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10427 Detroit Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44102 – P: 216.694.7200 F: 216.521.2604

Student/Parent Handbook

2024-2025

The Gerson School
A program of [Applewood Centers, Inc.](#)

**10427 Detroit Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44102
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The Gerson Mission

[The Gerson School](#) is an inclusive, alternative educational environment serving students in grades 6-12 who have had difficulties experiencing success in a traditional learning environment. Gerson provides an unconditional education which prepares students for life by developing and nurturing:

- Critical/creative thinking and problem solving skills
- Personal life skills
- Mature habits of mind
- Responsibility

The Gerson School Philosophy

At Gerson, we believe that young people are inclined to be pro-social, responsible, motivated, caring, and accepting of others. It is the goal of the school to help students overcome their obstacles and to become successful as students and citizens. We believe that students learn best in a community where they feel respected and cared for as individuals and where they are guided to respect and care for others. The school's role is to provide students educational and personal opportunities, direction, and encouragement.

Academic Policies & Procedures

Service Delivery

The Gerson School is chartered by the [Ohio Department of Education](#) (ODE). Each team member is appropriately credentialed through ODE. Education services are provided by intervention specialists and highly qualified teachers (HQT). Other team members include classroom and teacher aides; a school-based social worker; a student services coordinator; a principal; a director; and other licensed staff. Our curriculum follows [Ohio's Learning Standards](#). Students are referred and placed by school districts throughout Northeast Ohio or referred and placed directly by parents. All services, including education, intervention, speech, school-based social work, and other services are provided on-site. All services are consistent with Ohio Department of Education requirements and all education procedures are set by local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

Curriculum

The Gerson curriculum is aligned with the Ohio Department of Education [graduation requirements](#) by providing core and elective course offerings to earn a high school diploma. Gerson offers courses in English Language Arts, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Health, Physical Education, and Fine Arts. Gerson's electives range from courses such as Life Skills, Financial Literacy, Foreign Language, Media & Communication and Women's Studies, to name a few. Elective course offerings rotate on an as-needed basis. In addition to traditional classes, Gerson offers online courses to eligible students.

The Gerson School has adopted the Understanding by Design framework of "backward design" for all instructional units and courses in the curriculum. This method focuses on first identifying worthy educational outcomes or objectives, and then building assessments and instruction aligned to the identified goal. This framework focuses on teaching for student understanding through three phases: acquisition, meaning-making, and transfer.

Acquisition means gaining new skills and knowledge. Meaning-making refers to learning experiences that provide context and relevance to the material. The phase of meaning-making is vital for Gerson Students. The curriculum, by design, blends some traditional approaches to teaching with experiential, hands-on activities, aimed at providing students with authentic opportunities to demonstrate their progress and achievement. Transfer means applying these skills and meaning to novel situations for independent performance for teachers to assess.

The Gerson School Principal leads a curriculum and instruction team responsible for developing and maintaining all components of curriculum. The principal monitors the implementation of the curriculum and any changes necessitated by the annual analysis and the modification of Ohio's Learning Standards. The Gerson School provides every student with opportunities and support, including intervention as needed, to continually earn high school credits, as well as to meet the additional graduation requirements set forth by ODE.

Progress Reporting

The Gerson School engages in routine assessments that are aligned with the course of study. Tests, quizzes, informal assessments, projects, and exams are used to assess performance of each student. Results of formative and summative assessments are used to determine the need for adjustments in instruction, intervention, guidance, and grade promotion. Quarterly progress reports are provided to parents and guardians. In addition, parent/teacher conferences, and IEP reviews are utilized to provide parents and districts with information about student performance.

Grading Periods

The Gerson School uses four grading quarters per school year. On average, each quarter consists of 45 instructional days. This allows students, parents, and [advisors](#) to track progress at short intervals and students can quickly remedy areas of poor progress before too much time is lost. Progress reports and report cards are issued on a quarterly basis.

These detailed reports contain grades and teacher comments for each subject. If a Progress Report is not received at home within 10 days of the end of a grading period, a copy should be requested from the office of the school.

Semester Grades

Semester grades are comprised of the average of the grades from each grading period and the grade for the final exam/project, if applicable. Abilities and needs are considered for individual students in assessing achievement. Semester grades are issued to the referring school district to be included in the student’s official district [transcript](#).

Final Examinations/Projects

Final examinations or projects may be scheduled during the last week of each semester. All subject matter covered during the semester may be assessed or tested unless noted otherwise by the teacher. Review days may be scheduled before the examinations to guide the students in their preparations. The value of the final examination/project grade will be determined by the course instructor and will be included in the final Semester Grade. The Gerson School believes that final exams/projects prepare students for certain important life experiences such as job interviews, entrance exams, promotion reviews, etc. Some classes have a state (ODE) provided [end-of-course exam](#) (EOC) (biology, algebra I, geometry, US history, US government, English II). For these courses, these exams will also serve as the final exam. However, scores from the EOC will not be used to determine final grades.

Grading Scale & Grade Point Average

The Gerson School believes that letter grades are an indicator of a student’s academic performance; we also believe that a letter grade is only half the story of a student’s success at Gerson. However, The Gerson School awards traditional letter grades and assigns a point value to each grade awarded. The point value is used to determine a student’s Grade Point Average (G.P.A.). The table below outlines the letter grades, the point value for each grade, and percent range for each grade.

