

# GEMS

American Academy Qatar

## Upper School Handbook

2023–2024



**WELCOME TO GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY QATAR**

Dear Upper School Students and Parents,

On behalf of the Upper School faculty, we welcome you to the 2022—2023 school year. We wish to extend a special welcome to those of you who are new to Qatar, GAAQ, or Upper School. If there is anything we can do to ease your transition, please let us know.

This handbook is the main reference for important information about our Upper School program. Other details will be provided to you via school-wide communications, the GAAQ website, and at special events like Back to School Night.

We are accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) which is an independent, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization which partners with over 1500 public, independent, and international schools in the US and worldwide to assess, support, and promote high quality education for all students through accreditation, professional assistance, and pursuit of best practices. NEASC aspires to provide a process for meaningful, ongoing whole school improvement while honoring the unique culture and context of each institution they support. In addition our students take Advanced Placement courses that are overseen by College Board. College board administers standardized tests and curricula globally as part of the college admissions tests. It is overseen by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB)

**Please read this handbook carefully.** It is our hope that all Upper School students and their parents/guardians will have a good understanding of the contents. Lack of knowledge of the information contained in this handbook will not constitute an excuse for falling short of expectations. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns.

We look forward to getting to know you this year!

Sincerely,

Eamonn Gregory  
Upper School Principal  
The Upper School Team

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 School Identity Statement

GEMS American Academy Qatar offers our multicultural student body a rigorous college preparatory American curriculum from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12. In addition to standards based academics, culminating with the Advanced Placement program, we also provide a robust extra-curricular program to support the development of the whole child. Our school equips students with skills to fulfil their potential and achieve their goals.

We value and foster:

Respect ~ Innovation ~ Leadership ~ Purpose ~ Tenacity

### 1.2 GEMS Education Philosophy

<https://www.gemseducation.com/the-gems-difference/our-heritage/>

## 2.0 Campus Security

School guidelines for safety and security are detailed in a Security Manual that is used by all GAAQ staff to ensure uniform, orderly, and timely responses to emergencies. Teachers review emergency procedures for building evacuation and lockdown drills with students each year. Drills are practiced so that students know the appropriate responses in emergency situations.

In the event of an emergency, you will be contacted by the school with further information and instructions.

### 3.0 Upper School Program

#### 3.1 Schedule Layout

Times	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday Times	Thursday
7:30 - 8:25	1	7	5	3	7:30 – 8:10	1
8:25 - 9:20	2	8	6	4	8:10 - 8:50	2
9:20 - 10:15	3	1	7	5	8:50 – 9:30	3
10:15 - 11:00	MS Advisory HS Lunch	MS Advisory HS Lunch	MS Advisory HS Lunch	MS Advisory HS Lunch	9:30 - 10:10	4
11:00 - 11:55	4	2	8	6	10:10- 10:50	MS Block 5 HS Lunch
11:55 - 12:25	MS Lunch HS Advisory	MS Lunch HS Advisory	MS Lunch HS Advisory	MS Lunch HS Advisory	10:50 - 11:30	MS Lunch HS Block 5
12:25 - 13:20	5	3	1	7	11:30 - 12:10	6
13:20 - 14:15	6	4	2	8	12:10 - 12:50	7
					12:50 - 13:30	8

**Please note that on Thursdays, students are dismissed at 13:30 p.m. in order for teacher professional development meetings to take place.**

#### 3.2 Curriculum and Upper School Course Requirements

Students who enter GAAQ in 9th grade are expected to enroll in classes according to course requirements (see below), abilities and interests, and previous educational experience. They are expected to successfully complete (pass) 24 courses over their four years of high school.

Course	Requirements
English	4 Credits
Math	4 Credits
Social Studies	4 Credits
Science	4 Credits
Global Language*	2 Credits
Physical Education/Health	1 Credits
Fine Arts	2 Credits
Student choice	3 Credits

\* Two consecutive years in the same Global language

### **Other important notes regarding course selection:**

- All Arabic nationality passport holders are required to take Arabic each year.
- All students registered as Muslim must take Islamic Education each year.
- All students will take Qatar History in the 9th grade as an additional elective.

