

GOLDEN HEART CHRISTIAN SCHOOL HANDBOOK

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PHILOSOPHY

The Fairbanks Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Alaska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists own and operate Golden Heart Christian School (GHCS.) It was established to guide young people in developing a meaningful relationship with God and prepare them for life and the world to come. This training experience, from the Seventh-day Adventist perspective, can best be accomplished by the cooperative effort of a Christ-centered home, church, and school.

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide excellence in education in a nurturing Christian environment.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Seventh-day Adventists believe:

- That both the Old and New Testaments are the inspired word of God
- In the incarnation and virgin birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- That man was created in the image of God, but became separated from God by sin.
- That man is redeemed by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- That the gift of eternal life is available to all persons who accept Jesus Christ by faith, are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God.
- In the bodily resurrection of Christ, His imminent and literal return, and the resurrection of His people.
- Death is an unconscious state for all people until Christ returns and the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be caught up to meet their Lord.
- That the law of God, the 10 Commandments, is binding upon mankind, and it can be kept in its fullness only through faith as the power of God works in our lives.
- The Creator, after six days of creation, rested on the seventh day and established the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of creation. This is why Seventh-day Adventists honor the Sabbath from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus our Lord.

OBJECTIVES

- To encourage the study of the plan of salvation and other great themes of the Bible.
- To foster an awareness of the reality of God and His personal interest in the things of everyday life.

- To instill in the students the ideals of integrity, honesty, purity, dependability, neatness, and punctuality.
- To teach the students to be responsible for his or her own behavior.
- To foster the ideals of self-respect and concern for others, recognizing the intrinsic value of every individual.
- To nurture basic skills: the ability to speak clearly, to read efficiently, to write effectively, to develop intellectual curiosity, habits of accuracy, and self discipline.
- To encourage creativity and independent thinking.
- To instruct the basic principles of good health and to encourage the development of good habits in the area of diet, rest, and exercise.
- To promote interest in serving their church, community, and country.
- To focus on God's character.

ACCREDITATION

Golden Heart Christian School is accredited by the:

- North American Division Commission of Education
- National Council for Private Schools Accreditation

ADMISSIONS

Non-discrimination

GHCS students are admitted without regard to race, color, national origin, or ethnic origin. They are entitled to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

Special Needs

The school is limited by its staffing in its ability to help special needs students.

Admission Pledge

Prior to admission, all students and their parents must sign the Commitment of Student and Parent pledge on the application form. It is understood that every student admitted to the school pledges to follow the rules and policies of the school with a positive and cooperative attitude and to respectfully uphold the Biblical principles upon which the school is founded. See Student Conduct Agreement.

Entrance Age

Students are accepted in accordance with the school-age entrance requirements of the State of Alaska. First graders must be age 6 by September 1.

Grade Placement

The school reserves the right to place the student in the grade at which he/she can achieve his/her best work according to placement tests and recommendations of the teachers. Multi-grade classrooms allow teachers to place students at their optimum performance level.

Immunizations

As required by state law, no student will be allowed to enter school without first showing proof of having current immunizations against diphtheria, pertussis, polio, tetanus, measles, rubella, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and varicella or medically verified chickenpox. Those seeking exemptions to this requirement can do so according to the Alaska State law. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make sure immunizations are kept current, and to provide the school with proof.

FINANCIAL POLICY

Golden Heart Christian School is committed to handling tuition matters with clarity, consistency, compassion, and faithful stewardship. Tuition payments support the school's daily operations and allow GHCS to continue providing a Christ-centered education for all students.

Families are expected to follow the financial agreement signed at enrollment. To secure enrollment, the registration/application fee and first month's tuition must be paid before the first day of school. Monthly tuition is due on the **1st day of each month, September through May**. Payments not received by the **10th of the month** may receive a **one-time \$50 late fee** per delinquent student account.

