



3100 NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Boca Raton, FL 33431  
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# PRE-SCHOOL STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK 2021-2022





3100 NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Boca Raton, FL 33431

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## Welcome to GSA

We want to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Garden of the Sahaba Academy (GSA). We are very blessed to have a community that fosters commitment to and for an Islamic Education of our children.

We hold high expectations for everyone at the school to achieve great things, academically, behaviourally, and socially. We will offer opportunities for all students to reach standards of excellence in an Islamic climate that is safe and free from interruptions. We will, Insha Allah, (God Willing) work together throughout the school year to help all students realize their highest potential.

This handbook shall serve as a general guideline to the policies and procedures of the Garden of the Sahaba Academy (GSA) Preschool. Please read it carefully. Parents and students are required to follow and adhere to the policies and procedures set out herein.

GSA views the educational imperatives to be jointly implemented by the school, the parents, and the community. Your active and full participation in the life of GSA is vital for our success. Our doors are open to listen to your comments and concerns.

We pray that Allah (SWT) guides us in this noble endeavor.

Sincerely,

*The Board of Education*



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## Introduction

Education, in Islam, is an obligation on both men and women. Therefore, the establishment of a superior educational institution is obligatory on us as a Muslim community. Today in the United States, it is estimated that there are about 6.5 million Muslims, both native and immigrant. In addition to valuable secular education, it is our commitment to provide the highest level of ethics and morals according to Islamic faith.

Garden of the Sahaba Academy (GSA), a division of the Islamic Center of Boca Raton (ICBR) began its operations in September 2003. Since its inception, the school has exponentially grown from a student body of 19 students and is now a student body of over 200 students. The school currently offers classes from Pre K through high school.

GSA is a full-time Islamic School and its doors are open to all students regardless of race, color or religion. We live in a pluralistic society and firmly believe in practicing inclusion. Our belief is based on the command of Allah (SWT) when He says:

“O Mankind! We have created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may know each other...” (40:13)

We seek your support as parents with prayers to Allah (SWT) to make our joint efforts successful in raising generations of Muslims that follow in the footsteps of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his rightly guided Sahaba.



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## Guiding Principles

The Garden of the Sahaba Academy:

- ❑ Affirms that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad, may he be blessed, is His Servant and Messenger.
- ❑ Believes that Islam is the only way of life, established by Allah (SWT) that can bring success in this life as well as in the Hereafter.
- ❑ Practices the highest standards of moral behavior and conduct as it makes a man or woman, the best of Allah's creation.
- ❑ Recognizes and values the individuality of every student, challenging each to his or her full potential and educates the whole child, helping him/her to acquire skills to ensure a lifelong physical, spiritual and mental well-being.
- ❑ Believes that a partnership exists between the home and the school which must be utilized to bring maximum benefit to the student.
- ❑ Appreciates and seeks to learn from our cultural differences in the context of our one, united Islamic Community.
- ❑ Strives to be a role model for our students and practice what we teach.
- ❑ Provides students with a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of the expectations of learning.
- ❑ Aims to be a model professional learning community for it is built on the premise of a shared mission of high levels of learning for each student, in which our teachers and administrators work collaboratively to achieve the school's mission, values and goals.





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## Vision

Graduate exemplary members of the American society

## Mission

Garden of the Sahaba Academy (GSA) empowers students with sound Islamic principles, provides academic excellence and fosters productive citizenship.

## Goals

Our goals at GSA are in three major areas:

### Religious and spiritual

- ❑ Ensure that our students will develop an appreciation and an understanding of the Islamic faith, values and traditions by incorporating Islam in the curriculum
- ❑ Maintain a safe, secure, clean and nurturing Islamic environment
- ❑ Teach and inculcate values and traditions

### Academic

- ❑ Provide clarity to teachers, parents and students on what knowledge and skills are required at each grade level.
- ❑ Cultivate a climate of high expectations for students, parents and teachers in achieving a high standard of education
- ❑ Seek and nurture faculty and staff that (1) work collaboratively to meet the needs of students; (2) are engaged in continuous improvement of their professional practices (3) reflect the culture and diversity of children and families served.
- ❑ Provide a high standard of education
- ❑ Evaluate students' performance and provide timely feedback to parents

### Citizenship

- ❑ Commend strong moral character
- ❑ Recognize and celebrate students' and adults' efforts, improvements and achievements



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- Honor commitments and accomplish them in a timely manner
- Devote one's self to the overall mission and have a positive impact on life
- Become active in the local community
- Work toward shared success and realize that we depend on each other
- Develop community and leadership qualities



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## School Contact Information

### MAILING ADDRESS

Garden of the Sahaba Academy  
3100 NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Boca Raton, FL 33431

### PHONE NUMBERS

Main Office

Tel: 561-395-3011

Fax: 561-395-3029

- Brother M. Sadiq Hamidani– Director – Ext. 002
- Sister Najat Alomairi – Administrative Assistant – Ext. 001
- Sister Nadirah Bessee – Registrar - Ext. 003



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## Parent Responsibilities

Every child is unique. He/she is endowed with unique skills and abilities. It is our joint task (parents/school/community) to help the child to rise to his or her fullest potential. The home and the community have a direct impact on the growth and advancement of each child. The home is the first socializing agent. Hence the family and parents have certain responsibilities and GSA expects that these responsibilities will be met:

- Provide a caring and safe environment at home
- Reinforce Islamic principles and practices at home
- Challenge your child to give his/her best
- Encourage your child to participate in physical/outdoor activities
- Read to your child every night
- Keep TV time to an absolute minimum
- Teach your child to respect others
- Encourage your child to be kind and courteous
- Encourage your child to respect all school staff and to obey the school rules
- Ensure that your child attends school regularly and punctually
- Make contact with the teachers through the proper procedure
- Schedule appointments with the teachers through the specified procedure
- Become an active member of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
- Meet your financial obligations to the school
- Volunteer your services in your fields of interest and for the benefit of the school
- Support the school and encourage other parents to enroll their students at GSA



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## New Parent/Student Orientation Policy

Welcome parents, families and children! You have become part of the Garden of the Sahaba Academy family. We would like to extend an invitation to you to visit the school. This will give us the opportunity to become acquainted with you and to provide the best learning opportunities for your child. Our doors are always open to you!

