



GONZAGA MIDDLE SCHOOL

A Jesuit NativityMiguel Academy
- Changing Lives - Fulfilling Potential -

STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

2025-2026



Executive Director: Tom Lussier
Principal: Rex Ferguson-Baird

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- Men and Women for Others -

Updated 05/09/2023

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WELCOME PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS,

We are happy to welcome you to Gonzaga Middle School (GMS). Because of our small class size, extra supports provided to students and extended time with each student – we get to know each student and aim to meet their needs, help them develop their unique gifts and become more successful learners. We are a school where students feel they are known and cared for by their teachers, where they feel respected, where they learn to respect themselves and others and learn a sense of responsibility for serving their community.

In addition, through our extended Graduate Support program we will continue to journey with our students and their families, providing ongoing mentoring and support after they graduate middle school during their high school and post-secondary studies. With this long term commitment, we can offer each student a wonderful opportunity for ongoing care and support towards fulfilling their potential.

As an inclusive Jesuit Nativity-model school we support our students of all cultural and faith backgrounds to reflect on who they are, invite them to learn to respect their own faith and spiritual traditions, to understand where they come from and who they hope to become and to also learn to respect other faiths and traditions. We guide our students to take responsibility for their words and actions, to include and respect others who might easily be left out, to extend a kind hand when someone is in need, and to have the courage to stand up for what is right even when it isn't an easy or popular thing to do. In all of this, we encourage them to become *men and women (or persons) for others*.

Whether it is in the classroom, the gymnasium or assembly hall, on a field trip, in art, music, cultural enrichment activities or summer camp experience – every staff member and volunteer at Gonzaga Middle School is here to help students reach towards their academic and Creator-given potential. We invite each of our students to take hold of the opportunity which being a Gonzaga student offers them. We appreciate the chance to work with parents/guardians and caregivers who are our students' primary role models in supporting our students' growth and development. I invite parents/guardians and other caregivers to drop by the school to share questions, concerns and ideas.

Peace and blessing to you and your families,
Tom Lussier, Executive Director and Rex Ferguson-Baird Principal

PURPOSE AND LIMITATION OF STUDENT AND FAMILY HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize students and their families with Gonzaga Middle School, its philosophy and policies, its rules, its curricular programs and its activities. It is hoped that through mutual cooperation and through identification of goals between home and school, we will help our students to grow spiritually and develop their talents and abilities.

This handbook does not establish a contractual relationship between Gonzaga Middle School and its students or their families. This handbook only serves to highlight Gonzaga Middle School's policies, practices, and procedures for your personal benefit and cannot be construed as a legal document of any kind. Any grievance procedure contained within this handbook is strictly intended to provide all students and their families an opportunity to resolve grievances that may arise. Such procedures are not intended to represent the precise formula to be followed in every dispute.

GONZAGA MIDDLE SCHOOL – STUDENT PLEDGE



**I pledge this day, with integrity and humility,
my continued support for the spirit of Gonzaga:**

A spirit of community not selfishness;

A spirit of respect for each person I encounter;

A spirit of respect for nature and care for all I am given;

**A spirit of respect for who I am, for my parents and where I
come from;**

**A spirit of responsibility for who I will become and how I will
act in service of others in need;**

In true Gonzaga spirit:

**I will treat others with compassion and strive for excellence in
my words, my actions, my school work and my play.**

I will not argue, fight, or bully.

I will believe in myself and my ability to succeed.

I will be responsible, honest and hard working.

**As a Gonzaga student I will do my best, look out for those in
need and trust that God will do the rest.**

**May this spirit grow in me today and may the spirit
of Gonzaga thrive!**

GONZAGA MIDDLE SCHOOL FOUNDATIONAL GOALS AND POLICIES

MISSION

Gonzaga Middle School of Winnipeg empowers underserved children from low-income neighbourhood families to develop to their full potential while accompanying them on their educational journey from middle school through high school and beyond. It supports students breaking the cycle of poverty by providing an enhanced, holistic, culturally sensitive, Jesuit-inspired middle school education.

VISION

GMS complements public and independent schools already in existence and pursues collaboration and companionship with our families and community partners.

GMS seeks to develop “**men and women (or persons) for others.**” Through the application of a distinctive Jesuit Nativity-model education and graduate support program it prepares students for success in high school and post-secondary study. It strives to graduate students who are **loving, intellectually competent, open to growth, spiritually alive, committed to doing justice and committed to being healthy.**

GMS supports its students of all cultural and faith backgrounds in their growth toward becoming hopeful, confident, morally responsible leaders for love and service of their families and communities.

MEANS

Gonzaga Middle School is a full-scholarship (non-tuition) based school. The success of GSM's mission is made possible through the ongoing and steadfast commitment of the school's students, parents/guardians, families, faculty, staff, Board members, volunteers and benefactors.

END GOALS

At Gonzaga Middle School, each student's course of studies includes the Manitoba Education, government approved English program curriculum including Language Arts, Mathematics, Science Social Studies, Physical Education/Health, Arts Education and optional studies enhanced with additional time and focus on reading, spirituality studies, and Indigenous perspectives. GSM students will have begun to personally appropriate the six core characteristics of Jesuit school graduates identified in the GSM Vision Statement. Also, in the Jesuit educational tradition of *eloquentia perfecta*, GSM expects students to learn to think critically, and to write and speak well. Students will understand they are called to serve others with the gifts the Creator has given them.

TEACHER COMMITMENT

In keeping with the Gonzaga Middle School mission and vision, GSM teachers demonstrate a commitment to academic excellence, professional development and the best ideals of the Catholic faith. All faculty members are disciplined workers, compassionate listeners, tireless advocates of the children they serve and an integral part of the school community. Teachers accompany learners engaging them to reflect on their experience, beliefs, and values in ways that respect learners' multicultural and multi-faith backgrounds. Teachers recognize that GSM asks them to approach their work as a vocation and make substantial contributions of their time and talents in the service of GSM students. The success of

each GMS student hinges upon the determination and excellence of each faculty member. They are directly responsible for the students' spiritual, moral, intellectual, emotional, social and physical development. The goal of a Gonzaga teacher is to develop students who demonstrate character, leadership and service to others. Teachers work closely with staff, volunteers, families and members of the community to ensure the overall success of the students.

PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMITMENT – PARENT AS PRIMARY EDUCATOR

The educational philosophy of Gonzaga Middle School is based upon the belief that parents are the primary educators of their children and that the school can provide significant enhancement to the home learning environment but cannot replace it.

Parents/guardians of GMS students act as active partners with GMS in their child's academic, social and spiritual development. Parents commit to GMS's extended school day and extended school year and ensure their child's timely arrival each day. They respond to phone calls and other notices from GMS staff in a manner that encourages student growth and development. As important partners of the GMS educational community, parents/guardians contribute ideas and suggestions to assist meeting the needs of all GMS students. In addition, parents/guardians volunteer their time and talents to further support their child and the growth and development of the larger school community.

We request that parents/guardians study the contents of this Student and Family Handbook and keep it as an available reference. The administration, faculty, and staff of Gonzaga Middle School look forward to collaborating with parents/guardians in support of each child's growth and education.

STUDENT COMMITMENT

Students of Gonzaga Middle School understand they have been given outstanding gifts and opportunities and seek always to use these for the benefit of others. While at GMS they begin their journey to becoming true men or women for others. Students commit to cooperate in their own social, spiritual and academic growth and work to create a school environment in which all students can learn. In short, students promise to do their best.

FAMILY COVENANT

The "Family Covenant" is a document produced for each family annually. It outlines the partnership between Gonzaga Middle School and participating families, describing expectations and responsibilities for each party: the school and the family.

GONZAGA MIDDLE SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICIES

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Gonzaga Middle School admits students of any race, color, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin in the administration of its education policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, athletic programs and other school administered programs. GMS will take students who are facing academic challenges; however, it will not have the necessary supports to

accommodate students with profound or severe behavioural problems or special needs. It will accept students who can meet the academic and behavioural requirements of the school.

INCLUSIVE JESUIT CATHOLIC CULTURE – OPEN TO STUDENTS OF ALL FAITHS AND BACKGROUNDS

Parents of all backgrounds can choose to apply for enrollment of their children. GMS will admit students of all faiths and backgrounds who meet the entrance requirements. The school is for all parents in Point Douglas or Northeast Downtown Winnipeg – whether living here for one generation or many more – who want to enroll their children in a faith-based program that has seen tremendous success throughout North America, including for example, Mother Teresa Middle School in Regina which opened in 2011. Parents and students must understand and accept the fact that GMS is inspired by Catholic and Jesuit values and operates in keeping with the Jesuit educational and Nativity-model traditions. While drawing on these traditions, it is open to a variety of cultural traditions and expressions of spirituality.