The subjects listed in the preceding table must be successfully completed for credit to be earned. Each year's performance will be reviewed to ensure that all students will eventually meet graduation requirements.

Students entering GAAQ after 9th grade will have their transcripts evaluated and may receive exemptions to GAAQ's course requirements based on their previous school's curriculum.

### **3.3 Service Hours**

All high school students (Grades 9-12) at GAAQ will be required to complete 40 hours of community service as a graduation requirement. This requirement helps young people develop new skills while encouraging them to develop an awareness and understanding of civic responsibility as they play a role in contributing and strengthening their communities.

All high school students are encouraged to continue to accumulate community involvement hours during the summer. You will need some documentation like a certificate or letter from the organization or individual you volunteer with outside of the school.

Students are encouraged to think about creative ways to support the community that do not put themselves or others at risk. This may include volunteer activities that can be completed at home or online

### **3.4 Course Changes**

Once course selections are made, course changes are discouraged. Changes are rare and only under exceptional circumstances. A grace period for students to change a potential course during the first week of school is allowed. After this period, changes are made on a case by case basis. In the event that a student has been moved to a new course because of an extenuating circumstance, the student must complete any work missed in the new course.

Credits are earned at the end of the semester. Any student who withdraws from a course during the semester will not earn credit for the dropped course

## **4.0 Assessment**

### **4.1 Incomplete assignments**

Students who do not complete work, or turn work in that is deemed unsatisfactory, will not receive credit for their assignment. Consistent incomplete assignments will impact student Grade Point Average (GPA).

#### 4.2 Absence During Assessment

If a student is absent from an assessment, they must bring a doctor's note in order to be excused for this absence. When a doctor's note is presented to the appropriate teacher(s), the student will be allowed to make up the exam. The administration realizes there may be urgent circumstances from time to time, and encourages parents to contact the school as early as possible to apply for a waiver of the absence policy.

#### 4.3 Grading System

The purpose of a grading system is to communicate student understanding and performance. Faculty members assess student academic and non-academic performance by assigning the following grades:

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	GPA	Descriptor
A	90-100	4.0	Excellent
B	80-89	3.0	Very Good
C	70-79	2.0	Good
D	60-69	1.0	Pass
F	0 - 59	0	Fail

#### 4.4 Academic Probation

Students who are failing any subject or have multiple D's may be placed on Academic Probation. Students who are on Academic Probation will be identified after the semester one report card. After quarter 1, or at the end of any subsequent quarter students may be placed on Academic Warning.

Please see retention and promotion policy below.

#### 4.5 Promotion/Retention/Non Continuance

GAAQ seeks to make decisions about promotion and retention that are in the best interest of each student. Therefore, promotion and retention are based on a holistic view of the student and include a number of factors, such as academic achievement, grade point average, successfully passing all courses, academic levels (external tests ie PSAT, MAP), social & emotional maturity, attendance in school and executive functioning skills. Assessment of promotion or retention on these factors will be made by the administration team on a case by case basis. We understand the severity of retention decisions and will not make these decisions lightly. However, ultimately we are responsible to ensure students are able to succeed academically and meet our graduation requirements.

If retention is a possibility, conversations with families will begin after a concern has been

identified and a pattern of low academic performance has been established.

Parents have open, unlimited, and live access to their students' grades on Alma ([www.gaaq.getalma.com](http://www.gaaq.getalma.com)). In addition, parents are welcome to email and meet with teachers as frequently as needed. GAAQ does not have a credit recovery process for courses that students fail. GAAQ reserves the right to promote or retain students based on what they believe is in the best interest of the student that will allow them to achieve future academic success.

General guidelines for retention decisions:

- Students may not fail more than 3 courses throughout their tenure at GAAQ. For example, any high school student who fails 3 or more courses (core or elective), in 1 year or combined in multiple years, will be required to repeat their current grade level. Examples include: failing 3 courses in 10th grade or failing 2 courses in 9th grade and 1 course in 10th grade. Repeating their current grade level will allow them to demonstrate their understanding and mastery of content and skills to universities. It is in their best interest to repeat the year in order to prepare for success in future high school grades and beyond.