All that we expect of the children is that they come to school, be themselves and have respect for others. Our expectations for parents and guardians, however, are higher. First of all, please read and agree to follow all operating procedures described in this handbook and other necessary materials we may distribute. Secondly, we want you to feel free to be an active participant in the school's dynamics, offering suggestions, comments and constructive criticism. In return, we will give our full commitment to your child's welfare and education.

The first day of school can be exciting and it can also be a time of anxiety. GSA implements a new student/parent orientation to assist in the transition of your child entering our center. Each child is unique as is every situation. Our warm, loving staff will help transition both parents and children into a routine which will offer the highest quality program.

The first few days are exciting and new. Children may exhibit separation anxiety after enrollment. This is normal. Most children adjust completely within two to three weeks. Parents need to be patient, enthusiastic and encourage their children and teachers. To help ease the process:

1. Parents and children meet the Director and teachers during the initial tour of the center.
2. Parent information packets are handed out.
3. All required paperwork for the student to enroll is discussed.
4. An observation morning or mornings is/are scheduled. This allows for the parents, children and teachers to get to know each other.



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5. Director answers parents' concerns and questions.
6. Paperwork on new students is collected and placed in the student's file.
7. Parents are given a checklist of items to bring in on the first day of school.
8. An open house is held annually for all families.

We are a team! Parents, along with dedicated teachers and the community, allow each child to gain stability and a strong sense of self. Our teachers are experienced, dedicated professionals. They are strongly committed to establishing positive personal relationships with our new families.



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## Admissions

### General, Open-door, and Non-Discriminatory

GSA is a full-time Pre K, elementary and upper school. At the present time GSA does not have the resources to support children with special needs. Parents/guardians of children requiring specialized service are referred to Child Find which can provide screening and, if needed, further evaluation to find out if early intervention would help. Child Find is a service provided by the School District of Palm Beach County's Department (SDPBC) of Exceptional Education and the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) funded by the Florida Department of Education. Services for children with disabilities or specialized needs are coordinated through the SDPBC's Department of Exceptional Education. Specialized Instructional Services educational program, offers certified or licensed professionals that provide instruction in individual or small group settings. Child Find services are provided at no cost to parents.

(4.08.005)

Admissions are open throughout the year. GSA admits students of any race, gender or religion to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to its students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender or religion in administration of its educational policies, admissions, and programs.

### Application and Supporting Documents

Students will not be admitted without the proper age verification, previous school records (if needed), and immunization records.

The admission procedure is as follows:

An application form is to be completed and signed online by parents for each child.

The following are also required:

- Tuition fees agreement which must be completed through FACTS Tuition Management.
- Parent Survey



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- Up up-to-date Immunization and/physical Health Examination Records, including Allergy information.
- Media Release Form
- Discipline Policy
- Birth certificate for each child
- Previous school records
- Psychological/social/developmental reports, and any other relevant information
- Proof of residential address
- VPK Certificate if applicable

**Important:** Students entering the early childhood program must be fully potty-trained.  
(4.05.009)

### Minimum Age Requirements

**Pre-K 3** 3 years of age on September 1 of the year of admission

**Pre-K 4** 4 years of age on September 1 of the year of admission

### Registration

Registration is conducted in early spring for both new and continuing students.

Advertisements will be done mid-to-late winter. Continuing students are required to re-register in February for the new academic year. A registration fee is required and is **non-refundable**. The registration fee reserves a place for your child in the school. New students will be admitted based on availability.

### Tuition and Fees Schedule

**Registration:** \$300.00/child/year

**Resource Fee:** \$300.00/child/year

**Third Party Tuition Collection Service Charge:** \$45/family/year





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**Voluntary Pre-K** Students registered in the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program are eligible for VPK Certificate, provided that the child is 4 years of age on or before September 1. VPK Certificate covers the Florida State Schooling Requirement of 540 hours minimum.

### Pre-K Tuition

Payment Plan	Annually	Monthly
Pre K 3	\$7,500	\$750
VPK (Wrap Around)	\$5,500	\$550

### Payment Policy

- ❑ Registration fees and resource fees are payable at the time of registration and are non-refundable. Payments for these fees can be made by cash, check or money order.
- ❑ School tuition is a yearly commitment. For parent convenience tuition fees are divided into ten (10) months from August to May. Payments are due on the 1st of the month. The first tuition payment is to be paid directly to the school.
- ❑ After the first payment which is paid at the school, tuition is collected by a third party company; FACTS Tuition Management Services.
- ❑ Parents may opt to send monthly checks to FACTS (an invoice will be emailed to parent/guardian by FACTS).
- ❑ The school recommends that parents engage in an automated debit program. A \$30.00 fee for each failed auto-debit transaction will be charged by FACTS. Fees not received by the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day of each month incur a late fee of \$25.00. The student will not be allowed to attend classes after the twentieth (20<sup>th</sup>) day of the month until the tuition is paid in full. Absences during this period will be considered unexcused. The parents are



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responsible to inform the director, in writing, of any difficulty in meeting these obligations.

- ❑ If a student is registered on or after the 15th, the parents are required to pay the entire tuition fee for the month.
- ❑ Students who attend school for three (3) days of any month will be required to pay tuition for the entire month.

### **Delinquent Accounts**

Students' report cards, tests, and health records will be withheld until all fees are paid in full. All fees from a previous year must be paid in full before the student is allowed to re-register for the new school year.

### **Returned checks**

A charge of \$30.00 will be added to any check that is returned for insufficient funds or closure of account, or any other reason. All remaining payments for the year must be by cash, money order, or cashier's checks.

### **Financial Aid**

The stated policy at GSA is that parents must complete all tuition requirements as specified in the registration information. Parents who are experiencing extreme difficulty meeting their tuition obligations to the school may apply for Financial Aid through FACTS Grants & Aid. It is parents' responsibility to forward required documentation to FACTS. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Deadline for submitting new and renewal applications is July 15. The amount of financial aid given each year is dependent upon availability of funds.



