2017-2018

PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

https://aeries.gcccharters.org/parent

Student ID:_____

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Empowering Possibilities International Charter

EPIC

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West Sacramento, CA 95691

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The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint parents and students with the program, policies, and procedures of Empowering Possibilities International Charter School (EPIC). The contents of the handbook were developed with you and your child in mind. We sincerely hope that the information within will be valuable to you throughout the school year.

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Welcome to Empowering Possibilities International Charter School!

Mission

All EPIC students will acquire knowledge, concepts, and skills to succeed in their choice of college and career in order to positively contribute to both their local and global communities.

Vision

To prepare our students for the competitive global economy, EPIC will provide a safe learning environment that fosters students' risk-taking, inquiry and independent thinking skills.

Academic Program

EPIC is a public charter school serving students in Transitional Kindergarten through 8th grade. EPIC is a school of Gateway Community Charters and overseen by the GCC governing board and Superintendent/CEO. EPIC challenges students with a rigorous, college preparatory curriculum. Both the elementary and middle school curricula align to Common Core State Standards. Students learn 21st Century learning skills that are incorporated into the International Baccalaureate framework. EPIC is seeking certification for both the primary and middle years programs as an IB world school. We are proud to announce that in Spring 2016 our primary years program (PYP) received official candidate status.

International Baccalaureate (IB)

At EPIC, we believe that an International Baccalaureate (IB) education will enrich this culturally diverse community of West Sacramento. This will add to the menu of quality education programs that serve the students throughout the area.

"The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right." *(Source: www.ibo.org/mission/)*

IB has 10 Learner Profile Traits which unites us all with a common focus on the student as a lifelong learner. It applies to students, teachers, parents, and administrators; for we are all continually learning. **We believe students who embody the IB mission and learner profile will be successful in a 21st century global environment.**

International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme offers education that develops the intellectual, personal, emotional, and social skills necessary to be competent and work in a globalizing world. There are four components to the IB program: Primary Years Programme (PYP) which focuses on Kindergarten through 5th grade; the Middle Years Programme (MYP) which focuses on grades 6-8; the Diploma Programme (DP) and the Career-related Programme (CP) which both focus on the high school grades. The IB Programme has a presence in countries throughout the world. There are IB World Schools around the globe and universities worldwide recognize the strength of students who were taught through the IB Programme. EPIC chose to be an IB school because the IB Programme has a reputation for high standards of teaching, pedagogical leadership and student achievement.

Knowledgeable*:* Students explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In doing so, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad range of disciplines.

Thinkers*:* Students exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators*:* Students understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled: Students act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open Minded: Students understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring: Students show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Risk-takers: Students approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced: Students understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective: Students give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Project Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD)

Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) is an instructional model that supports teachers by providing differentiated strategies to integrate instruction in English and grade-level content standards in a heterogeneous, mainstream classroom. GLAD is a Kindergarten through grade twelve instructional model consisting of thirty-five strategies. The strategies are designed for teachers who have a significant number of English Language learners in their classroom. EPIC uses GLAD strategies in all of our classrooms because the strategies specifically develop both conversational skills as wells as academic English. Teachers use GLAD strategies to support the development of vocabulary and linguistic structures students need to participate in context-rich discourse.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Daily Schedule

Elementary **Regular Day Schedule (Monday-Thursday)**	8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Middle **School Regular Day Schedule (Monday-Thursday)**	8:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.
Friday Schedule	8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Office Hours

School Office Open:	8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

POLICIES and PROCEDURES

Arrivals:

Students may not be on campus before 7:45 a.m. There is no adult supervision prior to this time, so we cannot guarantee students safety. All students should report to either the multi-purpose room (for breakfast only) or to the playground.

Classroom instruction starts promptly at 8:30 a.m.
Arrivals after 8:45 a.m. will be considered Tardy.

It is important that parents do no park and leave their vehicles unattended in the drop off zones during school hours. Parents arriving late with students must enter through the main EPIC entrance and sign in at the office. Parents who may be staying on campus with their children after the start of the school day *MUST* go to the office, sign in, and wear a Visitor's Badge.

Dismissal:

All students should be picked up promptly at the end of each school day at 3:15 p.m. (or 12:30 p.m. on Fridays). It is imperative that children be picked up on time after school ends. All students must be picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal time, unless they are participating in an authorized school program or activity. Walkers are to exit campus immediately at the end of the day. Students who are still on campus after pickup time will be brought to the office and the parents will be called. If there is no response by phone from parents and emergency contacts, the school will call the local authorities.

Closed Campus- In an effort to keep all students safe and supervised, once a student arrives on the school grounds they must remain on campus until the end of the school day unless there is a note provided by the parent or guardian and permission has been granted by school office staff to leave. If a student leaves school grounds without this permission, a student is considered truant and is subject to disciplinary action.

Attendance/Absences

Student Truancy- Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education who is absent from school without valid excuse more than three days or tardy in excess of 15 minutes on each of more than three days in one school year is truant. Student with excessive absences and/or tardies will be referred to the Student Study Team for review. If the problem persists, EPIC reserves the right to refer truant students back to their home school/district. School success starts with attendance.