Students failing to meet GAAQ's academic and/or behavioral expectations may be required to leave at any time during the academic year as deemed appropriate by the Principal, in consultation with the Head of School.

#### **4.6 Report Cards and Conferences**

We communicate student progress in many ways, both formally and informally. Report cards are issued four times a year, at the end of each quarter. GPAs are calculated by semester, with the Q1 and Q3 reports serving as check points. Two parent-teacher conferences are held during the year to report and discuss each student's academic, social, and emotional progress. Informal meetings, email correspondence, and telephone conferences are encouraged whenever teachers or parents have concerns. Administrators are available for conferences by appointment. We encourage regular home and school contact, and ask that parents begin any communication with the faculty member most closely related to the matter at hand. In the event that parents cannot make scheduled meetings or conferences we would once again like to strongly encourage parents to contact their child's teacher or any member of senior leadership anytime.

Report cards will not be distributed if student accounts are not in good standing, if school property has not been returned, or due to excessive absences.

#### **4.7 Transcripts**

Failure to submit official document requests ahead of a deadline with ample processing time (10 school days) or leaving out information such as university admissions email address or application identification number could result in delay.

Types of Transcripts:

- **Official Transcript-** signed and stamped by Registrar; sent directly to university only



- **Unofficial Transcript**- a complimentary copy of unofficial transcripts are provided to student and parent for personal records and self-reporting
- **Grade 9-11 Transcript** includes courses, credits and grades for school years completed at GAAQ up to end of Grade 11/junior year
- **Mid-Year/Interim Transcript** includes courses, credits and grades for school years completed at GAAQ up to the end of semester 1 of senior year. Available on or around January 24, 2023
- **Final Transcript** includes courses, credits and grades for school years completed at GAAQ and successful graduation. Available in June.

*Processing of Transcript Requests:*

\*\*Note: you must allow 10 school days (excluding holidays and breaks) for processing of official documents. If you do not know your application deadlines then you risk your documents not reaching the university in time.

*Current Course Letter:*

Only provided before mid-year/Semester 1 transcript is available in January.

- This letter will list grades currently in ALMA or S1 progress report.
- Request will not be processed without the following information
- Application or Student Identification Number
- Destination email address

*Language Waiver Letter:*

Only provided if the university requests it and you have completed 4 years at GEMS American Academy.

- Must provide proof (email) that the university is requesting documentation.
- Request will not be processed without the following information
- Application or Student Identification Number
- Destination email address

\*If University/College requests transcripts through mail directly from the school, the parents need to pay shipping fee\*

## 5.0 School Uniforms

Except on certain school-approved or special occasions, students must wear the following regulation GAAQ uniform every day:

- light blue tailored shirt of an appropriate size, tucked in at the waist
- dark blue slacks for boys
- knee-length or longer dark blue skirts or slacks for girls

- dark blue tie with school logo
- black shoes with non-marking soles and black laces
- black leather belts for slacks
- dark blue hooded sweatshirt or sweater with school logo

Each student must also have the prescribed school PE clothing and proper athletic shoes. Clothing should be clearly labeled with the student's name.

GAAQ may not require uniforms while students are participating in after-school or out-of-school activities, or on designated special dress days such as School Spirit Days and UN Day; however, students should be properly dressed in a manner that is not offensive to our host country. These rules will apply:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ● no skirts above the knee                    | ● no shirts that expose the back                            |
| ● no tight clothing                           | ● no exposed midriff  |
| ● no spaghetti strap shirts                   | ● no low-cut shirts or blouses                              |
| no offensive logos or expressions on clothing | ● no jewelry that does not compliment the school dress code |

School administration has the final judgment on dress code violations. Students may be required to return home for the purpose of changing their clothes if what they are wearing is deemed unacceptable.

## 6.0 Upper School Discipline

We believe that a positive academic and social climate is necessary for student learning. We also believe that responsibility for establishing this climate is shared by each student, faculty member, and parent.