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## Withdrawal

Parents who withdraw their child/children may not be allowed to re-enroll the students again in the same academic year. Parents will have to fill out the withdrawal form for each child withdrawn. All records, reports, and test scores will be withheld until all fees are paid.

## Bus Service

Bus service is not provided for students enrolled in the Pre School.

## Uniforms – Dress Code

Blue Polo shirts

Khaki pants- long

Black or brown shoes\*, sandals, slippers, clogs are not permitted.

Blue Sweat Jackets

\* Shoes can be tennis shoe material but must be brown or black and for safety reasons, may have Velcro straps only

# INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

## Pre-School

This is the entry point of the curriculum at GSA. The Pre-K student starts to study, acquire skills, and form attitudes from this level and then move on through the school. The individuality and abilities of the students are the guiding principles. Age-appropriate materials and tasks are provided in a caring and stimulating environment.

Pre-K students are guided to acquire mastery at their pace and level in these major areas:

- ❑ **Motor Skill:** Gross and fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, audio-visual perception, memory/recognition and retention, hammering, fixing puzzle, drama.
- ❑ **Communication Skills:** Verbalizing, listening, making signs, letters and words mimicking sounds, writing, speaking, and facial expression.



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- ❑ **Pre-Reading Skills:** Alphabet recognition (Arabic and English) and writing, sounds of letters, sound recognition, rhyming, singing, story telling.
- ❑ **Math Skills:** Manipulation of objects, shapes, numbers and numeration, puzzles, matching, arranging, measuring, solving problems, sets, notation, and grouping
- ❑ **Writing Skills:** Letter formation, rhythmic movement, eye-hand coordination, artistic activities, creative expression, and show and tell.
- ❑ **Language Skills:** Oral skills, listening, writing, and drawing.
- ❑ **Physical/Science:** Living and nonliving things around us.
- ❑ **Socializing/Emotional Skills:** Sharing, caring, personal awareness, interaction, greeting, and courtesy.

Classrooms and outdoor play areas are sufficient in square footage per child and equipped with activity centers/areas that help to stimulate the students and allow them to explore. At GSA we strive to educate the “whole child.” (4.05.037) (4.07.004)

### Pre-K 4 Curriculum

GSA purchased Frog Street Curriculum in 2018. Frog Street uses research-based principles of learning to deliver a comprehensive, sequential, integrated system of instructions organized into nine themes aligned to current Florida State Standards. Additionally, Frog Street incorporates the work of Dr. Becky Bailey (Conscious Discipline) to provide daily routines that develop key social skills and emotional control.

Towards the end of the school year PRE-K students visit the KG class and share experiences of KG students under the guidance of the KG teacher about expectations and learning in Kindergarten. Pre K 4 parents are also invited to the event and encouraged to enroll their child in Kindergarten at GSA to ensure a smooth transition. Any family wishing to enroll in county public school is referred to contact their local elementary school and the school district website. Families wishing to choose another childcare



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center are recommended to contact Strong Minds for a participating quality program.  
**(4.16.004) (4.16.005) (2.02.002).**

### **Pre-K 3 Curriculum**

GSA purchased Frog Street Threes in 2019. Frog Street 3 is designed around the latest brain research, including 36 weeks of instruction designed specifically for three-year-olds. Activities are presented in nine thematic teaching guides. Additionally, the social and emotional component incorporates Dr. Becky Bailey’s Conscious Discipline.

### **Progress Reports**

Teachers will regularly inform parents of their child's academic progress. Parent/teacher conferences are held every nine weeks and are scheduled on the school calendar. There are other times, as the situation dictates, when a teacher may contact parents by email or phone for special conferences.

### **Assessment System (Pre-K3 & Pre-K4)**

Assessments are based on the standards provided by the Florida Department of Education and denote the level of skill that a three and four-year-old child has acquired throughout the school year. Progress in acquiring these skills are monitored throughout the academic year and reported in four consecutive terms, each term consisting of a nine-week period.

Mastered Skill	MS
Learning Skill	LS
Not applicable	NA

Date of availability of progress reports at the end of each nine-week period is specified in the annual school calendar for parents to access. Parents may also contact the teacher for a conference in case their child is not progressing satisfactorily to determine the best manner in which they may help the child so he/she can make progress.



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The child's teacher will also share the results of Fall, Winter and Spring VPK and GOLD assessment results.

## School Records

Parents have the right to access, inspect, and review official records, files, and other important documents kept on file with respect to their children. This right does not include the removal and copying of materials from the record. A permanent file for every student is maintained in RenWeb which includes report cards, awards, and special notes. The purpose of recording all such information about a student is that it enables the school to be fair and just when evaluating a student's performance and/or needs and for sending records to another educational institution upon request. This information is not available to the general public and can only be released to other schools when they formally request such records.

The following indicates the policy in relation to students' records:

- Only the parent or authorized personnel (director, curriculum specialist, Administration, and registrar) may have access to assessment results and records. (3.07.010)
- Information with respect to the students will not be made available to a non-custodial person without a signed court release.
- The name change of a student must be supported by a legal document and it will be part of the student's permanent record.
- All school records will be withheld until all tuition and other fees are paid in full.
- Records will also be withheld until all/any school property is returned.

### Privacy Act - Florida State 228.093 (4.16.006)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of education records. Under FERPA, a parent includes any natural parent, guardian, or individual (such as a foster parent) acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. The school must have written permission from the parent in order to release any information from a



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student's education record except as allowed under FERPA. For more information on FERPA, please visit:

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

## Attendance

### GSA VPK Rules and Regulations

- ❑ **Instructional Hours:** The VPK program requires that students be provided 540 instructional hours. However the VPK Flexible Option permits a maximum of 270 hours only.
- ❑ **Option to withdraw and/or transfer:** Parents will be given the option to withdraw and/or transfer to another VPK program if they choose to do so.
- ❑ **Attendance for VPK Flex Option:** Teachers will be taking attendance and recording the attendance in the school's SIS daily. Lower school secretary will be responsible for monitoring students' attendance.
- ❑ **Parents will be liable for tuition payments if absences exceed 60 hours.**
- ❑ **Absences due to extraordinary circumstances** must be accompanied by appropriate documentation which may include a doctor's certificate
- ❑ **Excessive Absences:** If a student is absent from the VPK program for **five (5) consecutive days**, written documentation must be provided describing the reasons for absences in order to avoid automatic withdrawal of the child from the VPK program.