If a family anticipates difficulty making a payment, we ask that they contact the school treasurer promptly. Currently the treasurer is Tanya Imler (612-398-1716). GHCS will work with families through a formal, written payment plan when appropriate. To protect both families and the school, payment arrangements must be documented and approved in accordance with school policy.

Past-due accounts will follow the school's established communication and resolution process. This may include reminders, formal notices, Finance Committee review,

payment plans, re-enrollment or records holds, referral to collections if authorized, settlement, or other resolution allowed by policy and law.

Additional details are provided in the full **Tuition Administration Policy**, which includes payment plan procedures, delinquency timelines, legacy balance procedures, and settlement guidelines. A copy is available from the school office or treasurer upon request.

ATTENDANCE

State Law and Attendance

GHCS is bound by state law to maintain records of student attendance and punctuality. Attendance is recorded in the register, which is a legal document. Reasonable allowances will be made for absences, but the only legal excuses are illness of the student or a death in the immediate family. If it is known in advance that the student must be absent, it is requested that the arrangements be made with the teacher prior to the absence. Provision will be made for “legal absences”; otherwise, the work missed will be “made up” at the discretion of the teacher. Parents/guardians are requested to text, call, or email the school before 9 AM for sickness or emergency absences. Otherwise, to ensure that the students are accounted for, school personnel will make a reasonable effort to contact the parents of any student absent without prior arrangements.

School Performance Attendance

GHCS believes that it is important that our students are involved in ministry and service. When GHCS has performances, all students are required to participate.

Absences

Regular attendance is a strong trait of successful students. Frequent absences may result in lower grades due to missed instruction and opportunities for participation.

Leaving School

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds while school is in session without a request from the parent or guardian in person, or in writing, and permission from the teacher. Students will not be permitted to leave the school premises with anyone other than those known to the staff to be the bona fide guardian, parents, or those authorized by them in writing or text.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Student Conduct Agreement

My signature on the application to attend Golden Heart Christian School indicates that during school hours and all school-sponsored activities and programs:

I will show respect and reverence for God and spiritual things.

I will follow school policies and procedures.

I will be responsible for my actions by:

- practicing the five life guidelines (“truthfulness”, “trustworthiness”, “no putdowns”, “active listening”, and “doing my personal best”).
- using appropriate language – words that uplift and encourage - no swearing or cursing.
- displaying a positive attitude.
- showing courtesy and respect for all staff, students, and visitors.
- respecting other people's property, including desks, shelves, lunches, clothes, etc.

I will respect the learning environment by:

- maintaining respect for school property
- being prepared for class with the necessary materials
- leaving items that distract from the learning process (such as toys and electronic devices) at home

I will support a safe environment by:

- wearing adequate, weather-appropriate clothing, which includes for outside play during winter months: a warm coat, a hat or a headband to cover the ears (even if a coat has a hood), gloves or mittens, snow pants, and snow boots
- wearing appropriate shoes that fit securely for outside or for the gym (no crocs, flip-flops, or clog-related shoes)
- understanding that possession of any kind of weapon may result in confiscation and immediate dismissal

I will dress appropriately for a Christian environment by:

- choosing clothes that reflect Christian values (neat, clean, well and modestly fitted, and in good repair)
- GHCS's dress policy excludes inappropriate wording or graphics
- dressing modestly. Modest attire excludes sheer fabrics, tightly-fitting stretch fabrics, sleeveless tops, low-cut or revealing clothing, or underwear showing. Girls should wear leggings under dresses and skirts.
- Shorts to the knees are acceptable.
- choosing a natural look in grooming. (Hair should be neat, clean, and out of the eyes and face. GHCS's natural look excludes jewelry.)
- wearing attire appropriate to the event for off-campus activities or as directed by the teacher.