Late Arrival- If a student arrives later than 8:45 a.m., he/she must **check in at the office** for an admit slip before going to class. Tardiness is excused only for doctor and dental appointments, injuries, and illnesses. A note from the parent/guardian must accompany the student before returning to class.

Early Dismissal- All students are expected to have a pass when leaving the classroom during scheduled class time. Students may be asked to show passes at any time at the request of a school employee. Parent authorization is required for any student leaving school at times other than the normal dismissal time. Persons picking up a student during the school day must report to the office and sign out the student; they may not go directly to the classroom.

If your child must leave during the school day, please do the following:

- Sign student out at the office and get an early dismissal form.

- The teacher will be called to get the child ready for dismissal. Students will be sent to the office where parents will be waiting. *Parents should not go to the classroom*.
- At no time should parents pick up students early without checking students out, even if it is a minimum day. To ensure accountability and student safety, parents are not to pick up students out on the playground, please follow the check-out procedures and wait in the office.
- Only persons who are listed on the school emergency card may pick up a student. Anyone not familiar to staff will be asked to provide identification before taking the student. The school must have an up-to-date home address, home phone number, cell phone numbers, and emergency numbers on file. Parents must keep the office informed of all changes during the school year.
- If students are arranging rides with persons other than those authorized, a phone call to the office and a note with parent permission is required to be turned in prior to pick up.

Custody Disputes: Parent/Guardians are responsible for contacting the school if there is a court order stipulating that one parent may not have access to a student at the school. A parent/guardian MUST notify the office and the teacher, and provide the office with a current court order. Otherwise, both biological parents (with appropriate identification) have equal rights to participate in their child's education including the right to: come to school to see their child, obtain school records for their child, or pick the child up from school.

EPIC requests that parents seek to schedule medical/dental appointments after school hours rather than remove the student from valuable class time. ***Please also adhere to the academic calendar when planning vacations and give advance notice to the teachers.*

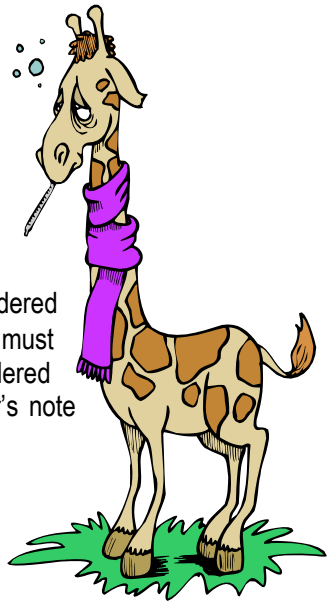
School Attendance is Required by Law- The State of California believes that education is essential for children and for our future. State law requires parent/guardians of children ages 6 to 18 to send their children to school, unless otherwise provided by law. Parents who fail to meet this obligation may be subject to prosecution.

Student Absences- School attendance is critical for a student's success. Parents are required to send their child to school Monday - Friday. Parents are strongly encouraged to schedule medical appointments during non-school hours. Absence from school will be excused for health reasons, family emergencies, and attendance at funeral services for a family member, appearance in court or observation of a religious holiday or ceremony.

Reporting Absences- Whenever a child is absent from school, the school must receive an explanation from the parent/guardian. Parents may send a note or email, or they may call the school office. The explanation must include the child's name, the date(s) of the absence, the reason for the absence, and the teacher's name. Notes should be signed and dated by the parent/guardian. For doctor or dentist appointments, please provide a note signed and dated by your physician or dentist. The school attendance clerk will call home if a phone call, note, or e-mail has not been received for absent students.

To assist parents in reporting absences, there are several ways to notify the office of an absence:

1: School E-Mail: Raisa.Melyanchuk @gcccharters.org
2: Office Phone: 916-286-1960 (8:00-4:30)
3: Note to Teacher



Unexcused Absences- All absences without a written or telephone excuse will be considered unexcused. Students with excessive unexcused absences will be considered truant. Students must clear absences within **two days** after returning to school or the absence may be considered unexcused. Students ill for **three (3)** or more consecutive days are required to have a doctor's note before returning to school. If no doctor's note is provided, the absence will be unexcused.

Acceptable Reasons for Excused Absences

- Personal illness, medical or dental appointment
- Religious observance or exercise
- Funeral service of parent, sibling, grandparent or any relative living in the immediate household of the child.

****If your child misses more than one day of instruction please contact the teacher to gather missing work assignments.**

SARB (Student Attendance Review Board) - School absences are monitored carefully throughout the year. If a student has three (3) excused or unexcused absences in a year a letter will be sent home, and a phone call made to discuss scheduling a meeting regarding the excessive absences.

If a student has five (5) excused or unexcused absences a conference will be scheduled and the review process will be initiated. A notice of truancy will be sent to parents after 5 unexcused absences and/or tardies. After 10 unexcused absences and/or tardies, a second letter will be sent. Students with excessive absences and/or tardies will be referred to the Student Study team for review.

Attendance is IMPERATIVE!

Getting your child to school on time is one of the most important ways parents can advocate for their children.

School Work/Homework

It is mandatory for students to complete all assigned school work and make-up work by the specified due dates.

