

# Gateways Academy

## Parent/Student Handbook

**2024-2025**

*The administration of Gateways Academy reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be communicated to parents in writing by letter or email.*

**GROW \* ACHIEVE \* THINK \* EXPLORE \* WONDER \* APPLY \* YOUTH \* SERVE**

*This handbook is not meant to conflict with state or federal laws. The major rules and policies are included in, but not limited to, those set forth in this revised edition of the Gateways Academy Parent/Student Handbook. Please remember that students also are expected to abide by the individual rules of each classroom. We are professionally trained and skilled educators who seek your cooperation in planning a challenging and rewarding year for your children.*

(August 2024)  
Gateways Academy  
10 Stanley Road  
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

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## **Faculty/Staff Directory**

Principal/Classroom Teacher/Administration - Cynthia Ahearn

Director of Student Learning/Classroom Teacher/Administration - Monica Campbell

Administration/Curriculum - Stacey Varney

Director of Student Support Services/Classroom Teacher/ Administration - Cindi Sprow

Administrative Assistant/Classroom Teacher - Maia Campbell

Classroom Teacher- Rebekah Hajj

Classroom Teacher - Meghan Mathon

Classroom Teacher - Kellyann Lorusso

Classroom Teacher - Jadira Bukoski

Classroom Teacher - Suzanne Vashugin

Music Teacher - Kathy LeBoeuf

Art and Robotics Teacher - Alana Reid

Rick Torres - Shop & Authentic Learning

STEAM Teacher - Sarah Richards

Theatre Teacher - Joel Seger (Corporation)

Physical Education - YMCA Staff (Corporation)

After School Staff

- Monica Campbell
- Meghan Mathon
- Eva Purdy
- Bella Perry
- Tina Forget
- Alana Reid

## Mission and Purpose

### ***Our Mission***

Gateways Academy is committed to offering a blended and comprehensive education for diverse learners, helping each child realize their individual gifts and potential. We promote life-long learning, create paths for individual success, and support well-being by integrating values of care and compassion. We prepare our students for life.

### ***Our Purpose***

Gateways Academy is motivated by the diversity present in every child - culturally, academically, socially - thus, we strive to reach to each student's intellectual potential and interests with an array of academic, cultural, service, and technological opportunities. In our school, every student is known personally and empowered to learn and grow.

### **School-wide, we adhere to the following foci:**

1. **Grow:** Given that student development occurs differently for each learner, we meet each learner where he/she is and advance learning from that starting place.
2. **Achieve:** Everyone can and will accomplish and succeed, particularly in an environment where student interest is paramount and drives the learning.
3. **Teach:** Empowering students to become teachers as each one gains knowledge and shares newly-discovered credible information increases the learners depth of understanding and grasp.
4. **Explore:** Engagement is strengthened during the process of looking beyond the textbook, in a hands-on, experiential and collaborative mode of learning.
5. **Wonder:** Restoring a sense of curiosity and expectation in learning gives learners a greater desire to know more.
6. **Apply:** Intentionally avoid knowledge for knowledge's sake gives purpose to learning. Students practice in real-life situations through the multi-age cohort and schoolwide collaboration.
7. **Youth:** Personal, social, and emotional development can vary greatly. Allowing students to "be kids" and "enjoy the present" are important elements for success.
8. **Serve:** Awareness of the needs of others in our school community, neighborhood, region, and beyond creates a broadened life perspective for our students.

**GROW \* ACHIEVE \* THINK \* EXPLORE \* WONDER \* APPLY \* YOUTH \* SERVE**

## ***Nondiscrimination Policy***

Gateways Academy admits students of any race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin, or disabilities to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin, or disabilities in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

## **Admissions**

### ***Academic Acceptance/Entrance Requirements***

Children applying for Kindergarten must be five years old on or before December 31. Students applying for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten must present birth certificates. All new pupils in grades PK through 12 must present immunization records, two full years of report cards (including most recent, if applicable), discipline report from previous school (if applicable), standardized tests (if applicable), and IEP or 504 plan (if applicable).