Actions/Items Prohibited

Some items may be confiscated. Some behavior may result in suspension and/or expulsion. Illegal actions will be reported to the local authorities. The following things are not allowed:

- Cigarettes/tobacco products, alcohol, drugs
- weapons, knives, firearms, fireworks, or explosives
- games and cards that do not portray Christian values
- gambling and betting
- profane, vulgar, demeaning, and/or insulting language
- physical or verbal abuse of teachers and/or other students

DISCIPLINE and GRIEVANCE POLICY

A basic component of the philosophy of Golden Heart Christian School is that discipline is "discipling" or "training" rather than punishment. Parents/Guardians should consider the school's disciplinary policy as an extension of their own efforts to train their children to be self-disciplined and well-balanced individuals. The greater self-discipline a student practices, the less external discipline will be required by the school faculty and staff. Guidance will be consistent and will be based on an understanding of individual needs and development. Parents/Guardians are expected to be involved in the discipline process and cooperate with the school in creating a healthy, safe, and positive learning environment for their student and for the rest of the students at school. Effective discipline requires a partnership between the parent/guardian and the school. Our goal is to use positive guidance and reinforcement to enable each student to develop a high self-esteem in the knowledge that he is loved by others and by God. If there is a continual behavior problem, the school will notify a parent and a conference will be needed to discuss the possible reasons and solutions for the negative behavior.

Classroom Discipline

- Golden Heart Christian School has high expectations that our students will avoid behavior that should involve them in disciplinary actions. However, should such occasions arise, problem solving will typically follow these basic steps: [1] Student and teacher problem-solve, [2] Student, parent/guardian, and teacher problem-solve, [3] Parent/guardian, teacher, and principal/school board chairperson problem-solve, [4] School board meets to problem-solve with family and staff.” An outline of how that process could look is as follows:
 - Student and teacher problem-solve [1]
 - This means the teacher will employ methods including but not limited to counseling with students, taking away privileges, time-out, separation from other students, special writing assignments, special job assignments, etc.
 - Should other methods fail, the teacher would be empowered to employ after-school detentions, first at the 30 minute level, and then at the 1 hour level. Should infractions become serious or frequent, detention might be a more common practice. The teacher is not constrained to repeat instruction given during time-outs, special writing assignments, etc. if the negative choices of the student are common.
 - Should a detention be necessary, the parent/guardian will be informed before the school day is over.
 - Normally, a student receiving three 30 minute detentions will be given a 1 hour detention. Three 1 hour detentions will advance the process to the next level.
 - Student, parent/guardian, and teacher problem-solve [2]
 - Parents/Guardians will naturally need to be involved at every step of the process. However, should a student’s behavior become serious enough, an in-person parent-teacher conference will be required.
 - If the solutions that this meeting generates are ineffective, the next step will be for the student to receive a 1 day in-school suspension. This means they will not join other students for recess or participate in normal class activities, but they will be required to be at school under the supervision of an adult.
 - Should the negative choices persist, the situation will advance to the next step of the process.
 - Parent/Guardian, Teacher, and Principal/Board chair problem solve [3]
 - The next step would be for the student to receive a 3-day, out of school suspension. This will involve a conference between the parent, teacher, principal, and superintendent of the school district or school board chair to discuss the student’s behavior and possible solutions.
 - Should those solutions prove ineffective, a 5-day, out of school suspension will be the next step. At that time the school board will meet with the family of the student and staff of the school to problem-solve.

- School Board meets with parent/guardian to problem-solve [4]
 - Should the process reach step 4, the parent or guardian will be invited to meet with the board at the next scheduled board meeting to discuss the problem and potential solutions. At this time, the parents and student will be notified that should the student not begin to make choices conducive to proper behavior and order in the learning environment, the issue of his/her behavior will come up before the school board again, and the board will sit to determine whether or not they will be allowed to continue as a student of GHCS. Should the parent/guardian not appear before the board or send a representative to the meeting in their stead or an explanation as to why they cannot do so, this will be interpreted by the board as a lack of desire to have the student in question enrolled at Golden Heart Christian School.