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- ❑ **Letter of Authorization:** Parent/guardian must submit a letter specifying the names of persons authorized to sign out the child/children from GSA.
- ❑ **Attendance Sign-in-Sheets:** Parents and or/guardians and all authorized persons who bring or take the child/children from the school must write their full name in the daily Sign-in-Sheet.
- ❑ **Parental Certification:** Parents will be required to sign the Student Attendance & Parental Choice Certificate Long Form at the end of each month certifying their child/children attendance at GSA.

### **Arrival and Departure Policy and Procedures**

This policy relates to the arrival and departure of children within the education and care setting.  
(4.15.001)

It is the responsibility of staff and families to ensure the safe arrival and departure of children at school.

GSA will provide a **daily sign-in/out sheet** for each month to record the time when a student was dropped off or picked up from the school. Custodial parents or guardians must accurately note the time and legibly write their full name on their child's attendance sheet. The custodial parent or guardian who picks up the child will also be required to sign the sign-out sheet documenting the time the child was signed out. Pens with blue ink for signing and a timeclock to assist in recording the exact time for both sign-in and sign-out will be provided by the school.

***People authorized to pick up the child should be 16 years of age or older in keeping with Article XV (B)(4) of Rules and Regulations governing child care facilities in Palm Beach County.*** A valid picture identification must be provided. The Sign-in/out sheets will have the GSA logo, month and year. The child's name must match the name on the eligibility certificate for VPK students.





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Columns will be provided for the following:

Date

Time-in

Full Signature (first and last name) of person signing child (in blue ink)

Time-out

Full Signature (first and last name) of parent or person authorized by the parent to pick up child (in blue ink)

Word WEEKEND will be printed in the sign in and out row for dates that fall on the weekend.

Custodial Parents or guardians are responsible for informing any other authorized persons picking up their children of GSA's sign-in and sign-out requirements.

Additionally, a **long form** certifying the days attended in each month must be signed by each custodial parent or authorized person for each child enrolled in the Voluntary Pre K (VPK) program at the end of each month.

**SAMPLE Sign in- Sign out Attendance Sheet**

**Student's Last Name, First Name**

**August 20XX**

**PLEASE USE BLUE INK**

Date	TIME-IN	Signature	TIME-OUT	Signature
1	8:00 am	First name, last name	3:00 pm	First name, last name
2				
3				
4				
5				
6		<b>WEEKEND</b>		<b>WEEKEND</b>



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7		WEEKEND		WEEKEND
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13		WEEKEND		WEEKEND
14		WEEKEND		WEEKEND
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				

Parents must clock in at the exact time. A clock is provided by the sign-in and sign-out binder for parent's convenience.

### **School Timings, Drop-off and Pick-Up**

Drop-off and pick-up procedures are implemented to promote student safety and convenience.

Please read the following carefully to become familiar with the routine.

### **PK 3 & VPK wrap around program**

Monday - Friday:	Drop-off	7:55 A.M. - 8:05 A.M
Monday - Thursday:	Pick-up	3:00 P.M
Friday:	Pick-up	2:00 P.M



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### VPK 3 hour program

Monday - Friday:	Drop-off	8: 00 AM
Monday - Friday:	Pick-up	11: AM

**Please respect your child’s learning environment by being punctual for drop off and pickup and observe the following safety rules:**

1. Park your vehicle in the parking area which is facing north
2. Escort your child to his or her classroom.
3. Parents or authorized people for the **3 hour** VPK Program must enter and exit through the school office as the school’s main gate is closed while school is in session.
4. Your child and his/her sibling is in your full custody and must be under your direct supervision.
5. For the sake of safety your child or his/her sibling is not permitted to play in Preschool, Elementary School playground/s or any other areas of the school premises prior to Drop-off and/or after Pick Up during normal school hours.

### Late Fee

Parents who do not pick up their children at dismissal time will be charged a \$7.00 fee for every 15 minutes time period for each child.

### Health and Safety

#### General (4.05.001) (4.05.035) (4.18.003) (4.18.005)(4.05.043)

Our children’s health and safety are of major importance to us all. GSA addresses the safety of all students as follows:

- Main entrance to the school is locked at all times.
- Access is provided using a buzz in the system.
- Entire campus including all playgrounds are fenced and gates are locked.



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- Visitors are required to sign in and out and must wear a visitor's badge while on campus.
- Both indoor and outdoor facilities are equipped with security cameras.
- Smoking is not permitted on the school premises.

Moreover, any person shall not possess any firearm, electric weapon or device, destructive device, or other weapon as defined in s. 790.001(13), including a razor blade or box cutter, except as authorized in support of school-sanctioned activities, at a school-sponsored event or on the property of any school, school bus, or school bus stop.

Emergency exits and emergency lights are installed in classrooms and hallways. Each classroom is equipped with smoke detectors and checked annually. Teachers and staff make sure the classroom and playground areas are safe from hazards. GSA has a maintenance protocol to ensure repairs and upkeep of the building, furniture and equipment.

At the time of enrollment, parents or guardians must bring in the HHS required health forms. All immunizations are to be kept up to date or your child will not be permitted to attend school. Parents should ensure that their children come to school equipped to deal with the weather.

### Handwashing

- Teachers, staff members, volunteers, and students must frequently wash their hands (for at least 20 seconds) thoroughly with soap and running water.
- The following guidelines should be followed when washing hands:
  - Wet hands with water.
  - Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.
  - Rub hands together and scrub everywhere.
  - Wash the front and back of your hands, in between your fingers, and under your nails.
  - Rinse hands with water.
  - Dry hands completely using a single-use towel.