Entrance to Gateways Academy for all grades is based on the student's report cards, discipline records, standardized testing, and other information from schools previously attended, if applicable. New students are accepted into classes if space is available and at the discretion of the school administration. During the school year, a shadow day and meeting with the administration are required to determine compatibility. For PK and K, a screening during the summertime is required.

In consideration for admission, we reserve the right to assess the readiness of a student's capability to perform the work of a given grade (Kindergarten) by testing and by reviewing previous school records, including subjects taken and evaluation of performance, objective aptitude and achievement test data, observations and recommendations, student profile, and interview results. A sincere parental commitment to support the program and staff is necessary.

## ***Tuition and Financial Policies***

The following tuition payment options are available for the 2024-2025 academic year:

1. **Monthly Payment Plan:** Monthly tuition payments begin on August 15th and end by May 15th. Cash and check payments can be made directly to the school office or dropped in the mail slot at the school entrance. Please label all payments with student names.
2. **Pay in full:** Families may pay tuition in full by September 3, 2024.
3. Families may pay via cash, check, or online. Families must have a SchoolCues account in order to pay online.

## **Academics**

### ***Parent/ Teacher Conferences***

We believe in ongoing communication with parents. Conferences will occur at the midpoint of the fall semester. Throughout the year, parents who have any concerns with their child's progress are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the teacher.

### ***Courses***

Each full year course (approximately 120 instructional hours) is valued at one credit. Physical education is valued at 1/4 credit per year. To meet the varied interests, backgrounds, and talents of the individual student, Gateways Academy offers diverse courses to provide a creative learning experience, while at the same time meeting requirements for college admissions.

Required Credits for grades 9-12:

- English - 4 credits
- Math - 4 credits
- Science and Engineering/Technology - 3 credits
- History/social science - 3 credits
- Foreign language - 2 credits (of the same language)
- Arts - 1 credit
- Additional core courses - 5 credits
- Physical Education - 1 full year (can be divided into quarters or semester)

## ***Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) – Buckley Amendment***

Gateways Academy adheres to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act – The Buckley Amendment regarding access to student records and academic confidentiality.

1. Students may not grade the work of other students.
2. Children of teachers may not grade the work of students enrolled at Gateways Academy.
3. Graded student work may not be displayed in the halls.
4. A student should never be asked to state his/her grade aloud.
5. Parent volunteers may not grade student work.
6. Parent volunteers should not tutor or work in a remedial capacity with any students.

## ***Grading Periods***

The school year is divided into two semesters. Progress reports and report cards will be issued two times each with the final report card in June. Narrative and numerical grades will be used on the report.

## ***Guidance***

Guidance forms an integral part of the education of our students. Because Gateways Academy aims at the total development of the person, guidance services include personal, social, educational, and career counseling. The program assists the students to understand themselves by focusing on their interests, abilities and needs in relation to their home, school and general environments. Counseling assists the students in developing decision making skills and in formulating future plans. Students are always welcome to make use of the information services available. The guidance program includes individual interviews, group seminars, the administration and interpretation of tests, visits by college representatives, college fairs, scholarships and financial aid information.

## ***Student Support Services***

Gateways Academy offers services to students who struggle both academically and behaviorally through the office of Student Support Services. For students who, through their public school system, are eligible for special education services through an IEP (Individualized Education Program), an accommodation plan is developed and carried out with the cooperation of the student, his or her parents, and his or her teachers. Student Support Services also identifies students who may be struggling and in need of extra support. Parents are encouraged to contact Student Support Services if they feel

that a child could benefit from an educational assessment or is in need of academic or behavioral intervention.

### ***Textbooks, Chromebooks and Workbooks***

Students are supplied with the currently published books as well as chromebooks as needed per requirements of the class.

### ***Transfer and Withdrawal Procedures***

Please inform the school office (administration) as soon as you make a decision to transfer your child. A release form must be signed by the parent to authorize the transfer of records. You may obtain a transfer form from the school office. Please return it, completed and signed to the school secretary.