We value having students follow reasonable rules and believe it is important for students to understand their purpose. Part of the learning process involves making decisions and sometimes making mistakes; however, we expect that students will learn from their errors and demonstrate growth.

### 6.1 Detention/Suspension/Expulsion and Behavior Contracts

Disregard of school rules may result in consequences as deemed fit by the upper school team. Standard consequences are detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. All infractions are referred to the office and recorded.

**Detention** may occur during break, lunch, or after school hours. The teacher and/or administrator will hold detention in a designated location. Parents will be notified when after-school detentions are assigned. Upon accumulating three (3) detentions, the student will be brought to an administrator to determine further corrective steps or consequences. If deemed appropriate by the administration, students may face a suspension.

**Suspensions** will be either in school or out of school and may vary in length. The student will

be given an opportunity during the period of suspension to make up assignment marks by completing work given during the period of absence from class.

**Expulsion from School** is a last resort reserved for serious and/or repeated infractions and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

**Behaviour Probation Contract** will be given to students who are failing to adhere to the behaviour policies of the school.

**Final Behavior Probation Contract** is for students who have not fulfilled or have not been successful in their behavior probation contract. Students may be placed on this contract due to gross or flagrant violation of school guidelines throughout the school year.

**Discontinuation of Enrollment** is for students who have not fulfilled or have not been successful in their final behavior probation contract. They will be given this contract to state that they will not be returning the next academic year due to behavior issues. Students may be placed on this contract due to gross or flagrant violation of school guidelines throughout the school year.

Please note that the foregoing chart is intended as a reference and does not supersede any policy contained within this handbook. Any violation and consequence thereof will be decided upon by the Upper School administration team and, when appropriate, the Head of School.

Important: All discipline guidelines are enforceable during school trips.

Note: Any behavior or activity that takes place outside the school campus that is illegal or brings disrepute to GAAQ may result in disciplinary action.

The following levels of violation identify infractions and potential discipline procedures. These are merely guidelines as it is not possible to develop a completely comprehensive list of student behaviors.

Behaviors	Possible Consequences
<p><b>Level 1: Initial Warning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Disrupting hallway, class and/or school functions</li> <li>● Neglecting to obtain requested parent signatures</li> <li>● Interfering with others' learning</li> <li>● Unexcused tardies</li> <li>● Dress code violations</li> <li>● Inappropriate display of affection</li> <li>● Inappropriate use of electronic devices</li> <li>● Littering or chewing gum</li> <li>● Mobile phone use</li> <li>● Operating a personal business without prior school authorization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warning</li> <li>● Lunch detention</li> <li>● Confiscation of device by teacher</li> <li>● Dress Code Violations will result in students being sent home. Student cannot enter class if they are not in the correct attire</li> <li>● Meeting with the division VP</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Misbehavior as determined by teachers and/or school administration</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Level 2: Final Warning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Inappropriate use of language</li> <li>● Possession of items that are deemed unacceptable in school</li> <li>● Rough play with other students</li> <li>● Academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating and/or plagiarism)</li> <li>● Violation of Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (AUTP)</li> <li>● Any action(s) considered to be disrespectful to others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Detention ( one to three days)</li> <li>● Confiscation of unacceptable items</li> <li>● Parent conference</li> <li>● Loss of appropriate privileges</li> <li>● Letter home</li> <li>● No grade for assessment/assignment (academic dishonesty)</li> <li>● Discipline Guidelines for Violation of Academic Honesty</li> <li>● In-school suspension</li> <li>● Behaviour Probation Contract</li> <li>● After school detention</li> <li>● Meeting with the division principal and VP</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 3: Initial Probation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Direct defiance to faculty or staff</li> <li>● Deliberate damage to property of others/Vandalism</li> <li>● Compromising safety for self and/or others</li> <li>● Leaving campus without authorization</li> <li>● Bullying (Cyber, Verbal, Physical and Emotional)</li> <li>● Skipping class</li> <li>● Physically/Verbal threatening comments or gestures</li> <li>● Smoking on school grounds or at school functions</li> <li>● Fighting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School suspension of three days</li> <li>● Parent conference</li> <li>● Payment for Damage</li> <li>● Letter home</li> <li>● Loss of co-curricular activities participation (e.g., sports, after-school activities, rehearsals, clubs, field trips, etc.)</li> <li>● Final Behavior Probation Contract</li> <li>● Meeting with the division principal and parents</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 4: Final Probation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Altering or tampering with school records</li> <li>● Physical attack on faculty or staff</li> <li>● Theft</li> <li>● Possession of weapons or dangerous objects (Illegal Substances)</li> <li>● Gross or flagrant violation of school guidelines endangering the reputation of GEMS, the school, or other students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Suspension from class and all school activities for at least three to five days</li> <li>● Possible dismissal from school</li> <li>● Discontinuation of enrollment</li> <li>● Meeting with the Head of School, division principal and parents</li> </ul>