Grade	Point Value	Percent Range	
		Starting %	Ending %
A+	4.33	99	100
A	4	93	98.99
A-	3.67	90	92.99
B+	3.33	86	89.99
B	3	83	85.99
B-	2.67	80	82.99
C+	2.33	76	79.99
C	2	73	75.99
C-	1.67	70	72.99
D+	1.33	66	69.99
D	1	63	65.99
D-	0.67	60	62.99
F	0	0	59.99

Earning Credit

Students can earn from 0.25 to 1.00 credits for each course, depending on the specifications determined by ODE and local decisions. Courses like physical education are awarded in increments of 0.25. Semester classes are typically worth

0.5 credits, and full year courses are worth 1.00. In some rare cases, a student may earn more than 1.00 credits for career technical courses or work study programs.

Off-Campus Credits & Credit Flexibility

Students at Gerson may have the opportunity to take courses off campus, earn credit for employment opportunities, or engage in a variety of alternative credit-bearing activities. This must be done with the prior permission of their Advisors, Gerson Administration, and the referring district's support. This option is available to students who are learning and working well in their scheduled classes; who are positive members of the school community; and whose interests and skills indicate that they will successfully complete the off-campus tasks. Only courses taken at an accredited institution, or approved and documented through Gerson's Credit Flexibility Plan will be approved for credit. A transcript or an official report of progress must be received at The Gerson School before credit will be awarded.

Assignments/Homework

Homework is an optional strategy that teachers may choose to use. Homework, for practice or preparation for instruction, is assigned and graded at a teacher's discretion.

Required Credits at The Gerson School

In order to earn a diploma, The Gerson School requires that a student earn the minimum number of credits specified by ODE. Presently, the number required for graduation is 20 credits. In addition to [Course Completion](#), students are required to meet ODE's requirements for [Demonstrating Competency](#) and [Demonstrating Readiness](#). [See Appendix B](#) for specific requirements and additional information.

State Testing

The Gerson School administers [Ohio's State Tests](#) (OST) to students. Exceptions from passing these tests are permitted only in accordance with written [IEP provisions](#). The Gerson School prepares students for each OST and offers *remediation* to any student who does not achieve a proficient score. All procedures established by the ODE are followed in the [security](#) and administration of the tests. If deemed appropriate by the IEP team, Gerson School administration, and the referring district; a student may choose to participate in the OST at their referring district.

College Testing

The Gerson School encourages each student to take standardized college entrance tests. The college applicant has one less worry when entrance testing is already completed. The Gerson School collaborates with each student's referring district in order for each student to take the [SAT](#) or [ACT](#). In order to better prepare students for these exams, [Advisors](#) may assist students in obtaining and/or preparing for the [ACT and SAT Practice Tests](#). Additionally, Advisors assist students with decisions about college choices, testing, and applications.

Transcripts

Official transcripts are created and maintained by each student's referring district. Upon completion of each semester, grades are sent to the referring district's representative and then added to the district's official student transcript. Upon request, The Gerson School may create a *Gerson School Transcript*. This transcript would only include those credits earned at The Gerson School. Release of transcripts to anyone other than a student's legal guardian, and referring district, requires written consent of the said guardian. [Records](#) of all students who attend The Gerson School are maintained at the School, either in physical or electronic form. Students may have their transcripts and/or other educational information sent to someone other than the referring district or legal guardian by requesting, in writing, which information is to be released and to whom it is to be sent.

Student Records

Cumulative records are maintained for all Gerson School students. The Gerson School reserves the right to maintain said records in either a physical or electronic format. School records contain private and confidential information, and

are kept in a secure area that is locked/password protected when not in use. The principal is responsible for the information that is included in the records, their maintenance and review, and their use in reflecting student progress. Professional staff with legitimate educational interest has access to a student's records. Records are released to officially recognized public and non-public schools, as well as other individuals, upon receipt of a written signed request by a student's legal guardian. The Gerson School may also release any records listed on and to any entity listed on the signed Gerson School *Consent for Educational Records Release*. Records may be released without parental notification, or request, as a result of a subpoena or judicial order. No information is released to outside requesting parties without the signed written consent of a student of legal age or of a parent, unless otherwise noted in this paragraph.

Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement

The Gerson School's strategic planning process is founded on the analysis of student and school performance and feedback from stakeholders. Building teams comprised of teaching staff, paraprofessionals, and administrators collect and analyze data pertaining to grades, progress toward student learning objectives, progress toward IEP goals and objectives, and other benchmarks. Data collection outcomes help to identify any areas for the team focus through short and long term strategies and progress monitoring. Feedback from parents and referring districts is collected through online satisfaction surveys. Additionally, staff completes agency and program-specific satisfaction surveys to help administrators better understand and meet staff needs and requests. A safety survey is also completed annually. Information from specific surveys and from the building teams is available to parents and districts upon request.

Staff Information

Staff is recruited, employed, assigned, evaluated, and provided professional development without discrimination on the basis of age, color, ancestry, national origin, race, gender, religion, disability or veteran status. Staffs holds appropriate credentials for assigned positions and have undergone background checks required of all Applewood Center employees, including BCI and FBI fingerprint checks. Copies of checks are maintained in the Human Resources Department of Applewood Centers/Wingspan Care Group. Professional development opportunities occur throughout the academic year. They include weekly meetings, quarterly staff in-service days, consultation with behavioral health and education experts, and independent study, to name a few. Professional development opportunities are scheduled on an as-needed basis and are regularly occurring. Team members are also provided the opportunity to participate in trainings off grounds. Staff training and professional development promotes a safe and healthy school environment conducive to learning and performance excellence.

Advisors

An *intervention specialist* is assigned to each student as their Advisor. All students meet weekly, and sometimes daily, with their Advisors. Advisors monitor their advisee's progress, help them to develop positive ways to handle problems, and assist them with career planning. Students are encouraged to discuss any personal concerns that interfere with their school progress with their Advisors. Advisors are the primary mentors, resource persons, and guides for their advisees. Advisors, together with the Gerson school social worker and/or guidance counselor, will assist students in planning class schedules, credit oversight, and career planning and preparation. Finally, the Advisor is the IEP Case Manager for their assigned students.