Parents should present the name and address of the new school, so that the administrative assistant may mail all appropriate records within a timely manner. School records cannot be given to the parents - they must be mailed directly to the new school. We do not make exceptions to our financial policy with regard to transfers.

## **Arrival, Attendance, Dismissal**

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m. The building opens at 7:15 for the before school program.

### ***Arrival and Dismissal***

All students will enter the main school doors upon arrival to school. Students must remain on school grounds for the duration of the school day, unless dismissed by a parent/guardian or participating in an authorized school-related trip.

Dismissal is at 2:30 p.m. Any students not involved in a structured extra-curricular activity, or staying with a teacher for extra help, are expected to leave the building at that time.

Early dismissal is granted to a student who has written permission from a parent or guardian, specifying the time and reason for dismissal. For the safety and protection of each child, a parent/guardian must send a written request for their child's early dismissal to school the morning of the early dismissal day. In the case of students who drive themselves to school, verbal permission via telephone must be made by the parent prior to dismissal. In case of illness during school hours, parents will be notified to pick up their child.

### ***After School Program***

Parents must inform the school of any student staying for the After School Program either through pre-registering or contacting the office the day the service is needed. After School Program hours are 2:30-5:30pm Monday-Thursday.

### ***Attendance***

Gateways Academy recognizes that there are reasons for being absent, tardy or the need for early dismissal from school, i.e., off campus academic services, illness, unavoidable medical or dental appointments, funerals, etc.

Extended illness should be reported to the school nurse and physician documentation may be required, especially when illnesses exceed the seven-day limit.

At Gateways Academy if a student...

- Has three (3) or more consecutive absences due to illness during a semester, parents must obtain a doctor's note and submit it to the school.
- Has at least five (5) or more unexcused absences, the principal will make a reasonable effort to meet with the student's parent/guardian to develop action steps for student attendance.
- Has ten (10) absences (excused or unexcused) over the course of the school year, a letter of warning will be issued to parents reminding them of the school's attendance policy, and an administrator will contact them to schedule a meeting should the absences approach fifteen (15) days.

### ***Tardy Policy***

- Any student grades 1-12 who arrive at school after 8:00 am will be considered tardy.
- Any student who is tardy 7 times in one semester will be required to meet with their parent/guardian and administration to develop an action plan to address the issue.
- Tardiness in excess of 14 times per year could result in consequences such as retention, reduction in course credit, or administrative consequences.

### ***Snow Days, Delays, Unexpected Dismissal Due To Weather***

Cancellation of school or delays because of inclement weather will be announced on the local radio station or news television stations. These announcements usually begin at 6:00 a.m. Gateways Academy will dismiss school because of the weather. Parents have the option to dismiss their child and must use their own discretion. Cancellations, early dismissals, and delays are made in conjunction with the Shrewsbury Public Schools. Text messages and alerts will also be sent by the administration.

## Student Health

All students must have all of the medically-appropriate vaccines unless a medical or religious exemption is in place on or before the first day of school. If your child has received the required immunizations, please provide the documentation. In addition to immunizations, please provide a copy of your child's COVID-19 vaccination where applicable. Appropriate documentation must be provided to qualify for the medical or religious/philosophical exemptions.

### ***Vaccinations***

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has added a **new influenza vaccine requirement for all children 6 months of age and older attending childcare/preschool, students in all grades of school from Kindergarten through Grade 12, and students of post-secondary institutions**. This requirement was put in place to reduce influenza-related morbidity and to reduce the overall impact of respiratory illness in a population still facing the COVID-19 pandemic. Students will be expected to have received an influenza vaccine for the current influenza season (July-June) by December 31 unless they have a medical or religious exemption.

The School Nurses/Health Coordinators realize the intense pressure families and providers are facing in the setting of COVID-19 and the Immunization Division of the DPH continues to advise that vaccinating against vaccine-preventable diseases is important to reduce the overall burden of disease in our communities. The state typically announces requirements for new immunizations with at least a year of advanced notice and acknowledges that this departure from the norm is a feature of these unprecedented times.