**Mobile Phone Use:** Mobile phone use should not impact a student's academic or social

progress in the school. Disciplinary action can follow if this is the case.

Mobile phones are brought to school at entirely the owner's risk. The school will not be involved in disputes and/or investigations over damage, loss or theft. Phones being used for unauthorized reasons during school hours may be confiscated and turned over to the office or administration. Repeat offences can result in permanent confiscation until parent can pick up phone.

**Bullying/fighting/physical aggression:** GAAQ has a zero tolerance policy on bullying. Offenses may result in student suspension and/or expulsion.

**Discrimination:** GAAQ has a zero tolerance policy on discrimination. Offenses may result in student suspension and/or expulsion. All people are to be treated respectfully, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or ability.

**Damage to school property:** Students will be individually charged and expected to reimburse the school for any damage they cause to school property.

**Textbooks and supplies:** Textbooks are provided on loan to students. Students are responsible for their books, and must pay for loss or damage, including deliberate defacing (i.e., writing and graffiti). Report cards will be withheld for outstanding or lost textbooks.

**Respect for local culture:**

As previously stated the above rules and infractions are merely guidelines as it is not possible to develop a completely comprehensive list of student behaviors. Moreover, GAAQ student discipline policies are superseded by local Qatari regulations and customs. For example, this includes but is not limited to, public displays of affection and inappropriate dress which are deemed culturally inappropriate in our host culture.

**6.2 Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy**

The use of drugs, controlled substances, and alcohol is injurious to student health and the school environment. The possession, use, sale, or distribution of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco or paraphernalia on school property, on school-provided transportation, or at school-sponsored or chaperoned functions is prohibited and is a grave contravention of the school rules and Qatar Law and will not be tolerated. The following policy includes, but is not limited to, sporting events, social functions, and co-curricular activities. Violation of this policy will result in the following consequences:

**Alcohol and Drugs:**

Both the Qatar government and school have a zero tolerance policy regarding alcohol or drug use or possession of either or paraphernalia. Violations will result in an immediate indefinite suspension from class and all school activities until due process is completed, with probable expulsion from school.

**Tobacco:**

The possession, use, sale, or distribution of tobacco products or paraphernalia on school grounds or property is prohibited and will result in a minimum consequence of a suspension. However, depending upon the circumstance and/or number of offenses, may result in expulsion.

### 6.3 Reporting Disciplinary Incidents to Universities and Colleges

The Counseling Office supports students throughout their college application process. Questions with regard to disciplinary history will be answered fully and honestly should universities or colleges inquire.

### 6.4 Discipline Guidelines for Violation of Academic Honesty

All students are responsible for understanding the Honor Code and what is expected of them. Violation of the Honor Code will be tracked over a student's school career at GAAQ. If there are any questions about what constitutes a breach of the Honor Code, they should be brought to the teacher.

### 6.5 Academic Honesty

Honesty in schoolwork requires that students do their own work. Students are expected to give credit to ideas, language, or thoughts which are not their own. To take ideas, writing, or thoughts from someone else and pass them off as one's own is plagiarism and is a violation of academic honesty. Plagiarism can occur with print or non-print sources, such as the Internet. Acts of academic dishonesty are a serious violation of the school community's trust, and students who commit academic dishonesty will face serious consequences and will be reported to the Principal immediately.