School-based Social Worker and Pupil Services Coordinator

The Gerson School offers the services of a school-based social worker and a pupil services coordinator. Both professionals are available to assist students with school issues, peer issues, planning for the future, and acclimation to

our school. The pupil services coordinator and social worker are available throughout the day for any unexpected crisis a student may encounter. The school social worker provides a social skills instruction to students, and co-facilitates the Active Parenting Group open to all parents. The pupil services coordinator assists with transcripts and credits, helps with transition services, and acts as the site testing coordinator.

School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

The Gerson School follows a philosophy that believes students need more positive than negative feedback and reinforcement. The model the School uses is called Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports ([PBIS](#)). This model is recommended by the Ohio Department of Education. We believe that students should be noticed when they are making the right decisions more than when they are making the wrong ones. The Gerson School incorporates positive rewards such as public acknowledgement, tokens of success like Gerson Bucks, and other reinforcements that encourage the student to maintain positive behavior. When a student displays the actions that reflect the elements of **Genuine, Engaged, Respectful, Safe, Original and Noble** behavior, it will be acknowledged and validated. Conversely, when a student makes a poor choice, consequences will be individualized to the student and issue, in order to provide a learning experience. The Gerson School PBIS Matrix outlines behavior expectations in the different school environments. These expectations will be reviewed during the first week of class.

Non-discrimination Policy

The Gerson School recruits and admits students of any race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or identify, or ancestry to all its rights, privileges, program and activities. In addition, the school will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or identify, or ancestry in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

The Gerson School will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or identify, or ancestry in the hiring of its certified or non-certified personnel.

Cooperation with Outside Agencies

The Gerson School recognizes the need for students to work with therapists, counselors, case managers, or other mental health professionals. The school makes every effort to support this work. In order to share information with these providers, we require signed [consent](#) by the parent or guardian. Adjustments to schedules *may* be made when **emergency** appointments have to take place during the school day. However, efforts should be made to schedule these appointments outside of instructional hours so as to not disrupt the educational process. Any emergency appointments during the school day, or at The Gerson School, should receive prior approval from the Principal or Director.

Dress Code

The best learning takes place in an environment in which everyone feels cared for and appreciated as individuals. The Gerson School's Dress Code supports these beliefs by creating a neutral place where students will not be offended, distracted, threatened, or demeaned while they have the opportunity to express their own individuality.

Examples of inappropriate clothing items include clothing with statements or pictures which insult a group or individual; that promote sex, or drug or alcohol use; that depict violence or depreciation of human dignity; or that advocate illegal activity; to name a few. All students are expected to wear clothing that is appropriate for an educational environment. Clothing that is designed to be an undergarment, or clothing that reveals undergarments, is not permitted. The Gerson School Administration reserves the right to review any attire on a case-by-case basis. The Principal, or designee, will have final say on whether any individual student is in violation of any part of the dress code. Students in violation of any part of the dress code will be asked to change and return to their regularly scheduled activity. Additionally, any student in violation of the dress code may be subject to the [behavior management](#) options outlined in the [Code of Conduct](#).

Personal Display of Affection

Students are expected to act appropriately and respectfully at school, on transportation to and from school, and at any school function. To accomplish that; kissing, hugging, touching, sitting on laps, or sitting entwined with each other is strictly prohibited. The Gerson School Administration has the final say on whether any act falls under this clause.

Lockers

Students are encouraged to leave valuable items at home. However, students may be assigned a locker. Students must supply their own lock for their locker and must take responsibility to keep their locker locked and in clean state. In order to maintain the security of belongings, students should not give the combination or key to any other student. Food and other perishable items are not permitted to be kept in lockers. A refrigerator is available for students to store their lunches. Lockers are the property of The Gerson School and are provided as a convenience for students. Students should not decorate their locker with stickers or duct tape, magnets and scotch tape are allowable. Lockers will be searched when there is a [reasonable suspicion](#) of a school violation or safety concern.

Lost and Found

Students who find lost articles are to give the item to school staff. Students looking for lost items should check with the school administrative support personnel. Items left at school after the conclusion of the school year will be discarded. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Medication

Over-the-counter medication and non-psychotropic medication can be kept at the school and provided on an as-needed basis by Gerson staff that are trained in medication dispersal. Psychotropic medication cannot be held and dispensed at Gerson School or by Gerson staff at this time. It is also not permissible for students to self-administer psychotropic medication while at school. Any student interested in storing and receiving the previously mentioned medications at school must complete an **Administration of Medication Request Form** and submit it to the school's administration. This form must be completed before medication can be administered during the school day. The administration of prescription non-psychotropic drugs **requires a physician's and parent/guardian's permission**. The administration of non-prescription drugs requires only the parent/guardian's permission. A safe, supervised storage area is provided for medications. The staff must store medication for students; medication cannot remain with the student or in the student's locker or school bag during the school day.

It is important to alert the school's Director or Principal when there has been a change in a student's medication. We need to know when to expect a change in behavior and to look for symptoms. Staff can better appreciate the changes in the student and assist them in managing these changes when we are aware. Staff can also inform the family or physician when reactions to the medication's effectiveness are identified.

Classrooms

The Gerson School works with each student as an individual. Respect for individual differences is valued. Supports, interventions, and services are individualized to each student, and are specific to the student's IEP, preferences, strengths, and needs. Classrooms are a part of the learning environment and provide a space where these previously mentioned ideas may flourish. Therefore, students are asked to actively participate in the learning process and only be present in their assigned rooms, unless given permission otherwise. When activities and behavior prevent others from learning, supports and behavior management responses will be developed and implemented.