More on Suspension and Expulsion

Serious infractions can require immediate suspension from school by the principal. In some cases the student will be required to remain suspended until the school board meets to consider his/her case. If the board finds that the student willfully and persistently refuses to cooperate, that the student's conduct is detrimental to other students, or feels the student is not receiving benefit from the school, the student will no longer be allowed to attend GHCS. A student can only be expelled by School Board action.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is not used by the staff at Golden Heart, Christian School, as a method of discipline.

Grievance Process

At GHCS we believe that true success in education can only be achieved when the parents and the teacher work as a team. Because of this belief, we continually strive to improve parent/teacher communication to create a pleasant team. Should misunderstandings or concerns arise, parents will find that the teachers will do everything possible to help correct any problem or situation. Following the example set in Matthew 18:15-20, we ask parents to speak with the teacher in a constructive and redemptive manner. If you believe the problem is still unresolved, please follow the tiered system as outlined below:

- Level one - Meet with the teacher to formally discuss your concerns and complete a student/parent grievance form
- Level two - Complete the appeal form. A meeting with the parents, teacher, and mediator will be arranged.
- Level three - Ongoing/unresolved problems will be brought before the school board for further evaluation.

Right of Appeal

Inherent in the rights of every American citizen is the right to appeal decisions. Should there be a disagreement regarding a disciplinary or grievance decision, it may be appealed to the next level of administration as stated above. Every effort will be made to resolve conflict at the lowest possible level.

In all the above, the staff will strive to remain firm but loving. These disciplinary and grievance policies are aimed at giving the student/parent every chance to resolve problems.

INTERNET USE

Golden Heart Christian School offers internet access for students in grades 1-8. In order for a student to use the internet at GHCS, the parent or legal guardian and student must both sign the **Internet Policy and Permission Form** at registration or return it to the principal no later than the first day of school. Access is a privilege, not a right, and requires responsible behavior.

The Internet is a powerful resource and enables students to explore millions of libraries and databases throughout the world. Unfortunately, the Internet contains items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive. However, managed appropriately, we believe that the benefits exceed the disadvantages.

Since the Internet is provided for research, access is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Students will be responsible and courteous in all written material, respect the confidentiality of others and their work, and observe copyright laws. Use of generative AI and language learning models is not permitted at GHCS.

School staff will guide students within the framework of school standards. If a student chooses to access inappropriate material, the school will not be liable, and the student will forfeit Internet privileges. School staff may review files and written material at any time to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are responsible. Any activity not complying with these rules may result in loss of access, as well as disciplinary or legal action.

STUDENT PHOTO/INFORMATION

Throughout the school year, Golden Heart Christian School publishes brochures, newsletters, and digital presentations, highlighting student activities and accomplishments, and providing information about the programs and features of GHCS. This information may also be carried

over to our website and Facebook page for public viewing. The information we publish is usually submitted by the teacher or teacher assistant. However, because of student privacy laws, we want to secure parental permission before publishing photos and/or information about any child.

Private information (such as address and phone numbers) is never published on public facing web sites and is used in accordance with GHCS policy. Golden Heart Christian School controls what is distributed to the public in our publications and website. We do not, however, control what is produced by outside media sources.

HEALTH and SAFETY

Illness/Contagious Diseases

A general rule of thumb for all illnesses: If you don't think your child is well enough to play during recess/gym class, he/she should probably stay home for the day.

No child with an infectious or contagious disease, deemed by the school to be a health threat to students and school personnel, shall be allowed to remain in school. The child will not be permitted to return to school until he/she has a medical release or until the school authorities are satisfied that such a threat no longer exists. (NPUC code 3018:19) Students must be fever/diarrhea free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school.

Medication

All medication, prescriptions or over-the-counter, shall be kept in a locked cabinet by school personnel. Students are not allowed to have prescription medication on their person, in their backpack, or at their desk or in their personal effects unless mandated by the primary care physician. School personnel are not permitted to give a student any medication without a completed release form on file at the school.

Student Supervision

Supervision will be provided in the classroom, on the playground, during recess, before and after school, and during activities sponsored by the school. Students are required to remain in the classroom after school until a parent/guardian comes in to pick them up. Then they will be dismissed by the teacher.