Gonzaga Middle School is a Jesuit-endorsed Middle School and runs its programs from an inclusive Catholic perspective. Non-Catholic students and their families must agree to support and participate in all school related programs and functions including lessons, services and cultural activities. It should be understood that Catholic faith and Ignatian spirituality primarily, but also Indigenous and other traditions will be integrated into the overall curriculum through prayer and cultural activities, through artwork and displays and where possible in lessons. In addition, through community service and social justice activities, GMS will reach out to the community. Gonzaga Middle School intentionally commits to contributing to the work of Reconciliation described by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the sake of its Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and building up the broader community.

GENERAL ADMISSION AND ONGOING REQUIREMENTS:

- Students must be from families who can demonstrate significant financial need.
- Students and their families must commit to an 8.75-hour school day and the full school year including the summer program from grades 6 to 8.
- Students must show evidence of academic motivation and personal potential.
- Students must consistently attend and actively participate in the summer leadership program.
- Students must demonstrate good student citizenship and character.
- There must be evidence of parental cooperation and support.

ENROLMENT AGREEMENT

The registration of a student at Gonzaga Middle School is deemed to be an agreement on their part, and on the part of their parents or guardians, to comply fully with all the policies, rules and regulations of the school. GMS reserves the right to make revisions to its policies, rules and regulations. Parents and students will be given prompt notifications of such changes or additions. Observance of any such change or addition is expected by all as soon as they are made known to the school community.

While GMS will not proselytize or aim to convert students who are not Catholic and will encourage students to respect their own faith or spiritual traditions be they Catholic, Christian, non-Christian or Indigenous traditions, it must be understood that Gonzaga Middle School is a Catholic school and runs its programs from a Catholic perspective. It will accept non-Catholic students who meet the entrance requirements of the school; however, non-Catholic students and their families must agree to support

student participation in or attendance at all school related programs and functions including liturgies. While students will be expected to participate in lessons, ceremonial activities and celebrations held throughout the school year, accommodation can and will be made for any student's additional spiritual needs in a way that is respectful of their own and other students' backgrounds.

FEES

Gonzaga Middle School is a tuition-free school in which each student receives an annual scholarship equal to the annual cost of educating a student at GMS (which, given the additional supports, is equal to about \$27,000). In addition to general operating and capital costs, Gonzaga Middle School covers the cost of school uniforms, enrichment opportunities, extracurricular activities, summer programming, meals and snacks, technology, school supplies and transportation to and from school.

As is the case with many Nativity-model schools which also provide many additional supports beyond traditional operating and capital costs, **each family at GMS is asked to pay a monthly (11 months) participation fee of \$50.00 to contribute to the educational process.** The fee will be reviewed annually by the school administration and is due on the 1st of each month and is meant to provide families with an opportunity to contribute to the additional supports for the education of their child.

HISTORY, JESUIT ENDORSEMENT AND JESUIT EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Over the last forty years as the history and success of Jesuit Nativity schools became known across North America, several people approached the Jesuits in Winnipeg and at St. Paul's High School (SPHS), in particular, about the possibility of founding a similar school in Winnipeg's inner city. Nativity model schools have had very significant success in breaking the cycle of poverty through educating students from low-income families living in neighbourhoods where poverty and its social impacts affect the educational opportunities of children.

When St. Paul's High School honoured Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hill from Regina, Saskatchewan at the November 2012 Ignatian Tribute Dinner for their commitment to service, Mr. Hill shared the story of why he and his wife Carol helped to found Mother Teresa Middle School (MTMS) in Regina. This sparked renewed interest among key members of the St. Paul's High School alumni community for starting a similar school in Winnipeg and resulted in a group of SPHS senior administrators and alumni to visit MTMS in Regina in the fall of 2013. Inspired and encouraged by what they saw, this group then travelled to visit Nativity schools in Milwaukee and Chicago. The senior administrators of SMA also visited MTMS in December 2013. These visits solidified belief in the Nativity school model and strengthened hopes for a similar school in Winnipeg.

A feasibility study on starting a Nativity school in Winnipeg was commissioned in June 2014 and after the completion of the GMS Feasibility Study, with the encouragement and support of the NativityMiguel Coalition, MTMS of Regina, the Canadian Jesuits and SPHS, a decision was made in the spring of 2015 to go forward with establishing Gonzaga Middle School in the Point Douglas neighbourhood of Winnipeg. Gonzaga Middle School opened in September 2016 thanks to the inspiration, compassion and generosity of Mr. Mark Chipman, Executive Chairman of True North Sports and Entertainment, Mr. Steve Chipman, President of Birchwood Automotive Group and Mr. Bob Puchniak, retired past Chief Financial Officer of James Richardson and Sons Limited. GMS was incorporated in July 2015 with these three founding members respectively as Chairperson, Secretary and Vice-Chairperson. They

served on the Board along with Fr. Len Altilia SJ, who was then President of SPHS and Provincial Assistant for Secondary and Pre-Secondary Education for the Jesuits in English Canada, Mrs. Connie Yunyk, then, the President of St. Mary's Academy (SMA), Dr. Niigaan Sinclair, Native Studies Professor and acting Department Head at the University of Manitoba, Dr. Jerome Cranston, Associate Professor of Education and Executive Director, Student Academic Success at the University of Manitoba and Mr. Tom Lussier, past Principal of St. Paul's hired as the first Executive Director and Principal of GMS. In February 2018, Mr. Kyle Mason, founder of the North End Family Centre joined the Board of Directors. In June 2018, Dr. Sinclair and Dr. Cranston stepped down due to changing work commitments, and then Ms Tara Zajak, then the Executive Director of the North Point Douglas Women's Centre and Mr. Mitch Bourbonniere, well-known community social worker and activist, OPK director, and Mama Bear Clan Founder joined the board. In 2020, Mrs. Jennifer Moncrieff, a GMS and broader community volunteer also joined the Board. With the departure of Ms Zajak from the board, a well-known Indigenous community leader and past MLA for Point Douglas, Mr. Kevin Chief joined the board. GMS thanks Mr Kyle Mason on completing two terms of office in June 2024. In September 2025, a well know Indigenous community leader, Ms Jewel Pierre-Roscelli joined the board as Mr Mason's replacement.

Throughout the feasibility study process, the advice, support and input of members of an Advisory Committee was important in the establishment of GMS. In addition to the initial Board members who formed a Working Committee, the Advisory Committee included: Mrs. Josie Audino, as Principal of SMA; Mr. Mitch Bourbonniere, the Honourable Kevin Chief, then the MLA for Point Douglas; Dr. Jerome Cranston; Mr. David Filmon, Chairperson SPHS Board; Mr. Bob Lewin, Principal of SPHS; Sr. Bernadette O'Reilly, NDS, past co-Director of Rossbrook House and Sr. Susan Wikeem SNJM, past President of SMA.

GMS continues to meet with community leaders in the Point Douglas and Northeast Downtown neighbourhoods and build relationships with the community.

The history of GMS is a story that is just beginning to be written. It is only with the support and engagement of the local community, GMS Board and Committee members, alumni of SPHS and alumnae of SMA, the larger Winnipeg community and people of many faiths and backgrounds that GMS will thrive and serve its mission. In November 2015, a formal Endorsement Agreement was signed by the Jesuits in English Canada and the Board of GMS. That Endorsement Agreement was renewed in September 2023. GMS operates as a culturally sensitive and inclusive Catholic Jesuit endorsed NativityMiguel Academy in partnership with the Canadian Jesuits and SPHS, in association with SMA and with the support of the Archbishop of Winnipeg.

JESUIT EDUCATION IN CANADA



JÉSUITES
du Canada

JESUITS
of Canada

Catholic religious orders use a sort of shorthand to indicate religious order to which a nun, brother, or priest belongs. This shorthand is a series of 2-4 letters written after the person's name. The "SJ" written after a Jesuit's name is short for the Latin

"Societas Jesu" – in English, "Society of Jesus." The Society of Jesus, known to many people as "The Jesuits," is the largest religious order of men in the Roman Catholic Church. The Society was founded in 1540 by St. Ignatius of Loyola and his companions from the University of Paris. Ignatius was a Spanish soldier and nobleman who turned to a life of prayer and study after he was wounded by a cannonball during a battle at Pamplona, Spain in 1521. The Jesuits operated schools for the training of young Jesuits from early in their history. In 1548, at Messina on the island of Sicily, at the request of the representative of the King of Spain, they opened their first school for non-Jesuit, lay students.