Assignment Planner- Assignment planners are to be filled out daily by all students, with the exception of kindergarten and 1st grade. Students will receive these planners early in the school year. This is an excellent tool for parent/teacher communication. It also allows the parent to keep track of their student's assignments and in some cases their grades. Parents should review their child's planners at least once a week if not daily.

Independent Study/Home Instruction: GCC policy:

Because EPIC cares about your child and his/her educational progress, in the event that your child must be gone from school for an extended period of time (3-20 days), a Short Term Independent Study Contract is available. Requests for independent study should be turned in to the office for the principal's signature one (1) week prior to the absence, so that there is adequate time for the teacher to prepare the necessary work assignments.

It is possible that requests submitted with less than five (5) days notice may not be granted. Successfully completed Short Term Independent Study Contracts will not count against a child's attendance record. Completed work must be returned on the day the student returns to school.

Homework Detention- We have high expectations for our scholars. With these expectations also come certain consequences if scholars are not performing at maximum effort. If any scholar misses two or more homework assignments in any given week, he/she will be assigned homework detention.

Withdrawal from School

If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child from EPIC, please notify the school office as soon as possible. Any lost books, materials, and fees must be paid before the school will release the student's transcripts or report card.

Emergency Procedures

The school has a well-developed and complete emergency response plan that is coordinated with local agencies. The emergency plan clearly identifies the specific actions for any emergency situation. Students and staff practice emergency procedures such as fire drills and classroom evacuations during the school year and are familiar with how to respond in an emergency situation.

During an emergency situation, the school will only dismiss children to go home if there is time for children to safely return to their homes and a parent/guardian has been notified. If a student's parent cannot be contacted and/or the parent is unable to pick up their child, the school will maintain responsibility for the child until the parent or an authorized individual can pick up the child. The safety of individual students is our highest priority. Students will not be excused except to the care of a parent or another adult designated on the emergency card.

Safety Drills- Fire and safety drills are held periodically to teach students the proper way to leave the building or to find alternative exit routes in an emergency. Fire drill instructions are posted in each classroom. Students are to quietly and quickly follow all directions given by teachers or other school or fire department personnel.

Parking and Driveway Safety- We need your help to keep the school and your children safe. It is imperative that families adhere to our parking safety rules. EVERY child's safety is important to us! At no time, should anyone drive fast or recklessly through the parking areas or surrounding streets. At no time, should parents park their cars in a drop off area or drop off zone. Parents must always park in a designated parking spot. The handicapped zone is reserved for those with handicap permits. Please be courteous and follow all safety guidelines at all times.

Health-

It is not always easy to know when to send your child to school and when to keep your child home. These Guidelines are based on public health science. If you have any questions about them, please call your school nurse.

Do not send a child to school with any of the following symptoms:

- **Fever** - 100.5°F or more, taken orally (or 101°F taken by ear, rectally or temporal scan). Note that ear temperatures are often not accurate and temperature should be taken using another route, if the temperature is high.
- **Cough and difficulty breathing** - do not send to school if child has labored breathing (heaving of chest muscles with each breath), rapid breathing at rest, blue color to skin, or wheezing (if never previously evaluated and treated), instead, see a doctor. If your child has pertussis (whooping cough) keep her/him home until 5 days of antibiotics have been received, or tuberculosis (until treated).
- **Rash** - that is undiagnosed, especially when there is a fever and behavioral change.
- **Chickenpox** - keep home until all blisters are scabbed over and there are no signs of illness. Must have a note from the doctor to return to school.
- **Diarrhea** - keep home if there is blood or mucous in the stool (unless from medication or hard stool), if the stools are all black or very pale, or if the stools are very watery and are increasing in frequency. See a doctor immediately if diarrhea is accompanied by: no urine output for 8 hours; jaundiced skin; or child looks/acts very ill.

- **Vomiting** - more than once a day or accompanied by fever, rash or general weakness.
- **Impetigo** - keep the child home for 24 hours after starting an antibiotic treatment.
- **Ringworm** - (a contagious skin fungus infection). Keep home until treatment is started. If it is in an exposed area, upon return, cover visible area with dressing and/or clothing. Ringworm on the scalp requires an oral medication, but child may return to school if covered with appropriate cream or covered.
- **Cold sores** - cold sores can be passed from one person to another, but only through direct contact. Unless otherwise indicated, students with above symptoms need to be absent for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school.
- **Antibiotics**: Children, who are placed on antibiotics for impetigo, strep throat, and several other bacterial infections, should be on them for a FULL 24 hours (longer for Pertussis/Whooping Cough) before returning to school to prevent the spread of those infections. If you are uncertain, ask your school nurse. If at any time you are unsure if your child's illness is contagious, you may want to call your child's primary care provider. If you have further questions, please contact your school site to speak to the school nurse. Thank you for your continued support of the families in our school community.

School policy mandates that students with a contagious disease should stay home. In order to ensure the health and welfare of all students, school personnel can request a doctor's note to confirm that the student is no longer contagious, upon his/her return. School personnel will provide minor first aid treatment, but will contact a parent or guardian if a student vomits, suffers a severe injury, or is running a temperature.