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- ❑ Examples of activities when hand washing is required include, but are not limited to:
  - ❑ Arriving to school and/or work in the morning
  - ❑ Before and after eating
  - ❑ During food preparation and snack distribution
  - ❑ Immediately following outdoor play
  - ❑ After toileting
  - ❑ After touching an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles or light switches.
  - ❑ After changing or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
  - ❑ After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
  - ❑ Before and after administering medication
  - ❑ After touching garbage
  - ❑ Following the use of any cleaners or toxic chemicals
- ❑ The use of hand sanitizers does not substitute for handwashing. However, in areas away from the facility where no running water is available, hand sanitizers may be used. Examples of such places are field trips, nature trails, or picnic areas where running water is not readily available.
- ❑ Teachers, staff members, or volunteers with open wounds and/or injury that inhibits handwashing, such as casts, bandages, or braces, must not prepare food.
- ❑ Hand washing reminders will be posted in visible and key locations throughout the classroom (and outdoors) to help remind the teachers, staff members, volunteers, and students of the importance of hand washing.

## Napping

For the purposes of this requirement, “napping” refers to a brief period of rest during daylight hours.



## Bedding and Linens

- Bedding must be appropriate for the child's size.
  - Floor mats will be provided by the PreK program. Floor mats must be at least one inch thick and covered with an impermeable surface that is cleaned and sanitized or disinfected after each use.
  - Air and foam mattresses are prohibited.
  - The parents must provide safe and sanitary bed linens (fitted sheet and blanket) to be used when napping.
  - Linens, provided by the parents, will be sent home at the end of the school week and must be washed prior to bringing them back to school.
  - If a child/ren does not have linen(s) or the appropriate linen(s), the PreK program will provide linen(s) for that child/ren.
  - Linens used by more than one child must be washed in between usage.
  - Linens that are soiled and dirty should be washed more often.
  - Bedding and linens, when not in use, must be stored in a sanitary manner which prevents the spread of germs or lice from other linens.
  - Bedding and linens shall not be stored in the bathroom, unless stored in cabinets.
- Nap/Sleep Space
- The PreK program must have a designated area where each child can sit quietly or lie down to nap.
  - When not in use, napping space and indoor floor space may be used interchangeably.
  - A minimum of 18 inches must be maintained around individual napping and sleeping spaces. A maximum of 2 sides of a napping space may be against a solid barrier, such as a wall.



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- Napping areas must not be under furniture or against furniture that creates a hazard.
- When napping, the floor mat should be covered with a tight fitted sheet and (aside from a blanket), should not be surrounded by any excess bedding, which includes but is not limited to: quilts, comforters, pillows, stuffed animals, cushions, and toys.
- Napping areas must not be in exit areas. All exits must remain clear in accordance with fire safety requirements.

### Sick Child at School

A child who becomes ill during the day will be isolated from other students. Parents will be notified and asked to pick up the child immediately. If a seriously ill child is not picked up promptly, emergency procedures will be put into effect.

You will be called if your child:

- Has a fever
- Has diarrhea
- Begins vomiting
- Has head lice or nits
- Displays symptoms of communicable disease (heavy green discharge, reddened eyes, sore throat, and headache), abdominal pain, suspicious rash or unusually lethargic behavior.
- Complaints of an earache.

**It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school if their child is sick or if the child has any allergy. The parents must also state in writing what action the doctor has recommended.**



## Doctor's Authorization to Return to School

A doctor's note is required for a child to return to school especially for Pre-K students and after 3 days of illness.

A doctor's note will also be required, as follows:

- If your child had a fever of 101 degrees or more during the previous 24 hours.
- Before any medication will be given including over the counter drugs.
- For a child returning to school after an illness requiring a prescription medication. The note must indicate that the child is not contagious and may return to school.
- For a child who has been sent home with diarrhea/vomiting and wishes to return to school the next day.
- For a child returning to school after a communicable disease such as chicken pox, strep throat or bronchitis.
- If your child has a heavy nasal discharge or persistent cough.

Note: Although a child has a doctor's note, the child must be physically able to participate in a group setting in order to return to school. The final decision rests with the school administrators.

**\*In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, GSA has formulated a COVID-19 Return to School Policy Manual. The manual serves as an addendum in dealing with health and safety matters during these unprecedented times. Guidelines contained in the manual will automatically supersede any of GSA's non-pandemic policies dealing with the same topic(s). The manual is located in the resource section in FACTS SIS (formerly RenWeb) and on GSA's website.**

## Administration of Medication at School (4.05.012)

Prescribed and over-the-counter medications **CAN NOT BE ADMINISTERED** without a signed Physician's Authorization for Medication form on file. A Physician's Authorization Form is required each school year and for any changes to the current order during the school year. The





form should contain the name of the student, the name and signature of the prescriber, the name of the medication, diagnosis, directions for use, and the parent's signature/consent. All medications must be delivered to the school nurse by an adult. Once received, a medication count and co-signature for receipt of the medication will be completed.

Prescribed medications must be in its original container with a pharmacy label, not expired and matching the current physician's order. Over-the-counter medications must be in the original unopened container, not expired and labeled with the child's name.

### **Medicine Dispensing Procedures**

The School Nurse or staff members (who have received medication administration training by the RN) may administer prescribed and over-the-counter medication(s) to students. Medicine will be given as prescribed by the doctor. The staff member administering the medication should ensure that the following "six rights" of medication administration is maintained:

1. Right student
2. Right medication
3. Right dosage
4. Right time
5. Right route
6. Right documentation

The following procedures will also be followed:

- All medicine must be labeled with the child's name, specific dosage and times the medication is to be administered.
- A medication form must be completed indicating each day the medicine is to be given and exact dosage.
- Documentation of administration will be maintained in the child's file and a copy will be provided to the parent/guardian.



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### **Illness or Injury**

Any type of illness or injury that occurs at school is to be reported immediately to the office. If it is a minor injury it will be treated and the child will be returned to his/her class. The parent will also be immediately contacted. The teacher will prepare and file the report in the incident/accident folder.