	Probable Consequences
First Breach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● grade of 0 on assignment</li> <li>● verbal and written contact with parents</li> <li>● incident documented on student's file</li> </ul>
Second Breach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● grade of 0 on assignment</li> <li>● verbal and written contact with parents</li> <li>● behavioral probation</li> <li>● in-school suspension of 1 to 3 days</li> </ul>
Third Breach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● grade of 0 on assignment</li> <li>● verbal and written contact with parents</li> <li>● suspension of 3 to 5 days</li> <li>● withdrawal from school recommended as school may move for expulsion. (Discontinuation of enrolment)</li> <li>● notification to universities or colleges, if applicable</li> </ul>

*Academic Collusion - Students whose work is submitted with or without their knowledge will receive a maximum of 50% for assignment.*

*Any work submitted that is flagged as above 20% plagiarism or AI created will considered Academic Dishonesty.*

## **6.6 Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (AUTP)**

Access to the school network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Access is available only for educational and administrative purposes. GAAQ's technology resources are to be used in accordance with this AUP and all users will be required to comply with its regulations.

Noncompliance will result in disciplinary action. The following guidelines are intended to help users understand appropriate use. The school may restrict, suspend, or terminate any user's access to the school's computer systems upon violation of the AUTP.

This policy applies to all facilities and technology associated with GAAQ, not just computers and equipment in the IT lab or on mobile carts.

### **Ethical Conduct:**

It is the responsibility of all users to:

- recognize and honor the intellectual property of others
- comply with legal restrictions regarding plagiarism and the use and citation of information resources
- restrict the use of GAAQ's technology resources to the mission of the school. The use of computer systems for personal use unrelated to the mission of the school or for private gain is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to posting to social media, use of video games, downloading of explicit material etc.
- help maintain the integrity of the school network and equipment. Deliberate tampering or experimentation is not allowed.

It is a violation to modify and/or copy any protected system files, system folders or control panel files without prior approval of the Network Administrator or IT Coordinator. The use of non-GAAQ proxies or VPNs inside the school is also prohibited.

### **Educational Use:**

Users are responsible for the ethical and appropriate use of their network accounts.

Saving to the hard disk drive of a school-owned computer is granted only by permission of the teacher (for students) or IT Coordinator (for faculty/staff).

Playing commercial or online games is not permitted unless approved by the school.

### **Respect for Security:**

Reading, modifying, or removing files and/or mail owned by other users is not allowed without prior approval by the instructor or IT Coordinator.

Any attempts to transmit software designed to compromise the operation or security of the network is prohibited.

### **Respect for Property:**

#### **Software Installation**



Software may only be installed on the school information systems (including all individual workstations) with prior approval from the IT Coordinator.

### **Software Copyright**

The only software, other than student projects, to be used on school computers is that for which the school owns a valid license.

Licensed/copyrighted software is not available for borrowing and may only be used at other sites with the approval of the IT Coordinator.

Copyrighted software shall not be downloaded from the Internet or further transmitted in any form without compliance with all terms of a preauthorized licensing agreement. Infringement or violation of U.S. or international copyright laws or restrictions will not be tolerated.

Any attempts to circumvent the licensing control or the copying of software from the network without the IT Coordinator's permission is prohibited.

### **Hardware**

Report equipment problems immediately to the instructor/tech assistant/Network Administrator/IT Coordinator.

Any attempt to move, repair, reconfigure, modify, or attach external devices to existing information and network systems without the permission of the Network Administrator and/or IT Coordinator is prohibited.

Borrowing of school hardware is not permitted unless email authorization has been given from the IT department.

### **Internet/World Wide Web Usage:**

Internet access is available to all students and teachers at GAAQ. We believe these communication links offer vast, diverse, and unique resources to both students and staff, and their availability outweighs any possible access to information that is not consistent with the educational goals of GAAQ.

