream pie in a staff member's face.

Presentations at the Detroit Institute of Arts - Grads make their required presentations at the DIA. Representatives from Levels 3 and 4 are allowed to attend, as are members of the Gaudior community at large.

Field Day - Outside activities are held and a picnic lunch is served.

Graduation - Ceremony is held during the last week of the school year. All attend.

Dress Requirements

Students are expected to dress comfortably within the bounds of good taste. Students who come to school in T-shirts that display unacceptable pictures or words will be required to wear them inside out. Short-cropped shirts, tank tops and "sagging" pants are not acceptable.

Shirts and tops should be long enough to cover the entire upper torso when the student's arms are fully extended above the head. Shirts and tops should cover the entire shoulder and be within 2" of the neckline. Pants should not sag. The waistlines of the pants or shorts should be at the student's waistline. Chains that hang on the outside of clothing are not acceptable. The wearing of hats and other head coverings by male or female students is not acceptable on both a health and a social level. Hats can be worn on the playground, but not in school.

Students in Levels 1-4 have gym class twice a week. Gym attire is as follows: gym shoes without heels and with non-marking soles. Jeans should not be worn, as they do not allow for the freedom of movement necessary in gym class. Dangling earrings should be removed prior to gym class. Children can store an extra pair of gym shoes in their lockers or they can bring them from home. (The extra pair would also come in handy when the children have accidents or have gotten wet outside.) The children are also free to change clothes before gym class, if they like. If children do not have the proper shoes or clothes, they will spend the class period working in the office.

It is strongly suggested that children keep an extra change of clothes in their locker for emergencies. Since there are so many varied activities offered in the classroom, the chance of an accident occurring exists. A change of clothes saves a phone call home and an embarrassing situation for the child.

Emergency Care

Minor incidents can be handled in the classroom. All classrooms have a first aid kit containing cough drops, band-aids and alcohol wipes. Teachers are asked to deal with the minor problems with a little TLC and the first aid kit. If a child complains of a headache, stomachache or is in need of ice, the student is sent down to the office and the Office Manager will address the problem.

If the action requires professional medical attention, a family or guardian will be called. During the phone call, determination will be made as to what action is to be taken next. Either the child will wait in the office until a family member comes or the family will meet the child, accompanied by a school staff person, at the hospital. The staff person will stay with the child until a family member arrives.

Enrollment Forms

All enrollment cards must be filled out and returned before the start of school. Immunization and physical records must be on file in the office before the start of the school year. Emergency cards must be completely filled out and on file in the office before a child can be left at school.

If any information changes during the school year, it is necessary to update forms. Children will be released from school only with the people specifically listed on the emergency cards unless the office is notified. If you should not want your child released with someone listed on the card, you must update your card .

Fire & Police Departments

Members of the local Police & Fire Departments play a vital role in the school's safety program. It shall be the responsibility of the school to:

- *Establish and maintain relationships with the local departments
- *Review the Safety Action Plan as a staff annually

Fire Drills/Lockdown Procedure/Tornado Warnings

Student safety is a responsibility of the staff. The school complies with all fire/lockdown/tornado safety laws and regularly conducts drills to insure safe conduct in times of emergency. The school will conduct eight (8) drills throughout the year to meet state requirements. Specific directions are given to the students by the staff so that safe, prompt and orderly evacuation of the building is obtained.

An evacuation plan is posted at every classroom exit.

Hazardous Materials

The school seeks to provide a safe environment for all members of the Gaudior community. The handling of hazardous materials will be dealt with as defined by OSHA and the Material Safety Data Sheets from materials suppliers to meet hazardous determination requirements. The Building Manager and/or Board designee will be responsible for ensuring that chemicals and hazardous materials are properly labeled and maintained.

Health Department

Gaudior Academy will keep close relations with the state and local Health Department in all matters of health programs in the school. Staff members shall safeguard the health of the child in school by supplementing and enforcing the efforts of the home, providing conditions and educational opportunities conducive to good health. Immunization forms, documenting dates of inoculations are required for each child enrolled in a public school. Your child will not be allowed to come to school if the Immunization Form is not complete and up-to-date.

Lost and Found

The school has a Lost and Found box in the main hall outside the office. The box is emptied every month and the contents donated to the Salvation Army. Please check the Lost and Found box for things that have not returned home.

Lunches and Snacks

The lunch hour is from 11:30 to 12:30. Students are required to provide their own lunches and snacks. Research has found that children feel and perform better when their lunches and snacks are nutritionally sound, therefore, children are asked to leave candy, pop, and other such snacks at home. All students are encouraged to bring in clear bottles of water to sip on during the school day.