If the illness/injury is serious and the parent/guardian does not respond, then the person listed as an emergency contact will be called. If no one can be reached, the child's physician will be called. If necessary, 911 will be called.

It is critical for any change in address, telephone number, doctor or emergency contact person to be reported immediately to the school's office.

### **Emergency Contact**

Parents are required to complete an emergency contact form each year for each child. This information must be updated immediately with any change. A designated staff person will contact parents by phone in the event of any illness, accident, injury, incident, dental or emergency dismissal of school.

### **Medical Appointments**

The parents should make every effort to schedule medical and dental appointments on non-school days. Parents are requested to advise the office the day before the appointment and the time the student will have to be released.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

The laws of the State of Florida require certain persons such as teachers, child-care workers, health workers, child counselors and administrator to report known or suspected cases of child abuse.

Ch. 415, Florida Statutes, protect any child, disabled, or aged adult from abuse and neglect.

Section 415.504 provides for a central abuse registry (1-800-96 ABUSE) in the Department of



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Children and Families to receive reports of abuse and neglect. Anyone who knows or suspects and fails to report a child’s abuse or knowingly prevents someone from reporting, or makes a false report is guilty of a second-degree misdemeanor.

### **Immunization & Physical Examination**

Florida State Law requires that all children enrolling in any public, private, or parochial school must show evidence of immunization to communicable disease, e.g. measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, mumps, rubella, polio. Parents are to present forms DH680 (for immunization) and DH3040 (for health examinations) at the time of admittance on the first day of school. Any waiver to the requirements must be documented on DH form 680-Part B.

### **Requirements**

Type of vaccine	Dosage
Diphtheria, tetanus, & Pertussis (DTPs)	4-5
Polio (IPV/OPV)	3-4
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	1-2
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	1-4
Hepatitis B	3
Varicella	1

### **Schedule of Communicable Diseases and Pests**

Disease	Incubation Period	Communicability	Period of Exclusion
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<b>Chicken Pox</b>	13-17 days	1 to 2 days before rash and not more than 1 week before the crop appears	Not more than 1 week after eruption and all lesions have crusted
<b>Coronavirus (COVID-19)</b>	Up to 14 days (median time of 4 - 5 days from exposure to symptoms onset)	48 to 72 hours before starting to experience symptoms up to 10 days after symptoms resolve (if asymptomatic, 10 days after testing positive)	Please refer to GSA's COVID-19 Return to School Guidelines Manual
<b>Fifth Disease</b>	4 - 12 days	Before the rash appears	No exclusion required
<b>Hand, Foot, Mouth Disease</b>	3 - 6 days	For days or weeks after the symptoms go away	Exclude until all blisters are dry
<b>Head Lice</b>	7-10 days	Until lice & eggs are destroyed	Until appropriate treatment has commenced.
<b>Hepatitis A</b>	28-30 days	Weeks before; 2 weeks after symptoms appear	2 weeks after onset or 10 days after jaundice
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	60-90 days	Several weeks before symptoms until blood is no longer positive	No exclusion required
<b>Herpes Simplex</b>	2-12 days	While lesions are present	No exclusion required



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<b>Herpes Zoster</b>	13-17 days	1-2 days before rash, not more than 1 week after lesions appear	Until 1 week after lesions erupt & all have lesions crusted
<b>Impetigo</b>	4-10 days	While sores are draining	Under treatment, lesions healing, no new lesion
<b>Influenza</b>	24-72 hours	3 days from onset	Until 3 days from onset
<b>Meningitis</b>	Depends on type	Depends on type	Until 3 days from onset
<b>Mononucleosis</b>	4-6 weeks	May be up to 1 year	Physician's approval
<b>Mumps</b>	18 days	48 hours before swelling, 6 days before gland involvement & 9 days after swelling	Until swelling & symptoms disappear
<b>Pink eye</b>	Varies	During course of active infection	Until under medical care & drainage clears
<b>Pinworms</b>	4-6 days	As long as eggs are laid	1 <sup>st</sup> treatment complete
<b>Ringworms</b>	4-14 days	While lesion is present	Until medical treatment



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<b>Rubella</b>	16-18 days	1 week before 4 days after rash appears	Until 4 <sup>th</sup> day after onset of rash
<b>Scabies</b>	2-6 weeks	Until mites and eggs destroyed	Complete 24 hours
<b>Scarlet</b>	1-3 days	During acute stage & after 2-4 days after rash	Until under treatment for 24 hours
<b>Strep Throat</b>	1-3 days	During acute stage & 2-4 days after rash	Until under treatment
<b>Shigella</b>	1-3 days	During the course of infection until feces clear	Until symptoms disappear
<b>Whooping Cough</b>	Within 10 days	7 days after exposure, 3 weeks, if not treated, 1 week after treatment	1 week after treatment, 3 weeks if not treated

### **Nutritious Snacks and Lunch (4.05.018)**

Students are to bring their own snacks and lunches based on the USDA food guidelines. Parents will be reminded with a written notice in the event that food fails to meet the recommended guidelines. Water coolers are in each classroom. Children have access to drinking water throughout the day. Parents must inform teachers of any/all allergies (food/medical/environmental) for their child for proper allergy precautions.

If for any reason a student did not bring his or her lunch, and/or their lunch is inadequate, the school nurse or her designee will give them a choice of healthy and nutritious snacks (also based on the USDA food guidelines) to choose from.



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## **Field Trips**

Throughout the school year, students will be taking field trips to enhance specific areas of their school's program. Permission slips will be issued which must be signed by parents and returned before the start of the trip. Normal rules of behavior and conduct will apply to students who participate.

## **Holidays/Vacations (special)**

Parents are provided with an annual school calendar which includes all the scheduled holidays for the year. In the event that parents must take a long break (more than 5 days) due to illness in the family or for religious pilgrimage (Hajj or Umrah) they must submit such requests in writing to the Administration/Director at least two weeks in advance. Any child enrolled in the VPK program may be asked to withdraw from the program.