This also includes a **new meningococcal vaccine (MenACWY) requirement for entry into Grades 7 and 11**. The Grade 11 requirement is for a booster dose of vaccine to be administered on or after the 16th birthday. Teens who turn 16 during the school year will not be expected to be vaccinated until after their 16th birthday.

The updated table of school requirements for the upcoming school year is posted online: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/immunization-requirements-for-school-entry-o/download>.

Frequently asked question documents are also available about the new flu requirement here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/school-immunizations#school-and-camp-requirements>.

**School nurses are authorized to obtain immunization records directly from health care providers without caregiver consent if necessary**, via email, fax etc., as long as a good faith effort has been made to obtain the information from the caregiver.

### ***Medications***

Medications are to be left at the office and taken in the presence of the Health Coordinator, the school administration, or a person designated by a member of the administration. Teachers cannot administer medicine, prescription or non-prescription, under any circumstances. A parent/guardian may come to school to administer medication on a prearranged basis. Medications, prescription or non-prescription, cannot be administered to your child without a prescription form from your child's physician and a parent consent form.

All medications, prescription and non-prescription, must be brought in by a parent/guardian to the office. All medications must be in the original bottle with the child's name, name of the medication, the dose, the reason for taking, and time to be given. This includes Advil, Tylenol, eye drops, cough drops, cough syrup and allergy medications. No more than a 30 day supply of prescription medication is stored at school. No student is allowed to have any medication in their possession, including in their desk or backpack. All medication is dispensed through the office. No loose medication will be accepted in a baggie or plastic bag. This is unsafe. Parents are to pick up any medications from the health office on the last day of school in June, or they will be disposed of. For children with asthma that use an inhaler, both an inhaler and prescription order must be in the office regardless of whether or not it is used on a regular basis.

## **Important School Policies**

### ***School Property, Restrooms, and Recess***

Gateways Academy shares space located inside Grace Baptist Church of Shrewsbury. Students are expected to respect the building, grounds, equipment, and materials.

The school has a policy of one student in the restroom at a time. This policy is for everyone's safety. Students are expected to:

- Keep restrooms clean for the benefit of all
- Utilize the restroom with the permission of the classroom teacher or staff member

The recess period gives our students an opportunity to mingle together and to enjoy each other's company. Teachers are present to supervise. Weather conditions will determine what activities are allowed.

- Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds at any time without permission of a teacher.
- No student is to return to the classroom during the recess period without a teacher's permission.
- Students should play and interact respectfully with other students.

### ***Photo/Video Authorization***

Gateways Academy uses photos/videos of students in both online and print marketing materials. This may include brochures, printed advertisements, social media, and the school website. If you do not wish for your student to be included in a specific format or at all, please contact the school office.

## ***School Uniforms and Dress Code***

Gateways Academy requires students to wear a Gateways uniform top (Gateways Academy shirt, jacket, or sweatshirt with logo) Monday-Thursday. Uniform Shirts may be ordered from Allen's School Uniforms. If the cost of Gateways uniform shirts is prohibitive, students can wear a green t-shirt on uniform days. See more details below:

Monday - Thursday

- **Tops:** Gateways Academy shirt/jacket/sweatshirt with logo
- **Bottoms:**
  - Khaki pants/jeans are recommended
  - Shorts/skirts must be no shorter than just above the knee, unless leggings are worn under the item; the “dress code fingertip test” provides a good measure
  - Yoga pants are allowed with longer tops/shirts

Friday

- Dress Down Day (see reminders below)

Gateways Academy students and staff are guests of the Grace Baptist Church. We are so thankful for the kindness they have shown by allowing us to use their church building for our school. It is most important for students and staff to respect Grace Baptist Church through our behavior, dress, and kind actions.