### **Responsibilities**

All users are prohibited from accessing portions of the Internet that do not promote the instructional mission of GAAQ.

All school web pages are subject to initial approval of the administration and should reflect the mission and values of the school.

### **Personal Equipment:**

Users must follow all of the school's AUP policies, even while using their own personal equipment.



## **Cyber Bullying:**

Cyber bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies by an individual or group to cause harm to others through deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior. Students will be held accountable for negatively impacting the academic and social environment at GAAQ through cyber bullying.

## **6.7 Attendance/Withdrawal and Absences**

Students who have accumulated **20** absences or more within the academic year may be retained or withdrawn from GAAQ. Decision on withdrawal or retention is on a case by case basis where academic performance, attitude to learning and school behavior are considered in administration's decision.

Absence policy is as follows:

- 5 Unexcused Absences - Email Home
- 10 Unexcused Absences - Contact by Upper School Vice Principal
- 15 Unexcused Absences - Meeting with Principal and Head of School
- 20 Unexcused Absences - Possible retention or withdrawal from GAAQ

If a student is sick, he or she is responsible for any and all missed assignments. The student should contact a classmate to get notes and assignments from classes missed. Students will be marked absent excused if they can produce a medical certificate or have extenuating circumstances (Bereavement, serious injury, unforeseen circumstances, etc.) that have been approved by administration.

Parents of absent students will be notified via SMS by the school for every day that they are absent. Parents will be notified by the end of the first period.

## **6.8 Tardies**

Students are expected to be in class on time. If a student arrives late in the morning, he or she is expected to have a parental note. Unexcused tardies will result in detentions.

Tardy policy is as follows (per quarter):

- 1-2 time = Verbal warning by Teacher
- 3<sup>rd</sup> time = Parent Email Expressing Concern by Teacher
- 4<sup>th</sup> time = Lunch Detention (Email also sent) by Teacher
- 5<sup>th</sup> time = Excessive Tardiness reported to the Upper School Vice Principal. Parent Meeting arranged.

Students more than 10 minutes late to class at any point in the day will be considered missing class unjustifiably, and consequences will be issued as per school guidelines.

## **6.9 Withdrawal Procedures**

1. Parents should notify the Principal and Registrar, and students should notify their teachers of the withdrawal date as far in advance as possible, preferably a minimum of two weeks ahead of time.

2. The Registrar will issue a withdrawal form that will be taken by the student to all concerned teachers and the library, and then the form will be returned to the Registrar. The Registrar will notify parents, the Principal, and the Head of School of any outstanding fees. Transfer certificates will be given to parents once all outstanding fees are settled and parents have met with the Principal and/or Head of School.
3. Parents who wish to pick up their children's records in person may be accommodated; however, they should notify the school of their desire to do this, and ample time must be given to assemble records. Issuance of report cards and records at the end of the year may be delayed due to scoring of exams. In that case, transcripts and/or records will be forwarded to the new school or to the parents by mail. (Parents should leave their forwarding address and a stamped envelope for this purpose.) Confidential student records and/or letters of reference will be sent directly to the receiving school. Records cannot be released until all outstanding fees are paid.

## 7.0 Student Services

### 7.1 School Health Office Services

Health Office responsibilities include administering first aid, treating minor ailments, providing health education, maintaining health records, updating vaccinations and medical information, and liaising with the Supreme Health Council.

The Health Office requires that the following completed forms be kept on file at school to enable us to care for your child effectively. These forms must be completed and returned to the Health Office directly, prior to your child starting school.

- Health Information Form
- Medical Consent Form
- Immunization Record (copy)

The Health Office and Registrar should be informed immediately of any change in telephone numbers/contact information so that we are always able to reach a parent or guardian in the event of sickness or accident. In anticipation of both parents being out of contact or traveling outside the country, an alternative contact number must be left with the Health Office and Registrar.

**Sickness at school:** When students become ill during the school day and feel the need to go home, they must go to the Health Office to discuss their health issue with the nurse. The best course of care will be decided. If it is determined that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the parent/guardian and inform teachers. It is expected that the student's parent/ driver will collect the student within an hour's time of receiving the nurse's phone call. A student may go home via taxi, as per parent instructions to the nurse.