Today, the Jesuits remain an active force in education in North America and around the world. In the U.S. alone, there are 27 Jesuit universities and 60 high schools – including traditional Jesuit High Schools and Christo Rey High Schools. In addition, Jesuits operate almost 20 Nativity Schools across North America.

The Jesuits have been in Canada since 1611 and they worked among both the French and First Nations people. Jesuit education in Canada began with the founding of the Collège des Jésuites in Quebec City in 1635 by Paul le Jeune, S.J. The school educated both French and First Nations boys. After their expulsion in 1773, Jesuits returned to Canada in 1842 and six years later established the Collège Sainte-Marie in Montreal. In 1896 Loyola College was established for English speakers in the western end of the city. French-Canadian Jesuits later established schools in St. Boniface (Collège St. Boniface, Manitoba), Edmonton, Quebec City and Montreal (Collège Brébeuf), whose alumni include former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

In Canada, of the English high schools founded and/or administered by Jesuits (Guelph, Charlottetown, Kingston, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Halifax, St. John's, and Regina) only St. Paul's High School in Winnipeg and Loyola High School in Montreal remain open while St. Bonaventure's in St. John's was newly founded in 1999. Similarly at the post-secondary level, Campion in Regina and Regis in Toronto remain under Jesuit direction. St. Mary's in Halifax, and Loyola (Concordia) in Montreal no longer have direct ties with the Jesuits while St. Paul's College at the University of Manitoba has Jesuits on staff. Mother Teresa Middle School in Regina, and Gonzaga Middle School in Winnipeg, the first and second Nativity schools in Canada, build on this long-standing Jesuit commitment to education and the formation of "Men and Women for Others." (Adapted from Fr. John Meehan, SJ– Past President Campion College, University of Regina)

STUDENT SOCIAL, SPIRITUAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS – IN THE JESUIT TRADITION

In choosing Gonzaga Middle School, our students commit to partnering in their own social, spiritual and academic growth and seek to become men and women for others. Students are guided in this commitment and work toward this goal by developing an understanding of the five core ideal characteristics of a Jesuit educated graduate-at-graduation. We also add one additional goal related to our student's physical growth and wellbeing. We invite parents and families to work with us in helping our students develop towards these goals.

It is helpful to identify **three levels of growth** towards each of these goals for our students:

- **Firstly**, a baseline expectation which each Gonzaga student should be able to meet and **demonstrate** each day.
- **Secondly**, a level of conduct which each student can **strive** toward in their time at GMS
- **Finally**, for each characteristic, a higher goal which we hope each student will **aspire** toward during their time at GMS – and toward which they will continue to grow after graduation.

In the Jesuit Educational tradition, a Gonzaga Middle School student will be:

1. Open to Growth

Gonzaga students **demonstrate**:

- An eagerness to learn new ideas and concepts in the classroom
- A willingness to try new things and activities given the opportunity
- Grit, determination and tenacity to learn from mistakes and constructive criticism

Gonzaga students **strive** to:

- Be humble and become aware that they can always learn more
- Appreciate artistic and cultural values that enhance the human experience

Gonzaga students **aspire** to:

- Be open to new ideas, people and cultures different from themselves
- Be lifelong learners
- Be able to interact across diverse communities with social competence.

2. Intellectually Competent

Gonzaga students **demonstrate**:

- Being prepared for class and ready to learn each day
- Doing their best on all homework and classwork assignments, and
- Positive participation and ability to follow teacher directions in order to help create a safe and positive learning environment

Gonzaga students **strive** to become partners in their own learning by:

- Seeking the assistance they need
- Taking on additional academic challenges and setting good academic goals
- Beginning to plan for their academic future

Gonzaga students **aspire** to:

- Be academically proficient and prepared for high school and beyond
- Read capably and understand that to communicate well they must listen well
- The ideal of *eloquentia perfecta*, or the ability to think critically, write clearly and speak articulately

3. Loving

Gonzaga students **demonstrate**:

- Appreciation and respect for the care given by teachers and other caring adults,
- Inclusion of others in activities
- Practical ways of helping make the classroom and the school a safe place for all students to learn and grow
- Doing small things like being silent during study or quiet reading sessions

Gonzaga students **strive** to:

- Do larger things like helping a struggling classmate or volunteering to clean up a mess even if someone else made it, or volunteering to help at school activities
- Model what it means to be a man or woman for others – especially when no one else is looking
- Learn how to be trustworthy friends, including friendship with people different from themselves
- Recognize personal prejudices and stereotyping and try to overcome them,
- Appreciate the importance of empathy (that is, the ability to put themselves “into the shoes” of others) and work at developing this capacity
- Be capable of giving and receiving love

Gonzaga students **aspire** to:

- Accept themselves as unconditionally loved by God/the Creator, and others,
- Be caring and compassionate individuals who are loved, valued, guided, and respected

- Recognize that true service to others is selfless, and become responsible, respectful, and service-oriented leaders who have a strong sense of self and the importance of community

4. Spiritually Alive

Gonzaga students **demonstrate**:

- Openness to attend and participate respectfully in daily prayer and other spiritual celebrations
- Participation as individuals and as a part of their class and the school community

Gonzaga students **strive** to:

- Develop an understanding of their place in creation and the role of the Creator in their lives.
- Model respectful participation in prayer and spiritual celebrations
- Be knowledgeable about Christian beliefs, traditions, values and behaviours that are embraced within the Catholic faith and a growing awareness of and respect for other religious and spirituality beliefs, traditions and practices
- Develop an awareness of the Jesuit expression of these teachings and Ignatian (after St. Ignatius the founder of the Jesuits) spirituality – especially the notion of “finding God in all things” and “discerning how they can best respond to love in their daily lives and showing that love in deeds”
- If they are non-Catholic (or non-Christian) – developing a growing sense of their own faith or spiritual tradition, and how that relates to their life and sense of self

Gonzaga students **aspire** to:

- Accept themselves as a person whose spirituality is important to their personal identity (for Christians this includes being a person formed in the image and likeness of God)
- Serve others with the unique gifts with which God/the Creator has entrusted them

5. Committed to Doing Justice

Gonzaga students **demonstrate**:

- An ability and readiness to recognize when another member of the class or school community is being treated unfairly
- A willingness to seek out the help needed to fix an unjust situation

Gonzaga students **strive** to:

- Be able to stand up for what is right even when it is unpopular or there is a risk of being mocked or laughed at by others – especially one’s friends
- Become more understanding, empathetic, accepting and generous with others
- Become more aware of the selfish attitudes and tendencies which can lead to treating others unjustly

Gonzaga students **aspire** to:

- Grow in awareness of current social problems
- Understand the structural roots of these injustices in social institutions
- Develop a sense of compassion for the victims of injustice
- Understand their human and spiritual obligation to participate in building a just society
- Become engaged citizens who can think critically and solve problems while being responsible, respectful, and service-oriented leaders in their community – to become men and women for others.

In addition, out of concern for students' physical development and wellbeing, at Gonzaga Middle School students will be:

6. Committed to Being Healthy

Gonzaga students **demonstrate**:

- Good eating habits and a commitment to daily physical activity
- Doing their best to be physically fit

Gonzaga students **strive** to:

- Avoid unhealthy eating/drinking practices and harmful physical activities
- Improve their level of physical activity and fitness
- Be knowledgeable of nutrition and fitness and make informed choices for lifelong health and wellness

Gonzaga students **aspire** to:

- Develop balance in their lives and grow physically, intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, socially and morally.

SEEKING THE GREATER GOOD – A CAUTION AGAINST “DOING THE MINIMUM”

In the Jesuit tradition there is a call to do the “greater good” or to “seek *the Magis*” – a Latin term which means “the More.” In this tradition, we should never be satisfied with doing the minimum to get by, or to simply pass our coursework. To do the minimum, to put forth the minimum amount of effort, is to limit who we are becoming as people. Instead, in all things, we should **strive** for a spirit of generous service and **aspire** to the higher goal – to develop and use the extraordinary gifts entrusted to us by the Creator in the service of others. This is encapsulated in the Jesuit motto – *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* – “for the greater glory of God.” In calling GMS students to strive in this way, and to aspire to the higher goal we honour the school’s mission of empowering students to fulfill their potential and educating men and women for others.