Immunizations:

Students must be current on required immunizations. Students who do not have required immunizations must receive the next required dose by the specified due date or they will be excluded from school until the dose is verified by GCC nurses or school staff.

Prescription Medication at School- When it is necessary for a student to take medication, please administer the medication before or after school hours if at all possible. When this is not possible, a signed release form from the parent and the doctor must be received by the EPIC School office before any assistance can be given in the administration of the medication. An authorization form must be completed by the student's parent/guardian and doctor before the school can administer prescription medications. All prescription medications must be brought to school by the parent, in the original container with the prescription label attached. This form is available in the school office and on our website. The school does not supply any medication, including Tylenol, for students. All medication must be kept in the office in its original container. Students may not carry medication (inhaler, Epi-pen) unless a consent signed by a parent and the physician allowing the medication to be carried is on file in the school office. Students may not provide any medication, including Tylenol, to other students.

Over-the-Counter Medications:

The school cannot administer any over-the-counter medications. If a child needs an over-the-counter medication at school, the parent/guardian must come to the school to administer it. Children must not bring over-the-counter medication to school.

Head Lice:

Parents need to contact the school if they find head lice on their child's head. The school must send the student home if they are found to have live head lice. Students will be rechecked before re-admittance to the classroom is permitted.

Emergency Contact Information- Sick or injured students are released only to parents or people listed as emergency contacts on the Emergency Card. Please provide current names and phone numbers of people to contact in case of emergency and keep the information on the Emergency Card accurate throughout the school year. ***If there are changes, please come in person to make the changes as soon as possible. Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping current emergency contact information on file. It is extremely important to have updated***

information in case of emergency, in order to ensure there is no time delay that can cause a sick child unnecessary discomfort or anxiety. The school must know how to reach you in case of an emergency.

PARENT AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

Parent Participation- A significant correlation has been established between direct parent involvement and a school's overall high rate of success. Empowering Possibilities International Charter School was established with a provision that parents would play a significant role as volunteers. At EPIC it is strongly encouraged that each parent volunteers at least 10 hours a year.

Parent Communication Due to the importance of parent involvement in the success of each child, parents are expected to communicate regularly with their child. Furthermore, parents and teachers need to communicate regularly in order to monitor their child's progress and build a strong partnership with their child's teacher. In the case that a parent has a concern regarding the child's experience in the classroom, parents are asked to follow the steps below:

1. Discuss the issue with your child.
2. Meet with the classroom or grade level teacher with your child present.
3. Meet with the classroom teacher, your child, and the Site Administrator.
4. Meet with Principal.

If the concern is not resolved after the steps above have been followed then parents have the option to proceed with the steps below:

1. Meet with the Principal and Assistant Superintendent of GCC.
2. File a complaint through the GCC complaint policy. (This can be found at www.epic.ib.org)

Visits to the Classroom - EPIC welcomes parent visitors at anytime; however, it is important that parents make arrangements with the classroom teacher one day in advance, out of consideration of classroom instructional time. All parent visitors are required to check in at the office to get a visitor's badge. ***If you wish to discuss your child's progress with the teacher, please arrange for a private conference with the teacher outside of instructional class time or transition times.***

Classroom Interruptions - If you need to leave a message for the teacher or your child, please contact the office. Office personnel will do their best to contact the teacher or student during recess or lunch. In the event of an emergency, the message will be relayed immediately. Teachers may also be reached through email from our school website.

Parent Support Programs - The success of a school relies on effective parent/school cooperation. The school does not assume total responsibility for education of the student; it is vital that a consistent approach be developed and agreed upon by parents, students and staff. To ensure success, we require a commitment signed by parents, students, and teachers pledging involvement and support of EPIC. This is called the **Three-Way Pledge** and will be sent home with each student at the beginning of the year.

Classroom Volunteers- Parent volunteers can help teachers with task such as reading with individual students, working with a child or group on basic math facts or high frequency words, making copies, field trips, etc. If being on campus does not fit in a parent's schedule, they can help out by volunteering to bring items home to work on and send back. Contact your child's teacher for further questions and to fill out the appropriate paperwork.

School Site Council/ELAC and PTO- The School Site Council is a very important part of the governance structure at Empowering Possibilities International Charter School. The SSC is charged with participating in the development of the Single School District plan (including the site budget), approving the plan and recommending it for approval by the GCC Board of Directors. SSC is also responsible for monitoring the implementation of the plan, including the expenditure of funds and the monitoring of achievement. SSC parents are elected by all parents. The English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC) meets four times a year and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meets on a monthly basis. If you are interested in being placed on the ballot, please contact the school principal in August.

GRADING AND REPORT CARDS

The school year is divided into three grading periods (trimesters). The trimesters are long enough (approximately 12 weeks) to allow students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of specific skills. At the end of each trimesters, students will receive **OVERALL** grades in each of four subjects. The subjects that will be graded are English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, and Social Studies. The grading scale is as follows:

A Students earning an **A** score 90 – 100% and show deep mastery of the knowledge and skills (Standards) that have been taught; they demonstrate an ability to go beyond the basic requirements of assignments to produce creative, thorough work.

B Students earning a **B** score 80 – 89% and they demonstrate a solid mastery of the knowledge and skills (Standards) that have been taught. However, they may still have some areas to work on.