School Computers

The Gerson School offers computers for the common use and assistance of students in their educational progress. They

are to be used only with the permission of staff and for school-related research. They may not be used for personal business. The Gerson School provides Chromebooks for students during class in order to take advantage of educational applications. These Chromebooks are for school use only and must be turned in at the end of the class in which they are used. See the **Student Information Technology Acceptable Use Form** for detailed information. All school computers are closely monitored by school and IT staff members.

Use of Social Media

The Gerson School students are expected to treat others with respect, both in person and in other forms of communication. Any derogatory, demeaning, bullying, or otherwise negative comments about other students or staff at The Gerson School, via social media, will be considered a violation of school policy and subject to disciplinary action. Please see the **Student Information Technology Acceptable Use Form for detailed information.**

Electronic Device Ban

Gerson School has a ban on all student-owned electronic devices. By electronic devices, we mean: *cell phones*, portable gaming systems, music players, earbuds and headphones, laptops, tablets, watches with data or Wi-Fi capability, or any other electronic device that we deem to be a student-owned device used for communication or internet access. By ban, we mean that students will not be permitted to carry these devices into the school building or have use of them during the school day. All devices will be submitted to staff and checked in upon entry to the building and stored securely until the student leaves the school for the day, at which time they will be returned to the student. Failure to comply with this ban may result in the student engaging in alternative aspects of their programming. It may also warrant implementing one of the behavior management options discussed in the Code of Conduct and/or a meeting with the students parent/guardian. Nothing in this policy prohibits a student from using a cell phone for a purpose documented in the student's IEP developed under Chapter 3323 of the Ohio Revised Code or a plan developed under section 504 of the "Rehabilitation Act of 1973" 29 U.S.C. 794. Please note that this policy is in accordance with Ohio House Bill 250, which was signed into law by the governor on May 15, 2024. A model policy, created by The Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, may be found here.

Health & Safety Practices

School Safety Plan

The Gerson School team is committed towards the maintenance of a safe and orderly school environment conducive to learning. Several school practices help to ensure this environment. Emergency evacuation procedures, including phone numbers, are posted throughout the school and in each classroom, and are practiced regularly according to state and local requirements. The student's cumulative records contain complete and updated information on immunizations, emergency medical forms, emergency contacts and medication dispensation information. The school safety plan includes: access to the school through one entrance, supervised by camera and intercom; standard action for calling 911 to request emergency assistance; immediately engaging parents in addressing unusual incidents from students; reporting unusual incidents, including suspicion of abuse, to Gerson, Applewood and/or outside agencies as required by federal, state and local laws; regular staff training in all safety procedures through staff meetings and annual recertification and trainings.

Items prohibited on school property

Students should not possess, handle or transmit the following on school grounds: knife; razor; box cutter; fire arms; fireworks; explosives; lighters; mace; pellet or air rifle or any object that could reasonably be considered a weapon. Students may not carry prescription or non-prescription medication. Emergency medication, such as an EPIPEN, may be kept in the school office. See [MEDICATION POLICY](#).

The Gerson School is committed to promoting an alcohol and drug-free school environment. Students may not possess, handle, transmit or sell, conceal or consume cigarettes or e-cigarettes, alcohol and/or drug substances. This rule concerns regular school hours as well as school activities off grounds, school events, the school bus, or any school function. A student should not consume or use alcohol or drugs prior to coming to school or prior to a school event or function. Students consuming alcohol or drugs during school hours or before may be subject to [Behavior Management Responses](#) and Alcohol and a Drug Use Assessment may be requested or recommended. If a student appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, his or her parent or guardian will be contacted and the [Chemical Abuse Procedures](#) will be enacted.

Safety Precautions

Students will be [checked](#) with a metal detector wand upon entering the school. Students have an opportunity to give up unsafe items prior to being checked. Items not considered appropriate for school that do not pose a safety risk will be returned to the student or parent/guardian. Items that pose a safety concern or that violate the [Code of Conduct](#) will not be returned and will be disposed of in a legal and proper manner.

Student backpacks, purses, and coat pockets will also be briefly checked for contraband. If there is a reasonable suspicion that a rule has been broken, [lockers](#) will be searched.

Visitors

All visitors are required to present an ID when entering the school. When visiting, and granted entry, visitors must report to the school's front desk where they will be required to sign into a visitor log and presented with a visitor's badge. All visitors will also be required to sign out and return the visitor's badge at the time of their departure.

Emergency Preparedness/Homeland Security

The Gerson School has undertaken a comprehensive revision of its Critical Events Plan, with the assistance of the local fire and police departments. Procedures are in place for evacuation, safety alert (lockdown) shelter-in-place and early dismissal. The exact protocol used would depend on the nature of the threat or event, and would be determined in consultation with safety officials.

For safety alert procedures, we implement the A.L.I.C.E. system. Staff certified in this training provide training for staff and students. A.L.I.C.E. stands for

Alert Get the word out! Armed Intruder in building instead of “Code Red.”
Use clear, concise language to convey the type and location of the Event.

Lockdown Good starting point. We will continue to lockdown student in a secure area.

Inform Communication Keeps the Shooter off balance and allows for good decision making.

Counter Apply skills to distract, confuse and gain control.

Evacuate Reduce the number of potential targets for the shooter, and reduce chances of victims resulting from friendly fire when help arrives.