GONZAGA MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC LIFE

ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHY:

In keeping with the Jesuit Tradition, Gonzaga Middle School’s main guiding principle with respect to teaching and learning is to expect teachers and students to strive for **academic excellence** in all curricula within a rigorous and supportive learning environment. GMS will incorporate student-centred Ignatian pedagogy. **We believe all of our students can learn, and we expect all of our students to learn.** Teachers will accompany learners, engaging them to reflect on their experience, beliefs, and values in ways that respect the multicultural and multi-faith background of learners. We expect our students to learn to think critically, and to write and speak well. The intention of Gonzaga Middle School is to prepare each student for entrance into a high school and post-secondary (or college) program of **each student’s and family’s choosing** that corresponds to each student’s aptitudes and interests.

CURRICULUM:

Gonzaga Middle School will fully implement and go beyond the requirements of the Manitoba Education government approved English program curriculum. The Gonzaga curriculum will be enhanced by extended school time including an emphasis on developing reading skills, small classroom size, transitional supports, significant communication and information technology programming and supports. The classroom-based curriculum is also enriched with cultural, recreational and summer programming.

In recognition of our particular context and time in history, GMS will integrate existing Manitoba provincial curricula and specific content recommended by bodies like the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. This process is ongoing and will involve community consultation and the involvement of stakeholders in the development and refinement of the school's curricular and educational goals. GMS will also inclusively integrate faith and spirituality content, practices and discussion into the school program.

Students enroll in the following classes: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education/Health Education and Arts Education, along with Indigenous studies and Basic French. Tables 1 and 2 below detail the Manitoba Education required subjects and suggested time allotments.

Table 1: Manitoba Education Middle Years Recommended Subject Area Time Allotments

Subject Areas		Grades 1 to 6	Grades 7 and 8
Compulsory	Language Arts (English)	35%	27%
	Mathematics	15%	17%
	Science	10%	13%
	Social studies	10%	13%
	Physical Education/Health education (mandated time)	11%	9%
	Arts Education	10%	8%
Optional	e.g., Basic French, other languages, Indigenous studies, etc.	9%	13%
Total		100%	100%

With respect to Physical Education/Health Education (PE/HE), the chart below (Table 2) shows the mandated minimum time allotments in percentages and minutes for PE/HE along with those times recommended for other subject areas. The figures provided are the number of minutes calculated per day and per a six-day cycle. The aim of all PE/HE instruction is to provide students with planned and balanced programming to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for physically active and healthy lifestyles (Manitoba Education, 2007, p. 3).

Table 2: Translation of K-8 Subject Area Time Allotments from Percentages to Minutes

Subject Areas	Grade 1 to 6			Grade 7 to 8		
	Percentage	Time/Day	6-Day Cycle	Percentage	Time/Day	6-Day Cycle
Language Arts (English)	35	105	630	27	89.1	534.6
Mathematics	15	45	270	17	56.1	336.6
Science	10	30	180	13	42.9	257.4
Social Studies	10	30	180	13	42.9	257.4
Physical Ed./Health Ed.	11	33	198	9	29.7	178.2
Arts (music, visual arts, drama, dance)	10	30	180	8	26.4	158.4
Optional	9	27	162	13	42.9	257.4
Totals	100	300	1800	100	330	1980

ACADEMIC GRADING:

Each teacher establishes a grading policy for each individual class and is expected to fully explain this policy at the start of the academic year. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the grading policy and requirements in a particular course. Should a student or parent wish to see or review a specific teacher's grading policy for a particular class, the teacher should be contacted.

The following general policies are in effect across the school:

PROGRESS REPORTS:

Report Cards are issued three times per year (November, March and June). They will indicate the academic and behavioural successes of each student.

STANDARDIZED TESTING:

Gonzaga Middle School will require its students to take standardized tests at times during their three year stay at GMS. Standardized tests help the administration and teachers measure student progress and identify areas where added attention is required. Standardized tests help identify student strengths and weaknesses and are incredibly helpful to GMS when it comes to program design. Some sample standardized tests include: Cat 5, MAPS, and possibly other numeracy and reading assessments. GMS also implements Grade 7 and 8 Manitoba Education provincially mandated assessments.

PROMOTION/RETENTION:

Gonzaga Middle School has high academic standards. The Administration and teachers at Gonzaga Middle school will recommend the grade level placement that best supports and extends student learning and learning needs.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FROM GRADE 8:

To be promoted into grade nine, students must successfully meet all the requirements outlined by Gonzaga Middle School and that of the Government of Manitoba.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Cheating and plagiarism (copying the work of others and passing it off as one's own) are forms of academic dishonesty which are inconsistent with Gonzaga Middle School principles. Students involved in copying others work or inappropriately providing material to others are held responsible. These are considered to be major academic offenses and are dealt with in accordance with guidelines set down by the administration. Students who are involved in such infractions, including violations of rules and policies established by both the administration and classroom teachers which are intended to curb such practices, are subject to significant academic and disciplinary consequences.

CARE OF MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Each student is provided with books for reading, library books, workbooks and textbooks and technology resources necessary for a successful learning experience. Each student must take responsibility for each of these items. Each must be handled with care by students to avoid damage or unreasonable wear. If the administration concludes that school property has been mishandled, lost or damaged by a student, then that student may be charged a fee to replace the item.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

Regular Awards: Students at Gonzaga Middle School are always encouraged to do their best in working toward their potential and becoming “Men and Women for Others.” They are constantly reminded to always live the values of Gonzaga’s mission and vision - in their work and in their play. As such, students are recognized at special school assemblies for displaying school values, servant leadership and reaching academic goals. Other awards and honours will be considered in consultation with students, teachers and families.

SCHOOL DAY

The school day at Gonzaga Middle School begins at 8:00 a.m. and normally ends at 4:45 p.m. each day. All students are required to be in attendance for the entire day and participation in all programming is mandatory. The day is highly structured as follows.

Gonzaga Middle School – Sample School Day

8:00 a.m. – 8:35 a.m.	Breakfast/Clean-up/Silent Reading
8:35 a.m. – 8:50 a.m.	Morning Assembly
8:50 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Instruction Time
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.	Instruction Time (Literacy)
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Brain Break/Snack
10:45 a.m. – 11:45 p.m.	Instruction Time (Numeracy)
11:45 p.m. – 12:10 p.m.	Lunch
12:10 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Clean-up//Movement Break
12:45 p.m. – 1:25 pm	Instruction Time
1.25 p.m. – 2:05 p.m.	Instruction Time
2:05 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Instruction Time
2:45 p.m. – 3:25 p.m.	Instruction Time
3:25 p.m. – 4:35 p.m.	Snack and Enrichment/Extra–Curricular Program
4:35 – 4:45 p.m.	Homeroom, Preparation for Dismissal
4:45 pm	Student Dismissal

Please note that students are dismissed every Friday at 3:30 pm.

Special Schedules

At times, throughout the year, there will be special schedules that promote social and emotional skills (such as grit, resiliency, tenacity or humour), or cultural and real-world knowledge. These days may involve field trips, field days, studies in nature, special projects and museum visits or arts events for example. As always, students are encouraged to share their ideas about how to make GMS a better place.

HOMEWORK

In general, students in Grade 6 and Grade seven will not be assigned homework but are expected to be reading at home. **When students begin Grade 8 they will be expected to do some homework more regularly.** This is to help them develop good habits for high school. Homework is not optional; it is a critical aspect of learning and attending school. Students are expected to take homework assignments seriously. If there are questions about the assignment or concerns about the amount of homework assigned, each student is encouraged to discuss this with their teacher. Parents are invited to review the student agenda for assignments daily to check on student progress.

If a student is absent, he/she is still expected to complete all missed schoolwork in a reasonable period of time after returning to school. Teachers will clarify homework policies to students in their courses. In most cases, students will be given one or two extra days to complete assignments missed while

absent. Teachers will make every effort to gather materials and write down assignments for an absent student. When possible, parents or guardians should make arrangements with teachers to come to the school to pick up assignments on the day the student is absent, or GMS will try to make arrangements for schoolwork to be delivered to the home.

In addition to homework specifically assigned by teachers, each Gonzaga Middle School Student is expected to read for at least 30 minutes each night to continue to improve literacy/reading skills.

SCHOOL YEAR

Participation in Gonzaga Middle School's year-round program helps to assure academic success. All current students **are required** to participate in the programs designed for their grade level. Acceptance into the next grade level at Gonzaga Middle School is dependent upon success in the required summer programs.