Medication

If a child should require medication during the school day, authorized personnel will do all dispensing in the office. At no time should a student take any medication on his/her own.

Forms signed by families and the student's physician must be on file giving school permission to dispense prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

If office personnel dispenses any medication, prescription or non-prescription, a written report will be kept detailing the quantity of medication, date, time and the amount of medication given as well as the initials of the staff person dispensing the medication.

All medication must be in original container and must have the child's name, dosage and physician's directions for dispensing. Procedures for handling medications are more specifically outlined in the "Medication Administration for Unlicensed Personnel Manual" issued by the Michigan Association of School Nurses.

Outdoor Recess

All children go out for recess everyday. Lunch hour is from 11:30 - 12:30. This includes approximately 20 minutes to eat, depending on the age of the child. The rest of the hour is spent outside. Research has found that children need to use their "far vision" some time every day. The outside activity also allows for large motor muscle activity.

Children are expected to be dressed appropriately. As long as the temperature is above 20 degrees (including wind chill), they will go outside for recess. The office will make every effort to display colored flags in the main hall, indicating whether or not the students can go out because of the weather. Please make sure students have hats, mittens, boots and snow pants when necessary. Extra clothes to change into are also useful if a child gets wet. The office keeps a few tops and sweats in case of emergencies. Please send the child to the office if an

accident occurs and the child does not have the needed change of clothes.

All children should have a full change of clothes in their locker. Accidents happen outside and in and the extra change of clothes may save the family a trip to school.

The children are asked not to bring toys from home to play with during recess. Excited children can cause broken toys. The school supplies outdoor equipment to be used during recess. They include, but are not limited to, foursquare balls, jump ropes, footballs, basketballs, and sand toys.

If the family/guardian requests that a student stay in for lunch, please send the child to the office with a book to read during recess.

Parking

Students need to be dropped off and picked up in the parking lot behind the building. Walkers leave via the office door. All other children use the Community door. Carpool traffic flows counter-clockwise in a "U" formation. Carpool vehicles may park on the perimeter, north of the "U", or in the very center of the "U". Staff may park along the warehouse on Avondale or in the north part of the back lot. Only Level 1 teachers may use the east door. Drivers are to proceed through the lot **with extreme caution at all times** to insure the safety of all. The gate will be opened from 8:15-9:00 and from 3:15-4:00. If families come before or after that time, they are asked to park on school side of Avondale and walk through the office.

Safety and Security

Gaudior Academy shall make reasonable provisions for the health and safety of its employees and students during their hours at school. Staff and the school community strive to maintain a safe and secure working environment for its employees.

Staff must immediately report any unsafe conditions to the school office. Employees who violate state and local safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report such situations may be subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of employment.

In case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees should notify the office. Families are always called when there has been a head injury. Accident reports are available in the office. Completed reports are to be given to the Student Services Administrator.

School Closing

Please listen to WWJ, 950 AM, or Channels 4, 7 or 50 for information regarding Gaudior. Because many of our students travel some distance, families are asked to use their own good judgment if the weather is bad. The state requires 1,098 hours of instruction. A school day is defined as having 75% total student attendance. If Gaudior falls below that attendance on any given day, the day must be made up. The Family Union has a phone tree system to inform families quickly if school has been canceled.

School Hours

The school day starts at 8:30 a.m. Students can begin entering their classrooms at 8:15 a.m. On regular school days, staff will escort their students out of the building at the end of the day at 3:30 p.m. Dismissal on half days will be at 12:00.

Students arriving late must stop at the office to sign in before going to their classrooms. If leaving the building early, the family member or authorized person picking up must sign out the student(s) in the office.

Families should make every effort to pick up their child(ren) at the 3:30 dismissal. In case of emergency, families are asked to call the office. Any child left in the building after 3:45 will be sent to Enrichment and the family will be charged both a drop-in fee and appropriate Enrichment fee. Please see the attached GECC Agreement for program details.

Families are always welcome to come into the classrooms before and after school. The

beginning and end of the school day can provide valuable opportunities for staff and families to socialize and exchange notes. However, to ensure that the staff is available to devote sufficient attention to their students during school hours, families are asked to arrange an appointment to address any problems that might arise.

Families working in classrooms should first check in at the office before proceeding to classrooms.

School Supplies

Every level will be given a supply list with their enrollment forms during the summer. Please have your student bring those items requested, with them the first week of school. The Family Union, as a service to the community, sells school supplies at a reduced cost to families.