IN NO WAY are we asking or teaching are students or staff to make any attempt to subdue an armed gunman outside of their secure area. However, we will provide them the knowledge that if faced with a life or death situation there are methods that can be applied to greatly enhance their chance of survival. The methods that will be taught in the event they are directly confronted by an armed gunman are:

- Cause distractions to interfere with the ability to shoot accurately
- Cause as much chaos in the room as possible to create sensory overload
- Do not be a stationary target
- How to control the attacker using body weight, not strength
- How to interact with responding Law Enforcement

In the unlikely event of an emergency, the school will need help to keep phone lines open for communication with emergency personnel. Therefore, we recommend that parents/guardians tune in to local radio or television news for information and updates. In addition, One Call Now will be utilized to communicate with parents and guardians.

If the federal government declares a red alert, the state and federal governments reserve the right to close all public and government facilities, including schools. The Gerson School would remain open during a red alert unless directed to do otherwise by state or federal emergency management officials.

If the school is required to close during the school day, students will be dismissed with the usual end of the day procedures. The Gerson School will make its best effort to contact your transportation department and arrange pick up. Students may choose to remain at the building for parental pickup.

Emergency School Closings

Emergencies due to severe weather, energy problems, staff/student illness, or other calamities may cause the unscheduled closing of the school. In these situations, the administration uses all information available to make a decision that is in the best interest of the entire school community and the learning process. School closings may be a full closing (which may include both synchronous or asynchronous learning and instruction), a delayed start, or an early dismissal. Decisions regarding school closures will be made as early as possible. The Gerson School will notify students, families, districts, and transportation companies via *One Call Now Notification System*. You must complete the One Call Now Notification form to be added to this notification system. Copies of the form are also available on the school website. Information will also be posted on the Applewood Centers' website and through closing alerts through local media. In the event that your referring school district is closed, and Gerson remains open, attendance is expected. However, if your referring school district is closed and you are not in attendance, this will not be an unexcused [absence](#). ***Please be aware that we will be listed as *The Gerson School* and NOT as part of Cleveland Metropolitan School District.**

Calendar

The school calendar is posted on the school's website and shared via *One Call Now*. Breaks and holidays may differ from those of a student's home school. Each student is expected to be in attendance according to The Gerson School calendar.

Transportation

Public schools that refer students for special education services at The Gerson School may arrange for the transportation of these students. Families are directed to the transportation departments of their local public schools to inquire about their policies.

Arrival

Students arriving on campus must enter The Gerson School at the designated entrance which is located on the east side of the main building. Once students arrive on campus, they must enter the building immediately, and are not permitted to loiter outside, in a car, or on the CAS grounds without explicit permission from the Safety Warden or Principal. A safety check with a handheld metal detector is completed on all students entering the school. Additionally, student bags are subject to search during the safety check. After the safety check, students should report to the Atrium for breakfast. Students are not permitted to leave the building without permission. Students must leave the building upon dismissal unless they are remaining for a school-sponsored meeting or activity.

Absences

Since regular attendance in all scheduled classes is essential to learning, The Gerson School expects all students to attend school promptly every day. The School also recognizes that students may suffer from occasional minor illness during the school year. **The School office must be informed by 8:00 AM when a student is going to be absent.** [House Bill 410](#) provides additional information regarding student absences. When no information about an absence is received, the school will, in compliance with [Ohio Revised Code Section 3321.141](#), initiate contact with the parent/guardian to notify and learn the cause of the absence.

The following are examples of what is considered an excused absence:

1. Personal Illness
2. Illness within the Family
3. Quarantine of the Home
4. Death of a Relative
5. Work at home because of the illness of parent/guardian
6. Observance of a religious holiday
7. Family Emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgment of the Gerson Principal or Superintendent, constitutes good and sufficient cause (an explanation will be required)
8. Medical appointment that cannot be scheduled beyond school hours.
9. College visitation of two days for student with evidence to verify the visit upon the student's return
10. A school-sponsored activity
11. Any activity or circumstance given approval by the building principal

Per House Bill 410, a student is “habitually truant” when a student is:

- a. Absent 30 or more consecutive hours (5.2 days) without a legitimate excuse;
- b. Absent 42 or more hours (7.3 days) in one school month without a legitimate excuse;
- c. Absent 72 or more hours (12.5 days) in one school year without a legitimate excuse.

Per HB 410, “excessive absences” is now defined as

- a. Absent 38 or more hours (6.6 days) in one school month with or without a legitimate excuse;
- b. Absent 65 or more hours (11.3 days) in one school year with or without a legitimate excuse.

DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN A CHILD HAS EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

When a student is excessively absent from school, the following will occur:

1. The district will notify the student's parents in writing within seven days of the triggering absence;
2. The student will follow the district's plan for absence intervention; and
3. The student and family may be referred to community resources.

DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN A CHILD IS HABITUALLY TRUANT

When a student is habitually truant, the following will occur:

1. Within seven days of the triggering absence, the district will do the following:
 - a. Select members of the absence intervention team;
 - b. Make three meaningful attempts to secure the participation of the student's parent or guardian on the absence intervention team.
2. Within 10 days of the triggering absence, the student will be assigned to the selected absence intervention team;
3. Within 14 days after the assignment of the team, the district will develop the student's absence intervention plan;
4. If the student does not make progress on the plan within 61 days or continues to be excessively absent, the district will file a complaint in the juvenile court.

Field Trips

It is assumed that if a class is taking a field trip, the trip offers important enrichment experiences essential to deepening student understanding. Therefore, all students enrolled in said class will be eligible to attend the field trip. However, there may be some instances in which students will not be eligible to attend the field trip. These are listed below.