Summer Session/Leadership Camp

Gonzaga Middle School operates an extended school year. The extended school year serves a variety of purposes including: the elimination of learning gaps, access to enrichment, experiential learning and leadership opportunities for students. Please note:

- Summer programming is mandatory for all students and participation is agreed upon prior to acceptance to Gonzaga Middle School.
- Summer programming is also intended to prepare students for the program they will be entering.
- Summer programming will provide access to enrichment programs and provide a positive learning environment, leadership opportunities as well as structure and support for students and their families during the summer months.
- Report Cards will be distributed in June as per the traditional school year. The specifics of the summer programming will be announced in June of each school year.

GONZAGA MIDDLE SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT, BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

CODE OF CONDUCT AND FOUNDATIONAL CONDUCT PRINCIPLES

It shall be an express condition of enrollment that a Gonzaga student behaves in a manner at all times, both on and off campus, which is in agreement with conduct principles consistent with Gonzaga Middle School's Mission and Vision as determined by the school in its discretion.

It shall be an express condition of enrollment that the parents/guardians of a student shall also conform themselves to standards of conduct that are consistent with these principles of the school, as determined by the school in its discretion.

These **Gonzaga Middle School Foundational conduct principles** include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Parents/guardians are expected to work courteously and cooperatively with the school to assist the student in meeting the academic, moral, and behavioral expectations of the school.
2. Students and parents/guardians may respectfully express their concerns about the school operation and its personnel. However, they may not do so in a manner that is discourteous, scandalous, rumor driven, disruptive, threatening, hostile, or divisive.
3. These expectations for students and parents/guardians include, but are not limited to, all school-sponsored programs and events (e.g., extended day, family events, field trips, etc.).

The more detailed GMS Code of Conduct is published separately and all students, parents and staff must agree to abide by this Code of Conduct in writing each year. The school reserves the right to determine which behaviors are determined contrary to our Code of Conduct and to determine an appropriate consequence. The school reserves the right to determine, in its own discretion, when conduct is of such severe nature as to warrant immediate action without a warning and/or without an intermediate step short of withdrawal.

BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Gonzaga Middle school expects students to conduct themselves respectfully and help the school be the best it can be. Students are expected to treat all people with respect, honesty, and politeness. Students must respect the rights, property and feelings of others. Students must be truthful at all times. They must address staff, parents, guardians and all adult visitors to the school with friendliness, eye contact and a firm handshake (or alternative). Adults should be addressed by their title (Father, Mister, Misses, Ms., or Sir or Ma'am if the student is unsure of a visitor's name).

Gonzaga Middle School students will be able upon completion of ...

- **Grade 6** to define and practice habits that help themselves become more successful students and their classroom become a more successful classroom
- **Grade 7** to define and practice habits that help GMS become a better school
- **Grade 8** to define and practice habits that help their community become a better community

Student Discipline

The basis of discipline at GMS is the establishment of relationships based on care and respect. GMS strives to create a school culture of individual care and concern for each student – where students feel they are known and cared for by their teachers, where they feel respected and where they learn to respect themselves and others and learn a sense of responsibility for serving their community.

Ideally, each student should be self-disciplined and not externally disciplined. Self-discipline is developed gradually in a context of a supportive, caring, reinforcing, positive learning environment. The student must be free to choose one form of behavior or another and to take upon himself/herself the consequences of that chosen action. Respect, order and self-control are an outgrowth of good teaching at home and at school. A self-disciplined child is one who takes responsibility for their actions and has control over them. A child first learns self-discipline at home.

GMS staff maintain good order and discipline at all times: in the classroom, on school grounds, and at all school events. Ultimately, students are taught to adhere to the “golden rule” given to us by Jesus: **“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”** Discipline in Gonzaga Middle School is to be considered an aspect of moral guidance and not a form of punishment. Inevitably young people

make mistakes and errors in judgement. Students who experience consistent, logical and realistic consequences learn that they themselves have positive control over their lives. The purpose of discipline is to promote student growth, to increase a sense of awareness and sensitivity for others, to assist in the growth of inner self-discipline and to provide an environment conducive to learning.

Unacceptable Behaviours

Unacceptable behavior is that which harms the school's learning environment and will not be tolerated.

This type of behavior includes:

- Rudeness, including obscene or racist language
- Dress code violations
- Unexcused tardiness
- Disruption of class time
- Rough or dangerous conduct
- Wearing make-up
- Lying
- Bringing personal items to school ex: iPods, cell phones, toys etc.
- Possession of inappropriate items: pictures, drawings, books, clothing etc. that do not promote values consistent with the GMS Mission and Vision

Borderline Behaviours

Borderline behaviours include actions that are more serious in nature and will result in more serious consequences for a student. Borderline behaviours include:

- Threatening, fighting or bullying others
- Extreme rudeness
- Possessing a weapon
- Stealing
- Serious disrespect for others
- Destruction of school property
- Make-up
- Leaving school property or school events without permission
- Piercings
- Leaving school without permission
- Skipping school
- Academic dishonesty (cheating)
- Pulling fire alarms
- Displaying gang colours or gang affiliation
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Selling drugs or alcohol
- Possession of tobacco other than for ceremonial purposes

Expectations for All Students:

If students:

- Are being respectful of themselves, their classmates, their teachers and others in the school
- Follow directions and
- Participate productively

they help achieve positive and productive personal, classroom, school and community goals.

Progressive Discipline:

Step 1: If a student is having difficulty living up to GMS's behavioural expectations: if a student struggles to be respectful of classmates, teachers or others; if they struggle to follow directions; or if they act in a way unbecoming of a GMS student, they will be asked to correct the problem. A student may, at an appropriate time, approach a teacher or other appropriate staff member and request assistance with problem solving, conflict resolution, or any struggle to positively focus on the tasks at hand. This can be done before or after class or from the administration or staff member who checks them in or out of the building. During class, a student may raise their hand and request assistance. Correcting a problem may involve a teacher requesting a student to:

- Correct a behaviour
- Separate themselves from a situation
- Speak with them at a time designated by the teacher
- Write a reflection regarding the problem
- Take some other appropriate action

Step 2: If a student chooses not to correct the problem or has become overly disruptive to other students and/or the educational process, they may be asked to report to the Front Office and meet with the Principal. Addressing the problem may include the following:

- **Time-Out:** If the incident happened in the classroom a Time-Out process is initiated where the student may be asked to reflect on what happened and their current behaviour and motivations – in writing. The student will be asked to review these reflections with the Principal and develop a written plan to address the problem. In addition, the student may not return to class until they are able to speak with the teacher about the incident and share their plans for positive involvement in the educational process.
- The teacher or Principal will ordinarily call the student's family to inform them that the student has missed class time and that they need significant encouragement from home to make better choices in the future.
- A student who has been given a Time-Out is also responsible for making up any work that they missed while out of class.
- **After Class Reflection and Service Work:** If the problem or incident occurs inside or outside of class, the student may alternatively be asked to meet with the teacher, a member of the Student Support Team or the Principal after classes end, be asked to reflect on their behaviour, write an apology, be asked to develop a plan for more positive involvement and contribution to the educational process or the school community. They may also be asked to provide some service work in support of the classroom or school to make restitution; that is, the student agrees to help the teacher or Principal with some classroom or schoolwork in order to demonstrate a willingness to help make the class or school a better place. Depending on the situation, the teacher or Principal may also make contact with home and ask for additional encouragement from home.

Step 3: In-School Suspension: In the event that a student causes a *second severe disruption in the same day*, makes aggressive physical contact (such as pushing, hitting, kicking and so on) or demonstrates some other *borderline behaviour*, the student will ordinarily meet with the Principal who may then suspend the student. An individualized plan of remediation is ordinarily developed and a meeting with family is required before a student returns to classes and normal activities.

Out-of-School Suspension: Alternatively, the Principal may decide the situation requires the student leave the school for the remainder of the day. The family will be called and asked to come to school to pick up the student immediately. The next day the student reports to the Principal before being admitted to school. An individualized plan of remediation is required before the student may return to classes and normal activities.

These progressive discipline steps are designed to help students make better behavioural choices, both for themselves and the good of fellow students. These steps are applied on a case-by-case basis as determined by the staff and school administration. These discipline steps may be imposed progressively or simultaneously as the situation warrants.