Updates

The office organizes and distributes the notes sent home every Tuesday via the youngest child in the family. Notes always include an *Update* written by the Director who summarizes important upcoming events and highlighting activities from the previous week. *Updates* will also include school announcements, fundraising activities, Family Union activities, etc. Please be sure to distribute the weekly *Updates* every Tuesday. Staff may add any pertinent information to the Update. Levels may also send home additional updates to the families. Please furnish the office a copy of any updates sent home from the classrooms.

A student's success in school starts in the hearts and hands of his family. Children must be told that he is loved, read to, hugged, smiled at, enjoyed. Only when the heart is satisfied can the teacher extend the learning that has started at home. The way the adults see the child and the way she sees herself are what the child will become.

Reprinted 8.08

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GAUDIOR ACADEMY FAMILY SUPPORT AGREEMENT

Because we believe that learning is and should be a lifelong process, we have designed Gaudior Academy to be an intergenerational educational community, which challenges all of its members, both children and adults, to actively explore the world of knowledge. In order for this community to succeed in its mission of producing well-balanced, responsible, and enthusiastic learners, its adult members must model the values and behavior we seek to instill in our children. As the parent or guardian of a Gaudior student, you will be a vital member of the Gaudior educational community, and one of your child(ren)'s primary educational role models. Because we recognize the integral role you play in your child(ren)'s education, we ask that before you and your child(ren) formally accept our invitation to join the community, you review the following information concerning our school policies and your expectations for your involvement in the life of the school. Your family's agreement to work with us in support of your child(ren)'s education is indicated by signing this form and returning it to the school.

I. Participation

Our experience indicates that children are more enthusiastic when their families participate in school activities. Therefore, we encourage families to become involved in all aspects of Gaudior Academy life, both inside and outside the classroom. At a minimum, we expect the involvement to include the following:

- Participation in at least one volunteer effort per year
- Attendance at all Gaudior Night programs
- Attendance at student-family-teacher conferences
- Participation in at least one school-developed community service project.

II. Assignments, Homework, Student Attendance

At Gaudior, we seek to educate the whole child. One important aspect of that education is helping children develop a sense of responsibility, both to themselves and others. Among other things, this means learning to complete and turn in assignments on time. Your child(ren) need your support and your direction in this process. We expect that you will help your child(ren) by:

- Staying informed about your child(ren)'s homework assignments and classroom activities
- Making yourself available to help your child(ren) with assignments when asked
- Monitoring your child(ren)'s progress with assignments
- Not doing your child(ren)'s homework for him/her
- Supporting all-school curricula projects (see next section)
- Attending a student-family-teacher conference when your child(ren) have been absent for 10 days (not necessarily in a block) to discuss missed class work.
- Attending a student-family-teacher conference when your child has been tardy for 15 days to discuss missed class work.

III. All-school curricula requirements

To ensure that every child has the opportunity to address all areas of the Multiple Intelligences, Gaudior Academy has established a list of yearly-required projects. These include:

- Writing and illustrating a book
- Completing a science fair project (students in Levels 1-3 participate in group projects)
- Submitting at least two works of art for the annual Fine Arts Night display
- Participating in at least two performances
- Participating in at least one community service project
- Participating in the Presidential Fitness Tests

IV. Discipline

The small student-teacher ratio at Gaudior allows for frequent individual exchanges between the teacher and student. This enables students to be involved in setting their own educational and personal goals. This close personal attention coupled with the school's integrated, investigative curriculum and its goal to develop a caring community, services to avert many problems before they arise. When problems do arise, the following disciplinary measures will apply, not necessarily in this order:

- Children are given time to refocus with a time-out and then re-join the class
- Children spend time in another classroom (Round-Robin)
- Children will stay after school to complete assigned tasks
- Family-teacher conferences with the Director to discuss formulating a behavioral contract
- Suspension, either in-school or out-of-school, reserved for infractions involving fighting, destruction of property
- Expulsion, as required by the State of Michigan, for possession of controlled substances or weapons

As the parent/legal guardian of student(s) of Gaudior Academy, I (we) have read the information regarding Gaudior's policies and expectations for participation, agree to support the school in the manner indicated, AND HAVE SIGNED AND RETURNED THE FAMILY HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE.

As a student(s) of Gaudior Academy, I (we) have read (or have been read to me) the information regarding Gaudior Academy's policies. I (We) agree to support the school, follow its policies and guidelines, AND HAVE SIGNED AND RETURNED THE FAMILY HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE.