- Parent/guardian opts the student out of attending
- School administration deems a student's behavior or recent behavior a safety concern

If a teacher believes a student is ineligible to attend a trip, they must present data that supports the claim. Otherwise it will be assumed that all students are eligible unless opted out by a parent/guardian. Signed permission forms are required for participation in all field trips.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Purpose

The Gerson School is committed to promoting a safe, respectful, and affirming school community. Our program encourages pro-social behavior through positive behavior incentives, social skills development and education, and community activities and mediation. The Gerson School believes that students learn best in an environment where they feel valued as individuals; where positive relationships with staff and peers exist; where they are physically and emotionally safe; and where they are guided to do their best, free from the disruptive actions of others. The Code of Conduct implements and supports this philosophy. It places importance on actions that build a safe, personable, and respectful atmosphere in the school. As a corollary, the Code of Conduct forbids all actions that interfere with the learning, safety, and maturation of each student.

Behavior Management

In congruence with [The Gerson School Rules](#); The Gerson School employs a variety of Behavior Management options, both positive and conventional, to address student behavior(s). Behavior Management options include both consequences and reinforcements. Consequences are responses to undesirable behaviors. They are implemented after the behavior has occurred and with the intention of weakening the behavior and making them less likely to occur in the future. Reinforcement is the process of implementing a reward in order to maintain a desired behavior, making it more likely to occur in the future, after a desirable behavior is exhibited. Violations to the Code of Conduct may result in consequences and/or reinforcement strategies. *Behavior Management* options may include, but are not limited to, the following: Mediation, Restoration/Restitution, Conferencing, Lunch Detention, In-School Suspension, Out of School Suspension, or Permanent Removal.

Violations

The following violations are examples of acts that interrupt teaching and learning, as well as the environment and community at The Gerson School. These violations are examples of prohibited acts and not an exhaustive list of acts of misconduct that may lead to disciplinary action. These violations are prohibited at school, on adjacent property, on transportation to/from school, and at school sponsored functions:

1. Elopement.
2. Physically aggressive behavior aimed at students, staff, and/or property.
3. [Bullying](#) and [Cyberbullying](#).
4. Any act that is deemed to endanger the emotional and/or physical safety of students or staff including, but not limited to the following; arson, abusive language, defiance/insubordination, fighting, hazing/harassment, threatening, etc.
5. Disruption on/during school provided transportation.
6. Failure to participate in school safety drills.
7. Vandalism.
8. Robbery/Theft.
9. Cheating/Plagiarism.

General Procedures

When a Code of Conduct violation occurs, the following general procedures may be implemented:

1. A 'Behavior Incident Report' will be generated by the witnessing staff and submitted to the office of the Principal or Director;
2. The student will meet with the Principal and/or the Director and is informed of the infraction and given the opportunity to present their side of the situation, except in extreme emergency situations when safety

- and/or the educational program are jeopardized. In emergency situations, the student may be immediately sent home and the opportunity to present their side would be held at a later date;
3. The Principal and/or Director will determine if a violation occurred and whether a [Behavior Management response](#) is warranted.
 4. Parents/guardians, students, and the referring district representative(s) are informed of the findings. Parents/guardians are invited to discuss the incident, findings, and response at the school;
 5. A copy of the Behavior Incident Report is issued to the parent and the referring/home district;
 6. The Behavior Management response is issued, explained, and implemented. Every effort to connect the response with the incident is made in order for the student to learn how to correct or avoid any such behavior in the future.

Permanent Removal from The Gerson School

The following violations may result in expulsion from The Gerson School:

1. Carrying, concealing, conveying and/or possessing [deadly weapons](#) on school property or to a school function;
2. Possessing, trafficking, or using drugs on school property or at a school function except in situations defined as [minor drug possession offenses](#);
3. Murder or aggravated murder on school property or at a school function;
4. Voluntary or involuntary manslaughter on school property or at a school function;
5. Aggravated or felonious assault on school property or at a school function;
6. Rape, gross sexual imposition, or felonious sexual penetration on school property or at a school function.

Chemical Abuse Procedures

The Gerson School acknowledges the significant barriers to learning and the health risks that the abuse of chemicals and alcohol has on students. In the event that school staff has a reasonable suspicion, or direct observation, of chemical and/or alcohol abuse by students, the school will implement the actions that follow. Chemical use is meant to include both illegal/illicit drugs, as well as prescription medications. Please see the [Medication](#) section for more details:

Immediate Action

When a student exhibits behaviors that are indicative of chemical and/or alcohol use, suspected possession of chemicals/alcohol or paraphernalia, or school staff has reasonable suspicion of use or a direct observation of use, the following procedures will be implemented:

1. The student will be accompanied to the Director's office.
2. Parents/Guardians will be summoned to the school for an immediate meeting with the Principal and to pick up their child. It will be recommended that the student be taken to an emergency room for medical evaluation.
3. Items 3-5 below, *Reasonable Suspicion* will be implemented.
4. The student's locker, bag, person, and/or belongings may be [subject to check](#).

Reasonable Suspicion

When one or more staff members have reason to believe a student in school is under the influence of non-prescribed chemicals:

1. All of the student's teachers will complete Observation Forms and the results will be compiled.
2. When suspicion of chemical abuse is confirmed by the Observation Forms, immediate actions will be taken. ([See Above](#)).
3. A follow up appointment within 24 hours will be scheduled. During the appointment, the results of Staff observations will be shared and a **Chemical Dependency Evaluation may be requested**. If the student needs to remain out of school during the course of assessment, arrangements will be made for the student to complete schoolwork at home.
4. When the results of the evaluation are received by the School, the student and parents will meet with the Director to plan the most appropriate educational services for the student.
5. Students receiving services through a special education program may require a manifestation team review as part of these procedures.