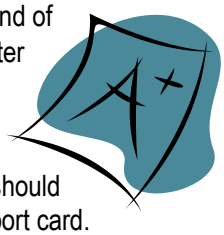
C Students earning a **C** score 70 – 79% and have skill deficits. The quality of their work meets minimum requirements. Students receiving a C in ELA or Math may be required to attend tutoring.

D Students earning a **D** score below 70% produced work of unacceptable quality. A student has major skill deficits that require additional instructional resources and student effort. *A grade of a D indicates No Credit was received due to the student's performance being below grade level. Students receiving a D in ELA or Math may be retained.

Teachers will clearly state the grading standards for their class and/or subject area at the beginning of the year.

If students are achieving below grade level, then he or she may receive instruction using intervention materials. EPIC academic interventions are focused on: identifying gaps in student's learning, setting high, standards-based goals for learning, and relentlessly working to help a student reach grade level proficiency. However, while a student is receiving intervention instruction, his or her grades will be based on the student's performance on grade level standards.

Report Cards- Grades are based on multiple assessments and measures, and are completed at the end of each trimester, about every twelve weeks. Elementary report cards will be issued at the end of each trimester in November, February, and June. Progress reports are sent out September, January, and April for all students.



Parents have access to all students' grades through Aeries and can monitor academic progress. Parents should contact their child's teacher if they have questions or concerns regarding their child's progress report or report card.

EPIC's AWARD PROGRAMS

The Award programs at EPIC are intended to acknowledge student academic excellence. Specifically, it acknowledges individual high achievement in grade level standards and curricula, which in turn, encourages each child to maximize their potential.

Frequency: Principal's List and Honor Roll students will be identified each school trimester.

Principal's List Requirements

This is for EPIC scholars who receive all As on their report card and have ZERO violations.

Honor Roll Requirements
This is for EPIC scholars who receive all As and Bs on their report card and have ZERO violations.

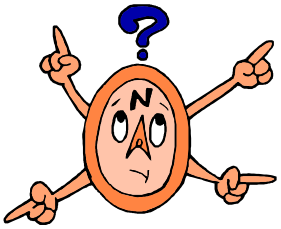
GRADE PROMOTION

The Principal and Teacher will make the final decision regarding promotion and solely reserve the right to request that a student repeat a grade level for lack of academic progress, organization and/or maturity. Students receiving below a 70% on a report card may be eligible for retention. In addition, students with repeated behavior violations or suspensions may be considered for retention.

Parent Conferences- Mandatory parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled in November and February with the possibility for an optional conference in May. The average length of a conference is 15 minutes. All appointments will be scheduled in the office at the parents' convenience. Conferences are used for reporting progress and charting goals for students. Parents and students are strongly encouraged to attend and to set up additional conferences as the need arises. If a translator is needed for conferences please make this request when setting your appointment time.

After School Program- An after school program is available Monday through Thursday 3:15 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Friday from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. There is limited space in this program, it is only available through an application process and preference is given to working families in need of childcare. This is not an individual tutoring program. Students are given time for homework, enrichment, and play. If students are not picked up on time, parents are given multiple warnings, and will be suspended and/or removed from the program.

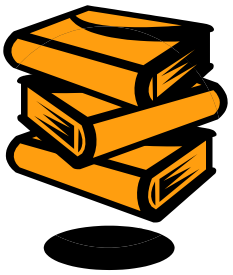
Lost and Found - Mark all your personal belongings with your full name. Should you lose anything, first check with your teachers and your friends. Then check the lost and found in the office after school. Please look for your belongings on your own time -- not during class time. All items not claimed in a timely fashion from lost and found will be donated to a local charity. An announcement will be made through the newsletter prior to the items being donated. Donations will be made on a trimester basis.



*****The School is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. This includes items that should not be brought to school, such as cell phones or other electronic items. Please keep all valuables at home!**

Finders are <u>not</u> keepers. If you find something that is not yours, it is your responsibility to turn it in to your teacher or to the lost and found.

Textbooks - Students will be provided with all necessary textbooks. Each student is responsible for giving proper care to books in his/her possession. All textbooks must be covered at all times. Students will be charged for lost and/or damaged books. Those students having outstanding fines will have report cards held and students will be ineligible to attend extracurricular activities. Report cards will be distributed once the debts are cleared. Textbooks will be checked for any damage at each progress report time and the end of the year.



Library Books - Library books must be returned by the date or a fee will be charged.

Food and Beverages at School

Everyone must work together to keep our school looking clean and attractive. Gum, soda, and candy are ***<u>not</u>*** permitted at school. No food or drink is allowed in the classroom unless it is permitted by the teacher. **<u>There is absolutely no sharing of food, candy, or beverages at school with other students; this poses a possible health or safety risk to students.</u>**

Free/Reduced Meal Program-In the school application packet, students will find a *Free/Reduced Breakfast and Lunch Program* application. This application is brought back to school and the district will determine eligibility. Parents will be notified of acceptance in this program.