APPEAL PROCESS

In the event of the need to appeal a disciplinary consequence, students and parent/guardians should first try to resolve the issue with the teacher or staff member involved. If the matter cannot be resolved then an appeal can be made to the Principal who will try to assist in mediating an agreement. If mediation does not result in an agreement then the student and parent/guardians can appeal directly to the Principal. A final appeal, only in very rare circumstances, can be made to the Executive Director as Head of School and the Board's representative. In this case, a written appeal is made to the Executive Director who determines if a final meeting and decision is warranted.

ANTI-HARASSMENT/ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Gonzaga Middle School is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from harassment in any form. Harassment or bullying of any student by any other student, parent, teacher, employee or volunteer is prohibited. The school will treat allegations of harassment and bullying seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. This section of the handbook summarizes the more detailed *GMS Respectful Work and Learning Environment Policy* which is available upon request.

A charge of harassment or bullying shall not, in and of itself, create the presumption of wrongdoing. However, substantiated acts of harassment or bullying will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Students found to have filed false or frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Harassment is defined under human rights law and the *Manitoba Workplace Health and Safety Act* as a course of offensive and unwelcome conduct or comment or display by a person that is directed at a person, made on the basis of ancestry, including colour or perceived race, ethnic background or national origin, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, age, marital or family status, disability, physical size or weight, age, and political belief or activity and which constitutes a threat to the health or safety of the person.

GMS more broadly defines harassment to include any objectionable conduct, comment or display made based on factors other than those referred to in the above definition. This broader definition of harassment, termed personal harassment, consists of any behaviours or actions that abuse or humiliate individuals, interfere with their performance or create an intimidating or hostile work or learning environment. It may include comments, verbal abuse, and unwelcome gestures, actions that invade privacy or personal property, spreading rumours or deliberately spreading misinformation.

Bullying, in the form of persistent criticism, name-calling or insults is a common type of personal harassment and can be any expression or action that would intentionally hurt someone on the inside or outside. It also means leaving people out. Bullying is deliberately – typically repeatedly – attempting to hurt, either physically or emotionally, another person where the aggressor derives gratification. It may be direct (face to face) or indirect (through others); it may take place through any form of expression, including written, verbal, physical, or any form of electronic communication.

Bullying or harassing others is harmful and hurtful. Staff and students have the right to come to school and be safe. Bullying, harassing or abusing physically, sexually, or psychologically - orally, in writing or otherwise - any person is unacceptable.

Harassment or bullying can occur any time during school hours, during school related activities or through electronic media at school or at home. They may include but are not limited to any or all of the following:

- **Physical** – such as unwanted physical touching or contact, slapping, tripping, hitting, choking, poking, punching, pinching, kicking, scratching, spitting, defacing property, physical acts or gestures that are embarrassing, locking in and out of space, assault or physical violence, threatening with a weapon, or inflicting bodily harm.
- **Verbal** - such as name calling, gossiping or embarrassing another, spreading rumors, ethnic slurs, setting up to take blame, taunting, teasing, derogatory comments and jokes, threatening phone calls, threats of violence against family or friends in person or through any electronic communication means.
- **Social/Relational** – actions or behaviours such as rejection, exclusion, manipulating, social order, setting up to humiliate in person or through the use of technology or any electronic communication means.
- **Sexual** - unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature such as comments about a person's body or attire, staring or ogling, inappropriate physical contact.
- **Cyber-bullying** - the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, text messages, instant messaging (IM), defamatory personal web sites, social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) and defamatory online personal polling Web sites, to send or post offensive material (including words, pictures, or images) to defame others or support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that results in harm to others. Serious incidents may be turned over to law enforcement authorities for prosecution. **Community members who feel they have been the victims of cyber-bullying should save or print a copy of the material and immediately report the incident to the school administration.**

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS AND PROCEDURES

All students at Gonzaga Middle School are required to comply with all rules and regulations found in this Student Handbook. The school expects its students to reside with parents(s) or an approved guardian(s) while enrolled at Gonzaga Middle School.

BUS POLICY

Students must be outside waiting for the bus. If the bus arrives early at your stop it will wait until the scheduled time for that stop. If your child is not outside waiting for the bus, it will only wait 1 minute. Please be patient for the bus when the weather changes as it can delay the run. For those students who get dropped off or walk, the school will not be open until 7:45 a.m.

****Please note the bus schedule is subject to change, but we will notify you if it does****

Parents/Guardians responsibilities:

- Reminding your child about acceptable behaviour and safety.
- Ensuring that your child is suitably clothed to withstand weather extremes, taking special care during very cold weather to ensure that he/she is properly cared for until the bus arrives.
- Seeing that your child gets to the pick-up point on time and behaves in a responsible manner at the bus stop.
- Providing for alternate arrangements for your child in the event a bus does not arrive or is late due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Co-operating with the school in correcting your child's behavior following reports of misbehaviour on the bus.

Students' responsibilities:

- Cell phones or other electronic devices may not be used on the bus.
- Getting to the bus stop on time.
- Behaving in a responsible manner at the bus stop, on the bus, and during loading and unloading.
- Following the instructions of the driver.

Safety:

- Students should remain at least 2 metres from the curb until the bus is stopped and the loading door opened. Loading and unloading should be conducted in an orderly and safe manner.
- Safe behaviour on the bus requires that students remain seated and quiet. Disruptive behaviour causes the driver distraction and creates a safety hazard.

Bus cancellation information

During the school year there may be times when school bus transportation is cancelled due to inclement weather or poor driving conditions, but **the school will remain open**.

School bus transportation for all schools in the City of Winnipeg is cancelled when the wind chill reaches -45 C by 6:15 a.m. based on the Environment Canada readings at the Forks. The temperature readings

can be found at the Environment Canada website (<http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca>). Announcements will be made on local radio and television stations if buses are cancelled for Gonzaga.

Severe weather conditions and poor roads may extend the running time of some buses, resulting in late arrival and departure. Parents/guardians should make sure that children are suitably clothed until picked up and that they have a place to go in the event the bus does not arrive. Parents/guardians must also ensure that children have a place to go after the return trip.

STUDENT SERVICES AND GRADUATE SUPPORT PROGRAM

While GMS students are in Grades 6-8, encouragement of regular attendance and provision of additional supports within the available resources of GMS are the responsibility of the Student and Graduate Support Director. Parents should expect regular contact from the Student and Graduate Support Director if their child is absent or in need of additional support.

The Graduate Support Program is one of the most unique aspects of a Gonzaga Middle School education. Through this program, GMS makes an extended commitment to students and families beyond grade eight.

ATTENDANCE

All students are expected to be present at school each day and to be on time for their scheduled bus pick-up times. This is essential if the student is to derive the full benefit of their education at Gonzaga Middle School.

All routine matters concerning attendance and monitoring thereof are handled through the Office Manager. Cases of non-routine nature will be referred to the Student and Graduate Support Director. If it is expected that a student will be absent for a prolonged period, the parent or guardian must immediately contact the Front Office to explain the situation. In the case of prolonged absences for medical reasons, the school will assist the family in designing a homework plan to aid academic success. Parents are expected to meet with the Student and Graduate Support Director for any anticipated absences of more than three days.

GMS will strive to achieve a 95% attendance rate as a school and for each student.

Daily Check-In

Each day upon arrival all students must check in with an administrator or teacher.

Students should arrive by 8:00 am for breakfast. Attendance is taken at 8:15 a.m. daily. Students may arrive as early as 7:45 a.m., but not before - as no student supervision is available. Any student arriving at school after 8:15 a.m. is tardy or late.

Unexcused Absences

Students and parents are expected to observe the published Gonzaga Middle School calendar in matters of vacations and days off from school. In the event that a student is taken out of school for personal reasons, the parents and student must assume full responsibility for this action and for the academic consequences that may result.

Office Procedure for Absences or Lates

If your child is absent from school or late for school, please follow these procedures:

1. **The parent or guardian is to contact the Front Office at 204-949-7100 and/or leave a message prior to 8:15 am.**
2. If a student is absent for multiple days a call must be placed each day.

Failure to comply with any of the regulations concerning absences and/or lates may result in disciplinary actions. In the case of questionable or non-health related absences, the administration may investigate and if necessary, will ask public authorities to become involved.

Medical, Dental and Special Appointments

If students must attend medical or dental or other special appointments during school hours, the student must present a note from their parent/guardian requesting that the student be dismissed from school for the appointment. The time of the appointment, name of doctor and phone number is to be clearly stated. This note is to be presented to the Front Office before 8:15 a.m. on the day of the appointment.

Dismissal

The school day ends at **4:45 p.m. daily** (except Friday when dismissal will take place at 3:30 p.m.) and transportation home will start at this time.