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

Harassment, intimidation, and bullying **based** on race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or sexual identity, to name a few, are prohibited in school, on school property, on the way to and from school, through any social media, and at school-sponsored events. (See the Gerson School Code of Conduct's [Purpose](#)) As defined by **state law**; harassment, intimidation, or bullying means any intentional, written, verbal, or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student **more than once** and the behavior causes mental or physical harm and is sufficiently **severe, persistent, or pervasive** that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student. Anyone who is a victim of bullying or harassment, is witness to, or becomes aware of bullying or harassment should notify the School office within 24 hours to make a written report. The person making the report may request anonymity.

When harassment or bullying is found to have occurred; the harasser and their parents will meet with the Principal and/or the Director of the school to discuss the event, to receive a warning, develop a plan of correction, and determine a [Behavior Management Response](#).

If an investigation reveals that harassment or bullying has occurred; the harasser may also be held legally liable for their actions under state or federal anti-discrimination laws or in a separate legal action.

Any student or staff member bringing a harassment or bullying complaint or assisting in investigating such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of continuing at school. Nor will they be discriminated against or discharged because of the complaint. Complaints of such retaliation will be promptly investigated.

After an investigation is complete, the principal or designee will present findings to pertinent parties, at which time a [Behavior Management Response](#) will be determined. Any instance of bullying or harassment may be met any behavioral response outlined previously in the Code of Conduct. Repeated or habitual instances of harassment or bullying from the same individual may result in a meeting to determine if the student should remain at Gerson. This meeting will include Gerson staff, the referring district representative, the student, and the student's parent/guardian.

Please see [Appendix D](#) of this document to review Applewood's complete policy regarding anti-harassment, anti-intimidation, and anti-bullying.

In addition to Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying; *Hate Speech* is also strictly prohibited at The Gerson School and subject to a [Behavior Management Response](#). Please see the following [link](#) for a definition and resources.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

1. This policy applies to all activities of The Gerson School involving students, volunteers, and visitors who are in contact with the school.
2. Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones. This includes:
 - a. Physical contact such as; unwelcome or aggressive contact, and unsolicited physical contact.
 - b. Written contact such as; sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations.
 - c. Verbal contact such as; sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, joke about gender-specific traits, and sexual propositions.
 - d. Visual contact such as; leering or staring at another person's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects including pictures, cartoons, posters or magazines.
 - e. Requests for sexual favors and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the job, salary, or work environment of another employee.
3. Students and staff agree to help create an environment that is free from sexual harassment by respecting the wishes of others and by staying outside the personal space of others.

APPENDIX B

[Ohio's Graduation Requirements](#) apply to all high school students and each student enrolled at The Gerson School. In order to earn a diploma, students must meet Ohio's Long-term Graduation Requirements. Under these requirements, students must complete the [required courses](#), [demonstrate competency](#), and [demonstrate readiness](#).

[Course Completion](#): ODE requires students to complete courses in a variety of content areas and earn a total of 20 credits in order to graduate. In addition to the requirements in the previous link, any Local Educational Agency may also require additional credits. The Gerson School will work with your referring district to be sure you complete any additional courses and receive credit for them.

[Demonstrating Competency](#): In order to demonstrate competency, students must demonstrate competency in foundational areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. Specifically ELA II and Algebra I or (Integrated Math I). Competency is measured through the End-Of-Course Exam. Competency is defined as a score of 684. Alternative methods to demonstrate competency are defined by ODE.

[Demonstrating Readiness](#): Students demonstrate readiness by earning two Graduation Seals. These seals allow students to demonstrate foundational and well-rounded academic and technical knowledge, professional skills, and leadership and reasoning skills. ODE has created 12 seals from which to choose. Local seals are also an option. Of the two seals, one must be a state-defined seal.

Appendix C

Gerson Rules

1. I will engage in emotionally and physically safe behavior, evidenced by the following:
 - a. Respecting other people's property.
 - b. Have safe bodies.
 - c. Participating in a positive learning environment.
 - d. Utilizing learned coping skills effectively.
 - e. Engaging in safe behaviors/do not harm self, others, or property/physical respect.
 - f. Using kind words and actions/verbal respect.
 - g. Be kind.
 - h. Trying your best. (Even if you do not want to do it).
 - i. Active listening.
 - j. Engaging in self-advocacy.
2. Use Safe/Appropriate Language
 - a. Respecting and being polite to others.
 - b. Speaking and responding at appropriate times.
 - c. Using safe words, tone, and volume.
 - d. Maintain appropriate school language and communication.
3. Remain in assigned/approved area.
 - a. When you are allowed to arrive and leave the area.
 - b. Remain in scheduled class, not in the hall or common area.
 - c. Stay in building, unless given permission.
4. Follow directions from any/all staff members.
 - a. Participate in positive learning environment.
 - b. Follow staff directions.
 - c. Try your best.



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Appendix D



Program/Department Name	The Gerson School, The Reserve School
Policy Number and Title	Anti-Harassment, Anti-Intimidation, or Anti-Bullying Policy
Original Effective Date	
Last Reviewed Date	May 13, 2024
Last Revised Date	May 13, 2024
Policy Owner	The Gerson School, The Reserve School, Risk Management

POLICY: It is the policy of Applewood Schools: The Reserve School and The Gerson School (hereinafter “the School”) to provide an educational environment free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The School is committed to protecting students from any form of physical, verbal, or mental abuse. Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying behavior by any student or school personnel is strictly prohibited by Illinois State Law, Ohio State Law and the School. The School will annually communicate this policy to students, their parents/guardians, school personnel and new hires.