The following clothing items **ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE** at any time:

- Torn/ripped pants or shirts
- Strapless tops, halter tops, low cut shirts, crop tops
- Shirts or tops that hang off shoulders
- Hats and hoods

### **Overall appearance**

- Bra straps, underwear, and/or waist/belly skin must not be showing. Pants should fit well and not hang below the waist. Belts are recommended.
- Logos on tee shirts must be appropriate; Slogans, advertisements for alcoholic beverages, or inappropriate sayings (profane, suggestive, etc.) **ARE NOT** appropriate for school. Athletic team or school logos **ARE** acceptable.
- All school clothing must be clean. Students should choose their school clothes carefully each day, asking themselves if the outfit is showing respect for themselves and the church.
- Shoes/sneakers should be safe and sturdy for running, jumping, etc.
- The use of deodorant is strongly recommended for students in grades 6 and up.

## ***Electronic and Digital Use Policy***

The use of technology is a privilege and an important part of education in the 21st century. Users shall take personal responsibility for their behavior while using the technological offerings of Gateways Academy.

This policy was developed to guide the use of technology by students. Students must agree to the following guidelines in order to be allowed to use technology at school.

1. Students shall use the Internet and all forms of school technology responsibly. School technology includes, but is not limited to, computers, tablets, printers, copiers, cameras, and interactive web resources that serve educational purposes. This agreement extends to use of technology that students may be able to use off site.
2. Students shall respect the rights of copyright owners by limiting copying to essential materials and providing attribution (citations) for images and text. Students shall avoid plagiarism by ensuring that their papers and projects reflect their thoughts and ideas as well as cited paraphrases, summaries and quotations. Students will ask teachers or media staff for assistance if they have questions regarding these terms.
3. Students shall understand the network is a valuable resource for teaching, learning and many other forms of productivity for students, staff and parents. Students shall understand that downloading large files or attachments requires permission from Gateways Academy Administration. Students shall limit their use of downloading large files to classroom lessons and research.
4. Students shall understand that their participation in school interactive web resources must represent what is expected from a student at Gateways Academy and be consistent with the educational objectives of the school. Therefore, anything that is considered inappropriate in the classroom is also inappropriate in all uses of email, blogs, podcasts, social networking sites, messaging/chat sites, or other digital communication tools. This includes, but is not limited to disrespectful or discriminatory. Additionally, students shall promptly inform a teacher or administrator if any messages received or material reviewed is inappropriate.
5. Students shall understand that Gateways Academy's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan applies to online behaviors and they shall comply with all provisions of that policy.
6. Students shall understand that school provided access to the Internet has to be filtered. If they need access to a blocked site, they shall work with their teachers to explore options available. Students shall not attempt to bypass any blocked sites or circumvent the filter in any manner.

7. For their own safety, users shall not reveal any personal information regarding themselves or others, such as addresses or phone numbers on the Internet. Students shall not impersonate nor attempt to impersonate another nor use or attempt to use somebody else's accounts on any device. Students shall not delete or tamper with anyone else's files, folders, or work. Students shall not let another student use their accounts on any device.
8. Students shall understand that files, services, and devices provided by and/or managed by the school are not private. There is no expectation of privacy when students use the school district's network, devices, and services and anything they do can be viewed by administration at any time.
9. Students and their families shall understand that they will be liable for full repair and replacement costs for damage to school property, whether intentional or through negligence, including electronic devices. Students shall understand that attempts to override, disable, alter, or circumvent security restrictions, management systems, or device firmware will be considered intentional damage.
10. Google email and apps accounts are the property of Gateways Academy. School email is intended for educational purposes only. Administrators can read student's emails at any time without consent. Emails are not to be linked to any social networking accounts.
11. Employing the Internet for any commercial purposes not formally approved is prohibited.
12. The supervising teacher/adult has the right to limit access to technology.
13. Students shall understand that should they be found in violation of this policy, the consequences could include, but are not limited to: restricting access to the device, disabling device features or applications, the revocation of all network access, suspension or exclusion from school, or legal action by the authorities.
14. We understand that the use of artificial intelligence is growing. If you choose to use any form of AI in your work, you **MUST** cite the program, software, sources, etc. that is used.