TELEPHONE MESSAGES

Telephone messages can be delivered to a student while at school; however students and parents are asked to use discretion when using the school phones in this way. Parents, guardians and other persons are asked to cooperate in this regard. Parents should not expect to contact their child by cell phone during the day.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER

The Main Office of the school is to be notified immediately of any change of address and/or change of phone number of each student's parent or guardian. This is essential in order to keep school records accurate and in order to be able to contact the parents or guardians in the event of an emergency.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE / DRESS CODE AND UNIFORM DRESS

Students are required to wear their school provided clothing every day at Gonzaga Middle School. This rule will be enforced by staff and faculty. Modifications to the uniform and dress code will be considered by the Administration if appropriate for cultural or religious reasons. Such requests should be presented to the Principal in writing. If there is a dress code violation, disciplinary actions may be enforced.

School Regular Uniform:

- Khaki or navy pants or skort
- jersey knit golf shirt with GMS embroidery (navy or grey)
- jersey knit long sleeved golf shirt (navy)
- dress uniform includes navy tights, navy skort or navy pants & light blue dress shirt
- black, white or navy socks if wearing pants, or navy tights if wearing the skort
- solid black flat shoes or school approved black or white runners while at school*

***Student is to supply black flat shoes (or black or white runners), non-marking soled gym runners (to be kept at school) and a black belt.**

P.E. Uniform:

- Physical education classes will be held regularly at GMS. All students are required to change into GMS gym clothing prior to P.E. class:
- Grey, or Gonzaga blue Gonzaga Middle School t-shirt
- Grey/Navy sweatpants or shorts
- Approved non-marking white-soled runners (provided by family)

Notes on Uniform

- Only solid white t-shirts may be worn under the uniform shirt
- Shirts must be tucked in for formal events or dress days or when requested. They may be left untucked except when asked to be tucked in by the Principal.
- Holes in uniforms should be repaired immediately

Grooming

- Students should be neat and clean at all times
- Hair should not cover the student's eyes
- Any form of dress or hairstyle that is extreme will not be permitted

Not Allowed

The following items are not to be worn at school:

- sandals
- platform, high heeled, open-toed, slip-on or backless shoes
- excessive jewelry (one necklace, bracelet or ring is allowed – must be removed for P.E. class)
One stud earring/ear is allowed; no multiple piercings
- make-up of any kind or fake nails
- hats inside the building
- perfume, cologne, scented body spray, scented lotion
- gang related jewelry, gang related manner of wearing clothes or shoes
- t-shirts with inappropriate slogans or pictures or sleeveless/muscle shirts

ELECTRONICS/CELL PHONE POLICY

In agreement with the Province of Manitoba's ban on cell phones in schools, we have a **No Cell Phone Use Policy** at Gonzaga Middle School to protect the privacy and safety of all children and adults in the building. Students are not to bring electronics of any kind to the school, or on to the bus, including personal music/video players like cell phones, MP3 players, iPods, iPads, CD players, smart watches, radios, digital cameras, and/or tape recorders. **Any electronic devices, including cell phones and**

smart watches that are brought to school MUST be turned into the office for safe keeping. Many of these devices, particularly cell phones and smart watches, can send e-mails and text messages as well as video recordings to other users and personal computers and may be used inappropriately. They can also distract students from learning.

This policy is in place to enable students to focus on their learning and to reduce the possibility of cyber-bullying. Confiscated electronics will be sent to the Front Office and will be returned at the discretion of the Principal. If your child requires an exception to support medical needs, please contact the Principal.

WATER BOTTLES

Water bottles are provided by the school. Students are allowed to have water bottles at their desks with teacher consent.

RESPECT FOR PROPERTY

Students are responsible for their own property. The school will not be responsible for loss of any articles belonging to the student. Theft of any kind is not acceptable. Students taking another's property or school property will be held responsible and liable to disciplinary consequences up to and including dismissal.

Any student damaging, defacing, destroying or removing school property from the school is liable for repair or replacement of the property, in addition to any other disciplinary sanction determined by the Principal.

TEXTBOOKS, SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND LOCKERS

At the start of the school year, GMS will provide all students with school supplies, a student agenda, and textbooks. Students are expected to respect school supplies and textbooks as they should all GMS property and equipment. All materials should be kept in a neat and orderly fashion in the classroom or locker.

All students are issued a locker to store their jackets, school bags and other supplies. Lockers are the property of GMS and are subject to inspection at any time. Lockers should be kept neat and orderly. With the exception of jackets and school bags, only GMS issued supplies should be kept in student lockers and classrooms.

FIELD TRIPS

Student participation on field trips is a privilege, not a right. A student could be denied participation if they fail to meet behavioral or academic requirements. A parent also has the right to refuse to let their child go on a trip.

COMPUTER AND INTERNET USAGE

Computers are available for student use on campus and most have access to the internet. Student laptops remain the property of the school until after Grade 8 graduation. To access the internet and computers on campus, a student must obtain school and parent consent by completing the ***Gonzaga Middle School: Acceptable Computer Use Policy Agreement*** upon registration.

It is essential for each student on the network to recognize their responsibility in having access to vast services, sites, systems, and people. The student is ultimately responsible for their actions in accessing network services. The use of the internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in

a cancellation of those privileges. All use of the internet must be in support of education and research and consistent with the mission statements of Gonzaga Middle School. The following list is a general guideline for student use of the internet:

- Students will use school accounts only under supervision and for authorized purposes.
- Students will not use the network to access or process inappropriate information and/or text files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the network.
- Students will report all incidents of accessing inappropriate material.

Students are strictly prohibited from using Gonzaga Middle School's name, initials, logos, pictures, or representations of the faculty, staff, or other individuals that, in the determination of the school administration, is degrading, lewd, threatening or inappropriate. Deliberate publication or posting of inappropriate material on the internet may result in serious disciplinary action including dismissal from the school. Illegal downloading on a school computer will result in the student losing the privilege of using computers and the internet on campus. Students must also always adhere to the cyberbullying policy.

PERMISSION TO USE STUDENT PHOTOS/VIDEOS

Upon registration, parents/guardians are asked to complete a consent form giving Gonzaga Middle School permission to periodically take photos/videos of students on campus or when participating in school sponsored activities for use on the official school website, social media or in school publications. The school reserves the right to use any and all photos.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent-Teacher Communication:

Parent-teacher communication is an important factor in your child's education and is essential for encouraging students to do their best academically and behaviourally. **It is important to stay in touch with your child's teachers.** Teachers and staff welcome parent/guardian communications (phone calls, emails, notes, etc.). If a parent/guardian has a concern about student progress, homework, behaviour or anything else, the parent/guardian is encouraged to contact the student's teacher right away. We encourage parents/guardians to schedule conversations with teachers/administrators about your child's performance. In this way, student issues may be resolved quickly, thus allowing the student to continue to progress.

Likewise, teachers are expected to inform the parent/guardians of student progress (or lack of progress) as appropriate. In this way, student issues can be resolved through the collaboration of home and school.

To keep you up to date on what is happening, a school calendar will be given to each family.

Your observations at home are as important as teaching observations when it comes to your child's education. Be sure to let the teacher know about special occasions in your family or any changes that take place in your child's life (birth, death, marriage, separation or divorce, etc.).

While the resources within the school are excellent, there are occasions when the school suggests that a child have additional help, e.g., an evaluation (learning, psychological, speech/language, neurological, etc.). These suggestions are usually made by the Teacher, Intervention Specialist Teacher, Support Director or the Principal after consultation and after discussions with the family.

Parent cooperation is essential in a child's education. Current research shows that the more parents are involved in the educational process of their son/daughter, the better their child performs. **Parental involvement includes:**

- Attendance at the Parent-Teacher-Student conferences
- Showing interest and checking in homework assignments
- Encourage 30 minutes of nightly reading by son/daughter
- Participating in school events
- Responding to communication made by the school
- Participating in mandatory Parent Meetings
- Contributing monthly participation fees
- Volunteering in the school
- Recruiting new families to Gonzaga Middle School

Monthly Participation Fees:

Each family is expected to make a financial contribution to their child's education at Gonzaga Middle School. The monthly fee of \$50.00 paid by each family will be reviewed annually by the school administration. **If a family faces particular hardship in paying the monthly participation fees, communication with the school administration is expected.** The family should contact the Front Office. If necessary, a meeting with the school administration will be scheduled to discuss an alternative plan for monthly participation.