SCOPE:

Definition

As defined by Ohio Revised Code section 3313.666, harassment, intimidation, or bullying is defined as “any intentional written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior both causes mental or physical harm to the other student and is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student or violence within a dating relationship.”

Bullying may involve but is not limited to cyberbullying, harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, ostracism, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting, opposing or alleging an act of bullying. This also includes any form of communication directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following: 1) placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property; 2) substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or 3) substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school. Such behaviors are prohibited on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, and on the way to and from school (including school buses).

Prohibited Conduct

It is a violation of the School’s policy for a student, employee, or any school visitor to:

- . harass, intimidate, or bully another person or to engage in conduct which would actively or passively support acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying on school property, on school transportation, or at school-sponsored events;
- . report false allegations or a false complaint of harassment, intimidation, or bullying; or
- . retaliate against another person for instituting a good faith complaint of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Complaints

A student who feels that he or she has been harassed, intimidated, or bullied, should inform a teacher or administrator of the School. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the Director or his/her designee. All other members of the School community including students, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. According to the School's Student and Parent Handbook, anyone who is a victim of bullying or becomes aware of bullying should notify the School office within twenty four (24) hours to make a written report.

Students who make informal complaints of conduct they consider to be harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the School staff member(s) and administrator(s) who receive the complaint. The person making the report may request anonymity; the anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying. Anonymous complaints will be accepted via phone and email at (216) 487- 1422; ssender@applewoodcenters.org, attention Stephanie Senter.

Investigation

Complaints will be documented and investigated. School personnel shall complete an incident report documenting a complaint of harassment, intimidation, or bullying if reported to them. If it is determined that a violation has occurred, prompt corrective action will be taken. When a report is received, the principal or director shall investigate whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the School's jurisdiction. If found to be within the scope, the principal or director will notify all required parties, collaborate with parents and students to agree upon a course of action and will work as quickly as is possible to ensure the safety of students, gather information, and clarify facts. The principal or director will notify and include other departments of the School, as necessary, depending on the scope and severity of the event. The principal or director will make all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within ten (10) school days after the date of the report, taking into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation. The principal or director will provide parents and students involved in the bullying incident with information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet to discuss the investigation, findings, and the actions taken to address any bullying that is found to have occurred. During the investigation, confidentiality will be maintained to the utmost extent possible.

Interventions may be provided, as needed, to the parties involved in the bullying, including but not limited to school social worker services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, psychological services, community-based services and other programs. Additionally, the following intervention strategies may be implemented:

- . Respectful responses to harassment, intimidation or bullying concerns raised by students, parents, or school personnel;
- . Planned professional development programs addressing targeted individuals' problems; including what constitutes safe and acceptable Internet use;
- . Formal or informal information or data collection regarding specific disciplinary or student problems;
- . Modeling by school personnel of positive, respectful, and supportive behavior towards students;

- . Employing classroom rules and strategies that instruct students on how to work together in a collaborative and supportive atmosphere; and
- . Gathering of information from parents, law enforcement, and other community members regarding positive responses to harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Disciplinary Consequences

Harassment, intimidation, and bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in seriousness and impact on the targeted individual and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response for verified acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of “harassment, intimidation or bullying,” as defined above will generally warrant disciplinary action against the perpetrator of such prohibited behaviors whether and to what extent to impose disciplinary action is a matter for the professional discretion of the Director principal or director. In accordance with the handbook, when HIB is substantiated, the harasser and his/her legal guardian will meet with the administrator of the School to discuss the event, to receive notice of the consequences and to develop a plan of correction.

Verified acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall result in an intervention by the Director or his/her designee that is intended to ensure that the prohibition against harassment intimidation, or bullying behavior is enforced, with the goal that such prohibited behavior will cease.

Reprisal, retaliation and/or knowingly making a false accusation or providing false information will be treated as bullying for purposes of determining consequences or other appropriate remedial actions.

If an investigation reveals that sexual harassment has occurred, the harasser may also be held legally liable for his/her actions under state or federal anti-discrimination laws or in a separate legal action.

Notification

The parent/guardian of students involved in any act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be promptly notified in accordance with federal, state and local rules governing student privacy rights, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

The Schools’ bullying policy is based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents/guardians and will be posted where other policies, rules, or standards of conduct are posted in the School, including the School’s website and handbook.

Policy Evaluation:

School administration will semiannually provide the board with a written summary of all reported incidents to the extent permitted by Ohio Revised Code section 3319.321 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. This policy will be evaluated every two years to assess its outcomes and effectiveness. The evaluation process will include, but is not limited to, factors such as:

1. The frequency of victimization.
2. Student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school.
3. Identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs.
4. The types of bullying being utilized.
5. Bystander intervention or participation.

The evaluation process may use relevant data and information that are already collected for other purposes. The information developed as part of the evaluation process will be posted on the School's websites.

This policy is fully consistent with the School's other policies.

INTERNAL REFERENCES: Student and Parent Handbook

EXTERNAL REFERENCES: Ohio Revised Code section 3319.321, Ohio Revised Code section 3313.666, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, 34 CFR Part 99

Appendix E

The Gerson School Student/Parent Handbook & Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form

I have received the Handbook and Code of Conduct and have been notified I may access additional copies by contacting the school office. Additionally, I am aware that I am able to access the handbook at www.gersonschool.org.

I have read and understand [The Gerson School Student/Parent Handbook](#) and agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained within.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

The Gerson School Student/Parent Handbook has been established to communicate the expectations for student behavior at school or school activities. Furthermore, it has been enacted to support the school's [mission](#), [philosophy](#), and [purpose](#). The Gerson School administration reserves the right to amend or edit the handbook as a need to do so arises.



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