## **Emergency Procedures**

### **Emergency Closing of School**

GSA will follow Palm Beach County Public Schools with respect to the closing of schools due to an emergency. If there is a specific threat, then an independent decision will be made. Inclement weather can cause an emergency closing of school. Please keep tuned to your local radio and TV for this information. Emergency closing information will be posted on the GSA website.

In the event of an emergency requiring building evacuation, students will be transported to a designated safe site. Parents will be contacted and required to pick up their child/children at the designated safe site.

Days lost due to emergency closing may be made up before the end of the school year.

### **Safety Drills**

Numerous safety drills are carried out throughout the school year

Emergency exit signs are posted in the school.



Students and parents will be informed in the event that the school needs to be closed due to prolonged electrical outage.

### **Playground Safety Rules (4.05.035) and (3.03.114)**

Students enjoy the use of the playground as long as it is safe to do so. In case of extreme heat, cold or rain, play will be conducted indoors. Students who violate safety rules or act aggressively will be redirected appropriately.

1. Teachers will review playground promises with the children
2. Students will listen and respond to the teacher/adult on duty.
3. Students will use all equipment properly and safely.
4. Students will cooperate and use good manners (including sharing equipment, no fighting, no inappropriate language or gestures, etc.).
5. Students will stay within the fenced boundaries of the playground.

## **Discipline**

### **General**

At GSA, we view discipline not as a means of punishing a child who has acted inappropriately, but rather as a means of teaching a child. Positive discipline teaches children where the limits are set, how to maintain control over their bodies and how to solve problems in the event of conflict. Harsh discipline is never administered at the center nor tied to food or toileting; instead, corrective measures are worked out between the child and the teacher that help the child's self-image and help develop self-discipline. If a child does misbehave, the teacher will take appropriate actions, such as

- ❑ **Redirection:** If a child is engaged in undesirable behavior he/she will be presented with an alternative and/or acceptable behavior or activity.
- ❑ **Verbal intervention:** The teacher will first discuss why the behavior is inappropriate and what is acceptable and expected of him/her.





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- ❑ **Logical Consequences:** The consequences of continued misbehavior will also be explained.
- ❑ **No Time-out:** Children will not have a time-out, only age-appropriate discussion and/or guided instruction.
- ❑ **Conference:** A conference will be called with parents if a child's behavior is consistently disruptive.
- ❑ **Referral:** If disruptive and unruly behavior continues, a referral will be given to parents to Child Find (FDLRS) or any licensed psychologist.
- ❑ **Removal:** If all steps have been exhausted, and the child continues to be disruptive to the learning environment, then (as a last resort) arrangements will have to be made for the child to be removed from the school.

### Discipline Policy

At the Garden of the Sahaba Academy each child is encouraged to carry out his/her duties to Allah, self, teachers, and classmates, and to ensure basic health and safety. We believe that prevention is the key to almost every situation that may require disciplinary action. We offer positive reinforcement for good behavior and redirection when necessary to minimize confrontation. Respect and encouragement are shown for direct expression of feelings. No one is permitted to physically harm another person or property. Children are expected to treat other children and staff members with respect. Physical facilities and school property must not be abused. The role of the teachers and parent helpers is to facilitate and model the development of the child's problem-solving skills. The children are guided to understand the consequences of their behavior and to solve their own problems. Parents and teachers apply the same uniform standards in the classroom and there is usually discussion of suitable classroom techniques with the parents. The school is not equipped to handle children with severe behavioral or learning disabilities. In case of habitual inappropriate behavior, the



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school will work closely with the parents in identifying the source of the problem and ways of changing those patterns. Parents will be encouraged to seek professional counseling if appropriate behavior and improvement does not occur.

## Home and School Relations

The home and school are intimately interdependent. This is a strong basis for a binding and dynamic relationship. Both the school and home are strong and focused entities working for the common goal of nurturing and training our future leaders and citizens to the highest levels they can achieve. We have an Amana (Trust) from Allah (SWT) in this noble task which we have to answer for.

May Allah (SWT) help us and bless us in this effort!

### Communication (2.03.001) (4.17.002)

There is a constant need for communication between the school and the home. This flow can be in many forms - letters, notes, telephone, etc. and should be from both sides (home and school). A monthly newsletter, letters, calendar of activities, field trip notes, etc. are sent to parents. The school also uses *Parent Web* as a means of communication with parents. Parents are requested to make daily checks of their child's backpack for correspondences sent by the school and also



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check Parent Web. Some of these correspondences will require your signature. Please sign them and return them to the teacher on a timely basis.

Teachers also send regular reports on the progress of your child. Please pay keen attention to these and all similar reports.

The best source of information about your child's progress is your child's teachers. Please contact the teachers so as to get accurate and up-to-date information.

### **Parents Grievance Procedure (2.01.001) (4.17.003)**

Parents who have a concern should first contact the child's teacher. If the concern is not resolved, the parent can complete a grievance form that is submitted to the Director. If the issue is not resolved at the director level within two weeks of form submission, the parent may forward the grievance form to the principal. If the issue is not resolved at the principal level within two weeks of form submission, the parent may forward the grievance form to the School Board. Grievance forms are available in the school office. For the purpose of mediation, GSA will find either a staff member or a member of the ICBR community at-large for communication in the language the family understands.

### **Developmental Screenings (4.16.003)**

The purpose of developmental screening is to identify children who may need further evaluation in order to determine if they have a possible developmental delay that might interfere with school success. GSA uses Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) as a tool for the screening. Parents/guardians are required to complete one Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) during a calendar year. The student's class teacher will provide the parent/guardian with the appropriate questionnaire. Each questionnaire contains simple questions addressing five specific skill areas and one Overall section. The five areas are as follows: Communications, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Problem Solving, and Personal-Social. The Overall Section is part of the question section and asks about general concerns. These questions are the parents/guardians' chance to note things



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they have observed about the child, e.g. “Do you think your child hears well?” Every question in this section is a potential indicator of a developmental delay or issue. Sometimes referrals are made based on an answer in the Overall Section. Based on the responses in the questionnaire and teacher’s observations the parents/guardian may be requested to contact Florida Diagnostic and Learning System (FDLRS) center at (561) 434-7339. Feedback from FDLRS and/or Exceptional Student Education department is disseminated to the teachers and school administration by the parents. (4.13.004) (3.06.021) (2.01.008)

### **Procedure for Visits (3.06.014)**

Parents are welcome to visit the school. You may visit for many reasons; e.g.:

- Discuss your child’s progress
- Visit the school and observe its functioning
- Sit-in on a lesson in your child’s class
- Drop-off your child’s lunch or some material that he/she may have forgotten
- Pick-up for early release.