Student Accident

In case of a minor accident, that may involve cuts or abrasions, first aid will be administered. The first aid administered may include washing the wound with soap and water and covering

with a bandage. The use of disinfectants and ointment or medications is prohibited, except when specific requests in writing are made by parents/guardians. GHCS maintains first-aid equipment sufficient to care for minor accidents.

If it is suspected that a student has sustained a serious injury of any type, the student will not be moved, and 911 will be called immediately. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately when any serious injury is suspected. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, the doctor and emergency contact specified on student records will be called. After attention has been given to the student, an accident report will be completed and submitted to the principal.

Student Insurance

Each student is covered by an accident policy, which partially covers medical bills as a result of an accident at school or in route to and from school. Claims are to be made through the principal immediately after the accident. Charges not covered by student accident insurance are to be assumed by the parent/guardian. Our insurance does not cover injuries caused by tackle football or injuries caused by riding all-terrain vehicles or motorcycles. Eyeglasses are not covered by school insurance. Replacement or repair is the responsibility of the parents.

Emergency Response Procedure

GHCS has emergency response procedures posted in each classroom, and teachers and students are familiar with the process should an emergency occur.

The principal or designated teacher will keep parents informed of the situation to the best of their ability, and make arrangements for students to return to their parent/guardian or designated location as quickly as possible should the need arise.

In case of a major emergency, and it is necessary for students to remain at school longer than the regular school day, the school is equipped with emergency supplies, such as water, flashlights, and battery operated radio.

Personal Survival Kit

Each student is required to have a personal survival kit. Please enclose personal items in a duffel bag and all food items in a one-gallon Ziploc bag with your child's name written on the outside. Food items must be packaged for a long shelf-life. Suggested items: dried fruit, nuts, granola bars, crackers, canned fruit, blankets/small sleeping bag, bottled water.

GENERAL INFORMATION

School Hours

School begins daily at 8 AM and ends at 3 PM Monday through Thursday; Friday closing time is 12 PM. Doors will be open to students 30 minutes prior to the start of school and will close 30 minutes after dismissal of school. During school hours, the doors will remain locked.

Stormy Days

Please check the local news media on days the weather is questionable. If the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District cancels school for weather, GHCS will also be closed.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for the transportation of their children to and from school. If your child will be going home with someone other than his/her regular method of transportation, please notify the school in writing or by text.

Drivers and students are required to follow Alaska State law in regard to car seats, booster seats, and the wearing of seatbelts.

It is expected that drivers understand that they are operating a vehicle in a public area with children present. It is therefore the driver's responsibility to drive with caution, refraining from all driving practices which may be deemed unsafe or which draw attention to themselves.

Visitors

Visitors are required to obtain prior permission before visiting the classes. Visitors should be quiet and unobtrusive so as not to interrupt the school program or instructional times.

Telephone Use

Students should not be called during school hours except in cases of emergency. Text-messaging the teacher is the preferred method of communication during the school day should the teacher and/or a student need to be reached.

School phones are for school business only. Students must ask permission from teachers or school staff to use the school phone.

Cell phones should not be brought to school unless absolutely necessary. If a parent needs to contact a student for any reason during the day, please feel free to call the school. If that does not work due to unusual and/or outstanding circumstances, please make specific arrangements with the teachers. If bringing a cell phone is necessitated, then the cell phone will be turned in to the homeroom teacher and stored in a secure location in the school during school hours and activities.

Meals

Parents are responsible for choosing and packing food for their own children. GHCS does not require specific foods, and families may send the meals and snacks they believe are best for their children. As a Seventh-day Adventist Christian school we encourage families to consider Biblical health principles when packing school meals, including avoiding pork and other meats identified as unclean in Leviticus 11. We also recommend excluding sodas and caffeinated beverages. To protect students with allergies, dietary restrictions, and family-specific food choices, students may not share food or drinks with one another.