GECC AGREEMENT

Welcome to all members of the Gaudior community! The Gaudior Early Childhood Center (GECC) is the preschool/childcare/before & after school care side of the Gaudior Educational Program. The GECC has been in operation for six years. Last year's programs and operations have been evaluated and areas were found where changes were needed. *Those changes are italicized below for your convenience.*

- **Communication is very important. Families must be made aware of GECC policies.**
 - To that end, this letter is being given to every family and every family indicates their agreement by signing the GECC portion of the Family Handbook Signature Page.
- **The before & after school program is named Enrichment.**
 - Two sessions are offered in the morning – 7-7:30A & 7:30-8:15A.
 - Two sessions are offered in the afternoon – 3:45-4:45P & 4:45-6:00P.
 - Based on experience, and depending on staffing and enrollment numbers, the older and younger children will be in 2 separate areas for the first session in the afternoon, with a GECC employee assigned to each area.
 - *AM costs are \$2.00 for each of the morning sessions.*
 - *PM costs are \$3.50 for each of the afternoon sessions.* Healthy snacks are offered in the afternoon.
 - A schedule and program are planned to offer children activities that peak their interests and keep to the school's multiple intelligence philosophy.
 - Periodically, *Tribe's* activities will be offered to continue the community-building activities initiated in the school.
 - A sibling discount is offered. *The fee for each additional child is \$1.25 per AM session and \$2.25 per PM session.*
 - *In an effort to continue being a "green" school – a school that considers its impact on the environment - registration forms will no longer be sent home with the weekly updates. They will be available in the main office, the school's website (www.gaudioracademy.org), or from the enrichment staff. Families are responsible for picking up forms in advance and submitting them by the date on the form, in advance of the start of the following week.* If a family would like to pay bi-monthly or monthly, arrangements can be made. Forms must be completed in their entirety.
 - All school children who are not picked up between 3:30pm and 3:45pm (the end of the school day), will be taken to enrichment and charged a drop-in fee of \$5.00/child per session, beyond the regular session fees.
 - Parents/Guardians MUST sign children in/out in the AM and PM.
 - Drop-off and pick-up is at the GECC door at the back of the building near the Community door.
 - For the safety of the children, families are asked to not drive past the double white line for drop-off/pick-up.
- **Preschool classes are offered for 3 & 4 year olds, M-TH during the school year.**
- **Childcare is offered from 7AM-6PM for children 3 months-5 years. Registration required.**
- **Financial Policies**
 - Enrichment registration forms are required and due in advance every Friday, prior to the start of the week for which they are registered, unless other arrangements have been made in advance.
 - **PAYMENT MUST BE MADE IN ADVANCE.** Full payment for the services requested on the registration form is due prior to the week for which the child is registered.
 - **You MUST receive a receipt for any payment made.**
 - A separate registration form is required for each child in attendance.
 - A \$20 late fee per form is assessed on late forms submitted, in addition to the session fees.
 - Late fees of \$1.00/minute per child are assessed after 6:00 pm.
 - Because of staff scheduling requirements, **NO REFUNDS are given for days registered and paid for, but not used.**
 - Checks may be made payable to **Gaudior Academy.**
 - Drop-in charges of \$5/child per session, are assessed, in addition to the session fee, if unregistered children are brought to Enrichment in the morning or at the end of the school day.
 - *Children may not be able to attend Enrichment or childcare classes if the family has an unpaid balance beyond one week. If children are not picked up by 3:45, they will be escorted to the school director for pick-up by the family.*
 - *If a child has not been picked up by 6:00P, and a family member cannot be contacted to clarify the reasons why the child is still in enrichment, the GECC personnel will consider the child(ren) abandoned and take the legal steps necessary in such a situation.*
 - All Gaudior Academy semester reports will be held until all balances are paid in full.
 - Balances may be sent to Collections, with parent/guardian also responsible for all Collection's fees.
 - A fee of \$10.00, in addition to the bank charges, will be assessed on any bounced checks. We reserve the right to refuse payment by check if two insufficient funds checks have already been returned.

If you have any questions, please call Sheila White, GECC Director, 313-792-8273.

I agree to abide by the above GECC policies should my child(ren) ever need to utilize these services and indicate this agreement by signing and returning the Family Handbook Signature Page.

**GAUDIOR ACADEMY
FIELD TRIP PERMISSION FORM**

3A. PLEASE READ AND INDICATE YOUR CONSENT BY SIGNING THE FAMILY HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE.

I hereby give permission for my child(ren) to participate in field trips with Gaudior Academy. I understand that these trips will be within a 40-mile radius and that the school will inform me of any trip(s) my child(ren) will attend.