A cheque is the preferred method of payment for monthly participation fees. Cheques can be made out to Gonzaga Middle School and submitted to the Office Manager.

If a family pays in cash, there are certain safeguards in place to ensure safe handling of cash. Cash payments should be made directly to the Office Manager. In case of an emergency, cash payments can be made to the Principal or the Executive Director. No other school personnel are authorized to receive cash.

Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences:

Parents are always welcome to call the school to make an appointment with a teacher at any time during the year. There are two (2) scheduled mandatory parent/teacher/student conferences each school year. These are scheduled: (a) at the end of the first grading period, and (b) at the conclusion of the second grading period.

These conferences allow the teachers, parents and students to review the report card together. This communication between parents, students and teachers is very helpful in setting a climate for cooperation between home and school and in letting the children know that parents are interested and actively concerned about their school life. Parents should regularly convey the value of education to their children. Parents and students must attend all parent/teacher/student conferences. In some cases, parents and students will be required to come for specific conferences regarding student academic or behavioral progress.

Conflict Management:

If there is any difference of opinion between a teacher and a parent, we encourage parents to communicate with the Principal about the issue. It is our school procedure that any such occasion must

first be dealt with in a meeting between the parent and the teacher. Gonzaga Middle School encourages faculty and parents to resolve concerns and issues at the lowest level possible. For example, parents should first bring the concern directly to the teacher for a discussion. Then, if necessary, the Principal should be consulted to help facilitate the discussion.

Parent/teacher meetings may be set up by telephone, letter or email. If the parent-teacher meeting has proven unsatisfactory, an appointment may be made with the Principal to further discuss the problem.

Parent/Community Council

Gonzaga Middle School will be planning parent meetings that will meet regularly with the Principal. Meetings will be announced in the monthly calendar updates. All Gonzaga Middle School parents/guardians and family caregivers (such as Grandmas) are invited and encouraged to attend on a regular or casual basis.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Closed Campus

Students are to remain on the campus or in adult supervision off-campus as required for school-sponsored field trips or activities from 8:00 a.m. until 4:45 p.m. Monday – Thursday and 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 on Fridays.

Visitors on Campus

Visitors must report to the Front Office upon arriving at the school. Parents who come to school must check in at the office and sign in. They may not go into a classroom unless they are accompanied by a staff member.

Each teacher and staff member at GMS has limited preparation time during the school day because of their extensive teaching, coaching, moderating, tutoring and administrative responsibilities. Parents/guardians are encouraged to schedule meetings with teachers or other staff by phone or email before visiting the school.

Contagious Disease

Students whose absence from school is due to a contagious disease (e.g., COVID, measles, chicken pox etc.) may be asked to provide the school with a doctor's note before returning to the classroom, certifying they are able to return to school.

Illness

If a child has a stomach flu, sore throat, earache, nasal discharge, skin rash, eye infection or elevated temperature of 38 C (99.6 F) or above, the child should be kept at home. If a child becomes ill during the school day, parents/guardians will be contacted at home or work. Parents/guardians are responsible to have their child picked up and taken home. The child will not be dismissed without an authorized adult to accompany him/her home. In no case should a student merely leave the campus if he/she becomes ill without reporting to the Front Office. Students are responsible for work missed in classes that day.

Immunizations

The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority will provide student immunization to students as needed. The school will help facilitate the delivery of these immunizations with the school public health nurse.

Student Health

The school administration should be made aware of any medical, physical or emotional problems a student that may have that in any way could affect their performance in school or school activities. Written notification to the administration must be made prior to the first day of school each year. Prior notification to school administration concerning such matters, even though they may appear minor, can prevent possible misunderstandings at a later time.

School Exclusion

The following diseases require exclusion from school: COVID, scabies, swine flu, chicken pox (until scabs are fully crusted), German measles (seven days after appearance of rash), and mumps (nine days and until all swelling is gone); others upon recommendation of public health officials.

Emergency Forms

It is of absolute importance that we have an emergency form on file for each family. The emergency forms should be filled out before the first day of school. **If any information on this form changes during the year, the office should be notified, in writing, immediately.** It is extremely important that the school be able to easily and quickly reach at least one parent or guardian at any time during the school day.

If a student becomes ill or is the victim of an accident during the school day, the Principal, Acting Principal, Office Manager, or Teacher will contact the parent or person indicated on the family's emergency form. If the parent, family physician, or the adult listed on the emergency form cannot be reached, the paramedics will be contacted and the matter will be put into their hands.

Child Custody

Divorced or separated parents must file a court-certified copy of the custody section of the divorce or separation decree with the Principal's office. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honour arrangements that have not been made known.

Student Medication Policy

When medication is needed by students during school hours, students may bring the necessary medication to the Office Manager with a note from their parent indicating permission to take this medication. The medication must be in the original container, appropriately labeled with the name of the student/child and dosage. Any change in medication should be communicated to the school at once. A Student Medication Administration request form must be filled out and returned to the office.

Student Medical Emergency

When a student experiences a medical emergency at school we will make contact with parents/guardians and emergency contacts if parents/guardians cannot be reached. If no one can be reached, the school will take the appropriate actions.

Statement on Child Abuse

Provincial law requires that all school employees report disclosure of child abuse and are responsible to report suspected occurrences of child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. In any investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect, all persons participating in the investigation of the case shall consider the needs of the child victim and shall do whatever is necessary to prevent psychological harm to the child victim.

Gonzaga Middle School will hold periodic professional discussions about the topic of child abuse, and our administration and student support staff are very aware of the many issues related to child neglect and abuse and the applicable laws.

Teachers and school employees are required by law to refer to Social Services and the Winnipeg Police Service any situation in which there seems to be “reasonable suspicion” of such abuse or neglect. This law exists to protect children.

Food/Nutrition Programs

Gonzaga Middle School will serve nutritionally balanced snacks and meals daily in accordance with our Nutrition Policy. Breakfast is served each morning from 8:00 a.m. until 8:25 a.m. The breakfast service will end at 8:25a.m. and students who have been served will have until 8:35 a.m. to finish their breakfast. The daily assembly starts at 8:35 a.m. Snacks are served daily in the morning, and in the afternoon.

Gonzaga Middle School will serve a full lunch each day. If a student has special dietary needs, parents are asked to indicate the request in writing to the Principal at the beginning of the year and every effort will be made to accommodate special cases. **Students are not allowed to bring their own food to school for breakfast, lunch and snacks and cannot “opt out” of the nutrition program.**

Life Threatening Allergies/Nut Policy

Students with severe allergies are initially identified by parents/guardians through the school registration form. Students that have life threatening allergies require a health care plan. The school must be provided with any Epi-Pens or medications that are required in the event of an emergency. They must be clearly labeled with the child’s prescription and doctor’s instructions.

Normally students are not allowed to bring their own food to school for breakfast, lunch or snacks. In the event permission to bring in food is given for special events, please ensure it does not contain nuts.

Counselling

In an attempt to meet the needs of all students, GMS will at times engage counselling services to be provided at the school. In the event we are unable to meet the needs of a student the services of outside counseling agencies will be sought. This will be done in consultation with the parent or guardian through the Student and Graduate Support Director.

Fire and Evacuation Drills

Signs are posted in each classroom to indicate the proper fire evacuation exit for that particular classroom. Students are to follow the directions indicated on these signs and also the directions given by the teacher in charge. Silence is to be observed during the entire time of the exercise, both leaving the classroom and returning. Regular fire drills will be scheduled. Other security drills will also be

scheduled. In the event of the need to evacuate the school building, the school will shelter in the Immaculate Conception Church Hall (the basement of the church) on Austin Street.

Parking

Gonzaga Middle School has a limited number of parking spots on school grounds and these are taken by faculty and staff. When visiting the school we ask that you respect the reserved teacher spots. Please park on the street and respect all bus stop areas.

Also, please **do not** take up the spots designated for staff or park in the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic parish lot on the west side of the block.

Volunteers

Volunteers are welcome at Gonzaga Middle School. Parents who are interested in volunteering at Gonzaga Middle School are encouraged to speak with the Student and Graduate Support Director or Office Manager.

All volunteers (and staff) who will work independently with students in all schools and youth programs are required to undergo **Safe School training**, a **criminal record check** and a **Child Abuse Registry check**. This is to ensure the safety of all students and young people, a goal that has the highest priority at Gonzaga Middle School.

Please contact the Office Manager or Director of Student and Graduate Support for assistance with completing these requirements.

GMS expects to fortunately have volunteers from the community and city at large who will support many students and programs.