Parental Involvement

GHCS encourages parents to be involved with their children's education. Contact the teacher to see how you can work "hand-in-hand" to enrich the learning environment.

Homework

In a multi-grade classroom most students, if working efficiently, have time to complete most assignments in school during the day. Homework may include but is not limited to the following:

- Unfinished class work
- Study for spelling tests
- Teacher assignments
- Make-up work from absences
- Special projects

We recommend students spend at least 30 minutes of independent reading at home each day as part of their homework assignment.

School-Sponsored Field Trips

Many educational benefits are derived from the regular field trips taken throughout the school year. Your child is well supervised and care is taken for his/her safety. By applying for enrollment you indicate your approval as a parent or guardian of these class sponsored activities. The school will send permission slips home to be signed by parents before each field trip. All who drive students on field trips must maintain active vehicle insurance coverage of \$100,000-\$300,000 personal liability as well as \$50,000 property damage.

Homeschool Program

Golden Heart Christian School honors and values Seventh-day Adventist home school education and wishes to provide opportunities to enrich home school education. GHCS may offer participation in school activities such as:

- Field trips
- Week of Prayer
- School portraits
- School picnic
- School programs
- Music classes or lessons
- PE or gym activities
- Swimming lessons
- Special events

Home school students wishing to participate in GHCS activities must adhere to the following:

- GHCS guidelines and student conduct requirements as outlined in the handbook
- pay all their own fees
- be accompanied by a parent for all activities
- understand that they are not covered by the school insurance policy

Grading and Progress Reporting

Grade report cards are issued quarterly. However, since no written report can reflect all the aspects of academic growth, teachers and parents need to communicate on a continuous basis and share additional information and concerns. Parent-Teacher Conferences are held at the end of the first quarter and during the third quarter. Progress reports are issued at the end of each quarter. Additional conferences may be scheduled at other times outside of school hours by the parent/guardian, the student, or the teacher.

Testing

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP Testing) is administered three times a year, September, January, and April to grades 3-8. This test is designed to measure individual proficiency in reading, language arts, and mathematics. Results are used to provide information for effective educational guidance and become part of each student's cumulative record. In addition, the following tests may also be given:

- First Grade Readiness Testing
- Math Placement Test

Information gathered from testing scores is available to parents during conferences with teachers and/or the principal.

Cumulative Records

Information contained in the student's cumulative record is confidential and is not released without written permission of the parent or guardian. Alaska State law regarding protection of and access to the records is observed. Parents/guardians of students transferring in from other schools must sign a request for release of records to Golden Heart Christian School at the time of registration. When a student transfers to another school, his records shall not be released to the school without a written request signed by the parent or legal guardian. Please see Grade Reports and Record Transfers in the Finance Policy section on page 4 for additional information.

Home and School Association

The Home and School Association is GHCS's parent organization whose purpose is to unite the home, the school, and the church in their endeavors to provide a Seventh-day Adventist Christian education for their children. The Home and School is involved in many aspects of school life such as fundraising, auction, field trips, and teacher support and appreciation. Members of the Fairbanks Adventist Church and patrons of the school are members of the home and school association. The Home and School Association officers for the planning committee shall be appointed by the school board at its first meeting each school year with the exception of the chair, which is appointed by the church board. Anyone interested in serving on the Home and School planning committee should submit his or her name to the school board.

School Constituency

The constituency of Golden Heart Christian School consists of the members of the Fairbanks Seventh-day Adventist church. The school constituency is to meet annually and special meetings may be called as needed.

Asbestos Notice

The Federal law requires a public announcement to be given to school patrons regarding any asbestos material in the school. The GHCS facility has been checked by a certified asbestos person. The asbestos in the school is in a non-friable condition and presents no hazards to anyone at the present time. It will be checked at stated periodic intervals to ascertain any change in the material.

School Board Actions

Any action taken or policy adopted by the GHCS School Board after this handbook is published shall have the same effect as anything printed in this document.