Celebrations, Class Parties, and Food Guidelines- Birthdays and other holiday celebrations are an important part of our culture. However, we'd like to encourage families to do most of the celebrating at home. If you choose to have a party where students from school will be invited, invitations need to be passed out before or after school in a discrete manner. Invitations are not allowed to be passed out during class or recess times, this helps ensure that students are being included and not excluded in front of peers. A small celebration with snacks or other treats may be brought to celebrate a student's birthday, but only after lunch and at the teacher's discretion. Please make arrangements prior to the celebration with the teacher. All parties will be held outside or in the gym to ensure a clean learning environment. Water is the only drink permitted inside classrooms, other drinks will be consumed at lunch or during recess times.

DRESS CODE POLICY - EPIC believes that the development of dress and grooming attitudes and behavior patterns is part of the educational experience. Therefore, dress, hairstyle, makeup or jewelry, which are distracting or interfere with the study habits of students in the class or school, or pose a health or safety risk to the students, shall not be acceptable. Personal appearance standards for students are defined in the dress code.

Students' attire must adhere to the following:

- Clothes are to be neat, clean, in good repair, not outgrown, are not revealing and in good taste. Tights must be worn with a skirt. Shorts and skirts must be fingertip length.
- Recreational attire shall not to be worn in classrooms or at most school events. Examples of unacceptable recreational attire are; short shorts or cut-offs, tank tops, spaghetti straps, halter tops, mesh or see-through sheer tops, bare midriff or bareback tops, crop tops and half-shirts.
- Inappropriate buttons, hats, and pins or jewelry will be confiscated and returned to the student's parents or guardians. Items are considered inappropriate if they contain or promote profanity, sexual conduct, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gangs or violence.
- Clothing items will be considered inappropriate if they present a clear and present danger to the student or other students. Clothing that bears profanity or advertises sex, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gangs or violence is inappropriate school attire.
- Shoes must be worn at all times. Flip flops and other strapless shoes as well as high and platform heels are considered unsafe and are not to be worn for regular school activities.
- Students are not allowed to wear hats in class or inside the building.
- Students are prohibited from wearing any gang affiliated clothing or items. Examples of such prohibited items include, but are not limited to, certain handkerchiefs, hanging suspenders, belts, shoestrings, earrings, jackets or devices associated with group intimidation or gangs. Pants will be worn at or above the student's waist. No undergarments are to be visible. Gang attire is any clothing, accessory or manner of grooming which may be an indicator of gang involvement.
- **Any item of clothing, accessory, or personal belonging deemed to be a distraction to the learning environment will not be allowed.**

Students wearing inappropriate attire or footwear will be sent to the office and will be asked to call their parent or guardian. Students will be given the opportunity to change into appropriate clothing, if available at the site or request the parent to bring a change of clothing or footwear. Students will return to class upon meeting dress code standards. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the school office.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

EPIC IS A SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL

We believe that all students have a right to a safe, healthy and nurturing learning environment. At EPIC we are committed to providing all students with a safe and caring school environment where everyone is treated with respect. EPIC will not tolerate behaviors that infringe on the safety and emotional well-being of any student.

Bullying- In order to minimize bullying and encourage teamwork, our goal is to help students gain skills and knowledge in a safe and positive learning community. The faculty, staff, and students achieve this by modeling positive behavior, using common language, improving communication, and encouraging community involvement. For more information about anti-bullying please refer to the GCC Board Policy 1515 Anti-Bullying

Bullying is . . .

- Intentional harm-doing
- Happens repeatedly over time
- Verbal: name calling, threatening and/or rumors; profanity
- Emotional: making faces, isolating others, gestures
- Unequal power (size, ability, popularity, money, clothing)
- Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, and hitting someone else to hurt someone
- On the internet/ through cyber bullying

School Rules Against Bullying- Students should be aware of their surroundings and should follow these four steps.

1. We will not bully other students.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will make a point to include students who are easily left out.
4. When we know somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

Bullying Incident Reporting System- This is a new system in place that allows students and/or a member of the community to report an incident of bullying or harassment. To report incidents go to the following website: http://report.doc-tracking.com/222724/222716 or http://www.epicib.org/how-to-report-a-bully/

EPIC seeks to inspire, challenge and empower all students in an environment that is safe, supportive, and conducive to learning. We have high expectations for student behavior and require all students to demonstrate responsibility and appropriate behavior at school and at school sponsored events and activities. To create clarity, we have adopted and implemented the following student discipline policies:

EPIC is a Flippen Group Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) school.

The primary focus of Capturing Kids' Hearts is to develop healthy relationships between members of a school's educational community and to teach effective skills that help participants:

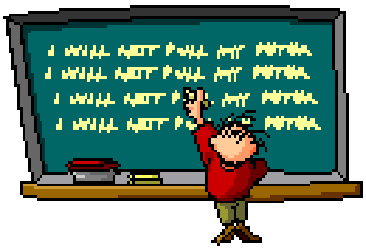
- Develop self-managing classrooms and decrease discipline issues through innovative techniques such as a social contract
- Decrease delinquent behaviors such as disruptive outbursts, violent acts, and drug use
- Utilize the EXCEL Teaching Model™ (Engage, X-plore, Communicate, Empower, Launch) and reinforce the role of emotional intelligence in teaching
- Build classroom rapport and teamwork to create a safe, trusting learning environment
- Develop students' empathy for diverse cultures/backgrounds
- Increase classroom attendance by building students' motivation and helping them take responsibility for their actions and performance

Classroom Behavioral Interventions

Discipline in the public schools of our nation continues to be a matter of great concern to educators and parents alike. Since discipline is essential to academic progress, the teachers and staff at EPIC work together to encourage productive behavior in a firm, fair, and consistent manner. We implement the Capturing Kids Hearts program that allows teachers to collaborate with students to create a classroom discipline management plan. Our school's discipline plan is based on the premise that teachers are here to teach and students are here to learn. Therefore, no student will be allowed to stop the teacher from teaching or interfere with the learning of other students.