These visits are to be arranged in advance so as to ensure the smooth functioning of the school.

Parents are not allowed to visit the classroom without an appointment. Appointments can be made by a note, a telephone call, or email.

You are requested to:

- Schedule all such visits by appointment through the office
- Avoid calling and requesting to speak to a teacher during official working time. This includes arrival, preparation, classroom, lunch, and dismissal times.
- Avoid engaging the teachers in conversation during the drop-off and pick-up time. The teachers need to give their full attention to our students. Emergencies are exempted.

### **Visit by Appointment**

Please follow this procedure when you are visiting the school by appointment:



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- a) On your arrival at the school, please report to the office and sign the Visitors' Book.
- b) The Office will give you a "Classroom Visitor" Pass. The pass will state your name, your child's name and grade, and the purpose of the visit. You will also be required to sign in on the Visitor's Sheet. A visitor comment sheet will also be provided.
- c) You will either be escorted or directed to the classroom(s). While visiting your child's classroom, you will be required to show your visitor's pass to the teacher. Otherwise, you will be asked to return to the office to procure a pass.
- d) In the classroom, you will be seated at the back of the class. There you will quietly observe the class at work. You are not permitted to speak to any student, interrupt or interfere with the class without the teacher's permission.
- e) After your visit, you are requested to turn in your visitor's pass and the visitor comment sheet with your comments to the Administration.
- f) Please do not visit another classroom. You will not be accepted without a visitor's pass. If you need to visit another classroom, you will have to repeat the aforementioned steps/procedures (a) through (e).

If you are visiting the entire school, an Office staff member will escort you.

### **Unannounced Visit**

If you have to visit the school unannounced, without an appointment, then you are requested to report to the Office. The Office staff will take the materials, lunch, etc. and deliver them to your child.

### **Parent Conferences**

Conferences are very important as the teachers will discuss your child's progress with you. The conferences are planned to be held at the end of the first, second and third marking periods. If needed, conferences may also be held at any time during the year. A conference summary report



will be completed and will include goals and require parent and teacher signatures. You are requested to read and sign the completed report. The report will be placed in your child's file.

### **Parent Advocacy (4.16.002)**

Parent advocacy in a childcare setting can be defined as a process to improve services, gain eligibility for services or change the amount or quality of services to better meet the needs of an individual child. In this vein, GSA teachers and staff encourage families to become advocates for their children by providing pamphlets e.g. Child Find, FDLRS, and referrals to agencies e.g. Early Learning Coalition, Strong Minds, and Children's Services Council etc.

### **Community-Based Resources (4.13.003)**

From time to time parents request the school for a list of community-based services that may assist in the well-being of their children and family. The school provides the following general list:

- Parent seminars held by GSA, ICBR and ICNA
- Boca Public Library
- Child Find
- FDLRS
- Children Services Council
- GSA Website – Useful links

### **Newsletter**

The Preschool newsletter is printed monthly. The newsletter provides information on class activities and plans, past and future events of the school. Students' work may also be included in the newsletter.

### **Parties**

Teacher approved parties may be held during the school year. The teacher and room parents may organize the parties. Parents must obtain the teacher's approval to send a treat for the class.



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Only HALAL food and drink are to be served at these parties. GSA does not allow birthday celebrations at the school.

### **Meetings**

There are several occasions during the school year, when parents are particularly encouraged to attend. PTO meetings are scheduled several times during the school year. Additionally, the school hosts an annual parents' open house. Other gatherings coincide with Islamic holidays and festivals. Look for information and details from the Office.

### **Fundraising**

The operation of a school requires a great deal of financial resources. Parents are encouraged to participate in all fundraising activities and are requested to actively involve relatives, friends and other community members in these pursuits.

May Allah (SWT) accept our efforts and include us among those parents who have fulfilled their obligations towards their children's education. Ameen!

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are always needed in the school. Parents are asked to assist the school with their time and/or talents. Your efforts are greatly welcomed.

### **Voluntary Service**

These are some areas in which you can volunteer your services:

Teachers' Helper	Story Reader
Chaperon	PTO Member
Office Helper	Lunch-time Helper
Resource Person	Fundraiser
Special School Event Helper	

Volunteers must complete an application and abide by all DCF clearance requirements.



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### **Surveys (2.03.006)**

Once a year, parents will be requested to complete a school survey. The parent survey provides feedback on the school's performance and enables the school personnel to continuously improve its operations.

### **School Pride**

We must demonstrate, at all times, respect for our school buildings. This is especially important when we have parents and guests visiting our school. We can do this by following our school rules at all times, by keeping the school building neat and clean (free of litter), and by being good citizens of the Garden of the Sahaba Academy. Your help, support and cooperation will have a significant impact on the education and behavior of your child.

## **Handbook Acknowledgement**

Please print this page and return to the administration

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Preschool Parent Handbook. I agree to keep a copy of this document for future reference. I agree to follow all present and future GSA policies and rules as authorized in this document or otherwise communicated to me from time to time. I affirm that I have read the discipline policy. I understand that the school may make changes to this Handbook at any time and those changes will be communicated to parents in writing through notices or emails.

I also understand that this document overrides and replaces all past GSA handbooks, manuals and policies, written or oral.





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Name of Student(s) (Please Print)

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Name of Parent (Please Print)

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Parent Signature

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Date



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**GSA Administration and Support Staff Organizational Flow Chart**