**Sickness at home:** A sick child cannot learn effectively and is unable to participate in class in a meaningful way. Keeping a sick child at home prevents the spread of illness in the school community and allows your child an opportunity to rest and recover. If your child is sick and

unable to attend class, please inform the school by 8 AM.

**School medical examinations:** The Supreme Health Council requires that students in selected grades undergo a school medical by our school nurses. If you prefer, your private family physician may conduct the medical exam and then submit the report to the Health Office for your child's file.

**Medications and Allergies:** If your child must take any regular medications during school hours, (on a long- or short-term basis), kindly give these medications to the Health Office to be administered by our nursing staff. Students are not permitted to keep medications with them, except in the case of personal inhalers to prevent/treat asthma attacks and *EpiPens* for students with life-threatening allergies. It is the responsibility of parents to advise the Health Office if their child has any allergies.

## **7.2 Counselor Services**

### **Middle School Counseling**

Counselors are an integral part of the Middle School (MS) educational team. Their aim is to support all students in acquiring the necessary skills, knowledge, and understanding to succeed in personal/social, academic, career, and global perspective domains. Counselors also focus efforts on helping students prepare to lead positive lives as respectful, purposeful, tenacious and innovative active global citizens. Services are delivered through school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, pro-social programs and system support. The MS Counselor may be contacted at any time to discuss academic, social, and/or emotional concerns.

### **High School Advising and Counseling**

School counseling at the GEMS American Academy- Qatar means supporting all students and advocating for their success.

Our primary goals include:

- Academic development
- Career exploration and college readiness
- Acquisition of self-knowledge and interpersonal skills
- These goals are accomplished through:
  - Classroom guidance and instruction
  - Small group counseling
  - Individual student planning
  - System support
  - Responsive services

University/Career advising is proactive at GAAQ, formally beginning in the second semester of Grade 10. GAAQ students will attend annual college fairs, host visiting universities on-campus

and explore various career pathways throughout the school year. We use the Unifrog program as a tool to research universities and career pathways. Students can meet with their counselor individually as often as needed during the university application and transition process.

### **7.3 Student Support Program for Academic Differences**

We realize that our students learn in different ways and have varying academic abilities. To address the needs of upper school students who are enrolled in our academic services program, the administrative staff, counselors, and teachers recognize the importance of implementing the following academic support:

- access to peer tutors for any subject
- assistance with homework, essay reviews, and study preps
- implementation of exam, homework, and project accommodations as required by the student's educational evaluation and their Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- assistance with organization, time management, and study skills.

Our priority is to provide the best possible academic support for the success of all students.

### **7.4 Bus Transportation Services and Rules**

Bus transportation to and from school is available through our school bus service. Information about our bus service is available through the Public Relations Officer and/or our Transportation Coordinator. Parents are in no way restricted to the use of this bus service and are welcome to investigate alternative methods of transportation. Bus transportation information can be found on the school's website.

#### **Bus rules**

Established rules ensure safety on the buses. Parents are advised to review these rules with their children.

- Always wear your seatbelt.
- Put away pencils, markers, rulers, and any sharp or pointed items.
- Keep your arms, legs, and head inside the vehicle at all times. Keep windows closed.
- No changing seat while the bus is moving or parked at traffic signals and without asking the monitor/teacher.
- Do not throw anything while on the bus.
- Do not distract the driver. Please keep voice volume down.
- No use of music players, video games, or electronic items without earphones.
- Stay away from control panels, automatic doors, etc., as injury can occur.
- Place trash in the bin or take it home with you.
- No eating on the bus.
- Keep the aisles clear.
- No smoking.
- Foul language, bullying, or any behavior that would not be tolerated while at school will not be tolerated on the bus.

All Upper School disciplinary rules are in full effect while a student is riding a school bus. The consequences of bus infractions by students are at the discretion of school administration. Upper School students are asked to keep in mind that they ride the bus with younger students, and therefore, they need to be mindful of their language and behavior.