When a student makes a deliberate choice to disobey an established rule or their social contract, some or all of the following interventions may be used at the teacher's discretion:

- Refocus Form
- Conference with student
- Time-out or Loss of recess
- Violation notice to parents
- Call parents
- Parent/Student/Teacher Conference
- Written behavioral contract
- Classroom visitation by the parent



A time-out area may be assigned in the classroom or in an alternate supervised classroom as part of the classroom management program.

When these interventions fail to bring about proper conduct, a violation notice will be sent home for the parents to review and sign. After three (3) violations or a mandatory referral in one trimester, a student will be referred to the Administration for further action. Any Violation given to a scholar will eliminate him/her from receiving Principal's List or Honor Roll for that current trimester. The result may be the following:

- In-School detention
- After School detention (homework only)
- At-home suspension
- Lunch detention
- Friday detention

School rules apply at all school events and functions, such as field trips, after school programs, and special class activities**.**

BELOW IS AN OUTLINE OF POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT ADHERING TO THE CLASSROOM SOCIAL CONTRACT OR SCHOOL RULES.

*Please note that consequences may vary by grade level

*Any Violation given to a scholar will eliminate him/her from receiving Principal's List or Honor Roll for that current trimester.

Cheating- Cheating is defined as any use or attempt to use the work effort of another student, with or without the consent of that student, or any previously published material to benefit their grade status. Both (or all) students involved in any incident will be held accountable for the consequences (violation notice, detention, suspension, and/or a zero on the assignment). Students involved in cheating on examinations or finals will be referred to the Site Administrator for disciplinary action.

EPIC students are responsible for their actions and are expected to adhere to the classroom Social Contract and school rules and policies. If a student is in violation of a school rule or policy, a teacher or staff member will refer him/her to the appropriate administrator to determine the consequences based on the type and severity of the violation.

Communication with Parents- There are many ways in which EPIC will communicate information and important events with families and students. It is pertinent that parents check backpacks, folders, binders, emails, etc. to ensure

that they are receiving all forms of communication from teachers or administration. Some forms of communication include but are not limited to:

School Newsletters:

A school newsletter will be published regularly informing parents of important information, upcoming events, and ways to help out at the school.

Empowering Possibilities International Charter School Website and Facebook:

The Empowering Possibilities International Charter School website http://www.epicib.org and Facebook page has a wealth of information in one place. Another important feature on the EPIC website is the Aeries Gradebook where parents can access students' current grades. In addition to school information, teacher websites provide class specific information. It is important to consistently check the website for new information.

E-Mail:

Please give your email to the office staff and sign up for a Aeries account. School updates are also sent to parents by email. Parents are encouraged to use email to communicate with all EPIC staff members. Our email addresses can be found on our website.

Uniform Complaint Procedures:

EPIC is responsible for ensuring compliance with state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs and has established procedures to address allegations of unlawful discrimination and/or failure to apply with such laws. The GCC Board encourages early, informal resolution of complaints at the site level whenever possible. If parties feel further investigation and resolution are needed, concerns should be submitted in writing to:

GCC Assistant Superintendent
5726 Dudley Blvd., McClellan, CA 95652
Phone: (916) 286-5129
Fax: (916) 993-4114

A complete copy of the Uniform Complaint Procedures is posted in the school office and online at www.epic.ib.org

EPIC's Prohibited Items

In trying to create a safe and orderly learning environment at EPIC School, we have prohibited the following items from the school campus.

We **DO NOT** allow these items at EPIC during class or after school:

Gum	**Cell Phones****	**Personal Toys**
Candy	Hats (see dress code)	**Sunflower Seeds**
Sodas	Makeup / Nail Polish	Video Tapes*/DVD's
Matches/Lighters	Bandannas	Perfumes/Colognes
Trading Cards	White-Out (which is not water-based)	Golf or baseballs
Cameras*	Pocket Knives	Balloons
CD/MP3 Players	Poppers	Aerosol Cans
Drugs/Paraphernalia	Weapons/Replicas	**Pets/animals**
Electronic Games	Radios	Fireworks
Roller Skates/Heely's	Toy Guns	Electronic Games
Flyers (not related to a school	Squirt Guns	Roller Skates
sponsored activity)	Stink Bombs	*except as allowed by teacher

*****ANY personal belonging deemed to be a distraction to the learning environment will not be allowed*****

- These items will be confiscated and returned only to parents.
- The school is not responsible for theft of the confiscated items.
- Repeat confiscations will result in consequences.