This policy will be reviewed and revised when necessary due to significant change in technology access or usage by students. Students or parents should contact the district or school administration if they have any questions about this agreement or its implementation.

## ***Academic Integrity***

We encourage all students to do their academic work with integrity and to the best of their abilities. We will continue to teach students about proper citations and avoiding plagiarism. Any question of academic integrity will be addressed by the school administration on a case by case basis.

## ***Bullying and Hazing Policy***

### **1. Introduction**

At Gateways Academy, we are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Bullying and hazing in any form are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. We aim to foster a culture of respect, kindness, and inclusivity.

### **2. Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is any intentional, harmful behavior directed at a student that can be verbal, physical, social, or cyber. This behavior is often repetitive and involves an imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim.

#### **Examples of Bullying Include:**

- **Verbal:** Name-calling, teasing, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, or threatening to cause harm.
- **Physical:** Hitting, kicking, pushing, or any other physical aggression.
- **Social:** Spreading rumors, intentional exclusion, or embarrassing someone in public.
- **Cyberbullying:** Using digital platforms to send, post, or share negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else

### **3. Definition of Hazing**

Hazing is any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them, regardless of their willingness to participate. Hazing often involves activities that are harmful or dangerous, either physically or emotionally.

## **Examples of Hazing Include:**

- **Physical Hazing:** Forced consumption of food, alcohol, or drugs; physical exertion; sleep deprivation; or any activity that causes physical harm or discomfort.
- **Psychological Hazing:** Public humiliation, threats, intimidation, or activities designed to demean or degrade the individual.
- **Social Hazing:** Forced exclusion from social interactions, intentionally isolating someone, or coercing someone to commit illegal or unethical acts.

## **4. Reporting Bullying and Hazing**

Students, parents, or staff who witness or experience bullying or hazing are encouraged to report it immediately. Reports can be made to any staff member, including teachers, or administrators. All reports will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.

## **5. Investigation and Response/Student Support**

Upon receiving a report of bullying or hazing, the school administration will:

- Conduct a thorough investigation, which may include interviews with the victim, alleged aggressor(s), and any witnesses.
- Take appropriate disciplinary action based on the findings of the investigation. This may include counseling, mediation, suspension, or expulsion.
- Provide support to the victim(s), which may include counseling, academic support, or other resources.

## **6. Consequences for Bullying and Hazing**

Consequences for bullying and hazing may vary depending on the severity and frequency of the behavior and may include:

- Verbal or written warnings
- Parent/guardian notification
- In or out of-school suspension
- Expulsion from school
- Notification of Law Enforcement

## **7. Prevention and Education**

Gateways Academy is dedicated to educating students, staff, and parents about the impact of bullying and hazing and how to prevent them. We will:

- Promote a positive school culture through activities and daily classes..
- Encourage students to be upstanders by reporting bullying and hazing and supporting their peers.

## **8. Retaliation**

Retaliation against anyone who reports bullying or hazing or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

## **9. Parent and Guardian Involvement**

Parents and guardians play a crucial role in supporting the school's efforts to prevent and address bullying and hazing. We encourage open communication between home and school and ask parents to discuss the importance of respect and kindness with their children.

## **10. Commitment to a Safe School Environment**

Gateways Academy is committed to creating and maintaining a school environment where every student feels safe, valued, and respected. We will continually evaluate and update our policies and practices to ensure they meet the needs of our school community.

**There are two options promoted by Gateways Academy for students, parents and community members who wish to report an incident that may be considered bullying or hazing:**

### **Reporting Option #1:**

The Gateways Academy administration strongly encourages anyone who sees or hears of a suspected bullying or hazing incident to report the incident to a school administrator personally.

**Reporting Option #2:**

If for whatever reason, an individual does not wish to discuss a suspected incident in person, this [Report Form](#) will provide you access to a reporting form that can be filled out by the reporter, printed and given to the respective school administrator(s).

***Suspensions/Expulsions***

If suspension or expulsion is deemed necessary, parents will be notified.