REMINDER: Michigan Booster Seat Law, effective July 1, 2008 - Children must be in a booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4'9" tall. Children who fall under this law are asked to bring their booster seats when their class is scheduled for a field trip.

**GAUDIOR ACADEMY
PHOTO CONSENT FORM**

3B. PLEASE READ AND INDICATE BY CHECKING YOUR CHOICES FOR BOTH SECTIONS ON THE FAMILY HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE.

SECTION #1

Because we are always taking pictures and videotaping during the school day for our print and video yearbooks, we request that this section be completed for our files.

I authorize Gaudior Academy to use my photograph or video for the purposes contained in Section #1. I understand that my name or no name may be used in conjunction with the photograph or video. I waive any and all rights I may have to royalties or other compensation in connection with any such use.

I do not authorize Gaudior Academy to use my photograph or video for the purposes contained in Section #1.

SECTION #2

There are occasions where outside sources will be visiting Gaudior and during that visit, take pictures or videotape for the purpose of supplementing a story for editorial and/or publicity purposes. We request that you also complete this section for our files.

I authorize Gaudior Academy to use my photograph or video for the purposes contained in Section #2. I understand that my name or no name may be used in conjunction with the photograph or video. I waive any and all rights I may have to royalties or other compensation in connection with any such use.

I do not authorize Gaudior Academy to use my photograph or video for the purposes contained in Section #2.

WE ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE CONTENT OF THESE FORMS AND HAVE SIGNED AND RETURNED THE FAMILY HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE.

GAUDIOR ACADEMY
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR TECHNOLOGY

Gaudior Academy maintains a computer system that is networked to a school server. This system includes personal computer hardware and software applications, electronic mail ("e-mail"), and Internet access. Gaudior provides these systems to assist students and staff in conducting Gaudior business and in pursuing their educational endeavors. All users are expected to use this system in a reasonable manner, acting responsibly at all times, and consistent with Gaudior's mission statement and philosophy.

Anyone who violates this policy or uses Gaudior's technology system for improper purposes shall be subject to disciplinary action, from loss of privileges to use Gaudior technology, up to and including termination of employment and/or expulsion from the school.

I understand that all Gaudior-provided technology, including all hardware and software components, belong to Gaudior. Additionally, all communications generated, composed, sent, or received using Gaudior-provided devices or services are, and remain, Gaudior property. Such communications are not the private property of any user.

I understand that I have no right of privacy with respect to Gaudior's software, e-mail, or Internet access. My having a password does not mean that I have any right of privacy in my e-mail, Internet access, or software.

I agree to not intentionally use Gaudior's technology to:

- 1) create, print, display, download, send or receive any offensive, threatening, or disruptive messages. Examples include any pornographic or racist messages, cartoons or jokes, or any other comment that inappropriately or offensively addresses someone's age, color, sex, race, religion, national origin or disability; or
- 2) illegally send/upload or receive/download or otherwise transfer copyrighted materials (including software, music, and video).

I further agree that if I receive any of the above types of material from another person, I will immediately delete the material and advise the senders that they are to not send such material again.

I understand that Gaudior reserves the right to review, audit, intercept, and access e-mail messages that I send or receive and may monitor my Internet access. By using these media, I waive any privacy rights I may have in these communications. If I am found to have intentionally created or sent abusive or inappropriate e-mail or to have accessed inappropriate material through the Internet, I know that I will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination and/or expulsion from Gaudior Academy.

WE ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE CONTENT OF THIS FORM AND HAVE SIGNED AND RETURNED THE FAMILY HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE.

GAUDIOR ACADEMY FAMILY HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE

In an effort to continue being a “green” school – a school that considers its impact on the environment - paper copies of the Family Handbook are no longer being printed. You can read the handbook on our website, www.gaudioracademy.org. If you do not have access to the internet, a copy of the handbook can be provided at your request.

We, the undersigned, have read the Gaudior Family Handbook and the forms attached, and:

1. agree to the contents of the (gray) Family Support Agreement.
2. agree to the contents of the (salmon) GECC Agreement.
- 3A. agree to the contents of the (purple) Field Trip Permission Slip.
- 3B. agree to the contents of the (purple) Photo Consent Form.
 - a. Section #1 Gaudior use of photos Do authorize Do not authorize (check one)
 - b. Section #2 Outside use of photos Do authorize Do not authorize (check one)
4. agree to the contents of the (yellow) Acceptable Use Policy for Technology.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian	Date
Signature of Student	Date
Signature of Student	Date
Signature of Student	Date
Signature of Student	Date
Signature of Student	Date