Cell Phone Policy- **All EPIC scholars are not permitted to use cell phones during the school day, including in the After School Program. Any student who abuses this privilege will have their cell phone taken away and a parent will have to pick it up from administration in the office on their first offense. The second offense will result in a one week confiscation of the cell phone. After third or repeated offenses, the cell phone will be confiscated for one month and other disciplinary action may be enforced.

Bicycles, Scooters, Roller Skates (Blades), Skateboards: Students may ride their bicycle or scooter to school and park it in a designated space on the school campus. Please note that the school will not accept responsibility for loss or damage to the bicycle/scooter. Students should not use roller skates or blades, or skateboards (or rip sticks) on the school grounds at any time. This includes shoes that have wheels built into them. Student must walk their bicycle/scooter on and around the school campus. Additionally, students are required to wear helmets as stated by California law when riding a bicycle, and obey all laws relating to bicycle/scooter use to ensure safety. Any student that wishes to bike, ride, or walk to school must have written parental consent on file in the office prior to doing so.

Tobacco-Free Zone EPIC believes that the use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs adversely affects a student's ability to achieve academic success, is physically and emotionally harmful and has serious social and legal consequences. Therefore, all school facilities are tobacco, alcohol and drug free sites. The use of any tobacco, alcohol or drug paraphernalia is prohibited within any school property, facility, or vehicle. This prohibition also applies to individuals attending events on school campuses or representing the GCC at school activities that are held at locations other than GCC property.

Harassment Policy EPIC considers sexual harassment to be a major offense, which may result in disciplinary action, including expulsion of the offending student. Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual behavior that interferes with an individual's performance at school or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive education environment. Any student who believes that he or she has been harassed or witnessed harassment is encouraged to immediately report such incident to his or her teacher, counselor, or Principal.

Gateway Community Charters
Notification of Rights under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.
FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
    - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
    - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
    - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
    - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
    - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
    - Accrediting organizations;
    - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
    - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
    - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice). Individuals who use TDD may use the Federal Relay Service.
Or you may contact us at the following address:
Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-8520

Empowering Possibilities International Charter School

Three – Way School Pledge

It is important that families and schools work together to help students achieve high academic standards. Through a balanced educational approach we can ensure success. The following are agreed upon roles and responsibilities for teachers, students and parents. Your signature signifies support of these actions.

Student Pledge ~ I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Come to school on time ready to learn and work hard.
- Bring necessary materials, completed assignments and homework.
- Know and follow school and class rules.
- Ask for help when I need it.
- Communicate regularly with my parents and teachers about school experiences so that they can help me to be successful in school.
- Limit my TV watching and video games and instead study or read every day after school.
- Respect the school, classmates, staff and families.
- Follow the Social Contracts

Family/Parent Pledge ~ I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Provide a quiet time and place for homework and monitor TV viewing.
- Read to my child or encourage my child to read every day.
- Communicate with the teacher or the school when I have a concern.
- Ensure that my child attends school dressed appropriately every day, gets adequate sleep, regular medical attention and proper nutrition.
- Regularly monitor my child's progress in school.
- Participate at school in activities such as school decision making, volunteering and/or attending parent-teacher conferences.
- Communicate the importance of education and learning to my child.
- Respect the school, staff, students, and families.

Teacher Pledge ~ I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction.
- Endeavor to motivate my students to learn.
- Have high expectations and help every child to develop a love of learning.
- Communicate regularly with families about student progress.
- Provide a warm, safe, and caring learning environment.
- Provide meaningful, daily homework assignments to reinforce and extend learning.
- Participate in professional development opportunities that improve teaching and learning and support the formation of partnerships with families and the community.
- Actively participate in collaborative decision making and consistently work with families and my school colleagues to make schools accessible and welcoming places for families which help each student achieve the school's high academic standards.
- Respect the school, students, staff and families.
- Follow the Social Contracts

I have read and received the EPIC parent and student handbook provided in the student planner.

_____	_____	_____
Student	Parent/Guardian	Teacher
_____	_____	_____
Date	Date	Date

Gateway Community Charters Board

Gateway Community Charters, Inc. (GCC) is an independent non-profit 501(c)3 agency that was created to support students, parents and communities through the conception, development, administration and governance of innovative, high quality, standards-based educational opportunities within charter school constructs. In cooperation with our Location Educational Agencies (LEAs), Twin Rivers Unified School District, San Juan Unified School District and Yolo County Office of Education, the GCC reaches out to the greater Sacramento County community to create schools to serve the educational needs of the underserved, for example; the disenfranchised, culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, homeless, parenting teens, working young adults, fifth year seniors, English language learners and others.

Dr. Cindy Petersen, Ed. D,
Superintendent/CEO

Lillie Campbell
Board President

Bruce Mangerich
Board Vice President

Mark Anderson
Board Treasurer

Jack Turner
Board Secretary

Harry Block
Board Director

MISSION Gateway Community Charters, Inc. (GCC) is an independent non-profit agency that supports students, parents and the community through the conception, development, administration and governance of innovative, high quality, standards-based educational school choice options within the greater Sacramento region.

VISION Our vision is to provide all students, regardless of circumstance, a safe, caring school choice with high academic and behavioral expectations where they can reach their fullest academic and social potential.