



Member Handbook

2024-2025



Greater Brunswick Charter School
429 Joyce Kilmer Avenue
New Brunswick NJ 08901

Phone: (732) 448-1052

Fax: (732) 448-1055

<http://greaterbrunswick.org>

Established 1998

Revised 8/29/2024

Table of Contents

Mission Statement5

Vision Statement.....5

Dual Language Program6

School Calendar 2024-20257

General Information8

 Contact Information.....8

Administrative Staff9

 Executive Director9

 Education Director.....9

 Assistant Education Director9

 School Business Administrator.....9

 Assistant to the Business Administrator9

 Executive Secretary9

 Family Coordinator.....10

 Receptionist10

Support Staff.....10

 School Nurse.....10

 School Social Worker10

 Custodians10

 Technology Specialist.....10

 Instructional Coach - Literacy10

 Instructional Coach - Mathematics10

Teaching Staff11

 Teachers.....11

 Teaching Assistants11

 Special Education Teachers11

 Success Program Instructors.....11

 English Language Learner Instructors11

Hours12

 Breakfast.....12

 Arrival.....12

 Morning Drop Off12

 Dismissal13

 Pick-up at Dismissal:13

 Pick-up after Enrichment Clusters and After School Academy:13

Attendance14

Absences.....	14
Tardiness.....	15
Unexcused Absences or Tardiness	15
Vacations	16
Permission to Leave School Early	16
School Closings/Early Dismissal.....	17
Delayed Openings.....	17
Early Closings (1:35pm).....	17
Transportation.....	18
GBCS Bus Expectations	19
Lunches and Snacks.....	20
Wellness Policy – Healthy Foods	20
Student Records.....	21
If You Move	21
Health Services	22
Health Screening.....	22
Immunization Requirements.....	22
Communicable/Infectious Diseases	22
Special Health Needs.....	22
Medication	23
Emergency Contact Information.....	23
Academic Program	24
Our Mission	24
Constructivism.....	24
Greater Brunswick Curriculum.....	24
Personal Education Plan (PEP).....	25
Progress Summaries	25
Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences	25
Standardized Testing	25
Homework	26
Computer/Technology Policy	26
Field Trips	26
Textbooks	26
Support Services	26
Special Education	27
The Success Program.....	27
Guidance and Student Counseling.....	27
Physical Education/Recess	27
After-School Academy	28

Conduct and Discipline29

 Positive Discipline29

 GBCS Code of Conduct.....29

 Discipline and Suspension Policy.....30

 Level 1 Incidents31

 Level 2 Incidents31

 Level 3 Incidents32

 Suspensions32

 Expulsions32

 Sexual Harassment Policy33

 Weapons Policy33

 Bullying Policy33

 Dress Code.....33

 Prohibited Items.....35

School Governance.....36

 General Membership36

 Board of Trustees.....36

 Board Meetings.....37

 Committees37

 School Review Committee37

 Development and Community Outreach Committee.....37

 Finance and Facilities Committee.....37

Miscellaneous38

 Lost and Found38

 Student Photo and Videotaping38

Greater Brunswick Charter School

2024-2025

The Greater Brunswick Charter School is a public school of choice, as defined by New Jersey state charter school laws. The school opened in September 1998, and enrollment for 2024-2025 is anticipated to be 398 students in grades K through 8. It is a regional school district serving New Brunswick, Edison, and Highland Park.

The Greater Brunswick Charter School is defined by the broad themes of child-directed learning in the vein of constructivism, parental and community involvement, Project Based Learning, and Positive Discipline. GBCS began a Dual Language program in 2011, developing bilingual and bi-literate students. It currently serves students in grades K-5.

GBCS is passionately committed to creating and operating a diverse learning community to educate the whole child. We incorporate each child's interests and talents in their personal education plans. We are devoted to working together - students, families/sponsors, and teachers - to create a school that nurtures individuality, mutual respect, cooperation and social involvement, develops the critical thinker in all of us and fosters a lifelong love of learning.

There are three pillars upon which the Charter School has been built.

- **Children direct their own education.**
- **Students, staff, and families/sponsors create a learning community.**
- **The Charter School builds civility, community, and democracy.**

Mission Statement

To provide our students with an education of the highest standards that incorporates their individual interests and learning styles, and nurtures their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical well-being within a learning community; and to share our best practices with other schools and educators.

Vision Statement

To be a community focused public school where students demonstrate a passion for learning, strong academic and social skills, independence and self-direction, confidence, and responsibility for their education, school, family, and community.

Greater Brunswick Charter School

The Greater Brunswick Charter School was founded in 1998 by parents, teachers, and children who dreamed of a public school that would be a true learning community, and in which all students could achieve their best both academically and socially. GBCS is a living testament that by working together we can make dreams come true. The students, families, and staff of the Greater Brunswick Charter School are passionately committed to creating a school that educates the whole child — a school where all families feel valued and welcome. Our school is built on the principles that children must learn to direct their own education, and that they must develop the values of personal responsibility, integrity, interdependence, and cooperation to become good citizens and community leaders.

Dual Language Program

What is a Dual Language Program?

Dual language education programs integrate native English speaking students with native Spanish speaking students for academic instruction, which is presented in both languages. Social and academic learning occurs in an environment that values the language and culture of all students and sets high standards to ultimately achieve academic success in Spanish and English.

Classrooms are composed of native English speakers and native Spanish speakers. The language used for instruction is also broken down by a 50/50 ratio. Fifty percent of classroom instruction is provided in English and fifty percent of classroom instruction is provided in Spanish. The goal is for all students to read, write, listen, and speak two languages equally well by the end of the program.

The dual language model creates an additive bilingual environment, which allows students to acquire a second language while maintaining and developing their native language. The curriculum of the program is the same as in the general education program. All academic areas: reading, language arts, math, science, and social science, are taught in both Spanish and English.

The diversity at Greater Brunswick Charter School provides an ideal platform for all students to have the opportunity to learn and develop a second language. Through the dual language program, students are exposed to rigorous curriculum while also having the opportunity to learn a second language.

What are the Goals of the Dual Language Program?

One of our goals at Greater Brunswick Charter School is “To prepare all students to become productive, responsible and contributing members of our changing global society by providing a nurturing environment that rigorously promotes the realization of individual potential.” Students in the dual language program are presented with the social and cognitive benefits of bilingualism. They gain a second language, a broader vocabulary, and multiple views of the world, (Cazabon, Lambert, & Heise-Baigorria, 2002). In order to acquire these benefits, the program sets out to accomplish the following goals:

- Develop high levels of proficiency in Spanish and English
- Achieve grade level academic performance in Spanish and English
- Develop children who will be more competitive in the global economy
- Take advantage of the optimal window of learning a second language during the primary years
- Give students an upper edge in high school, college, and the workplace
- Develop bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism
- Develop positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors



SCHOOL CALENDAR 2024-2025 Adopted 5/9/24

September - 20 Days				
M	T	W	Th	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

October - 22 Days				
M	T	W	Th	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

November - 17 Days				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

December - 15 Days				
M	T	W	Th	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

January - 19 Days				
M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

Trimesters	
1st	09/03/2024 - 12/03/2024
2nd	12/04/2024 - 03/18/2025
3rd	03/19/2025 - 06/26/2025

Key	
	First/Last Day of school
	School Closed
	Early Dismissal 1:35 p.m.
	Conferences/Early Dismissal
	Professional Day / School closed for Students only

September 2024
 2 Labor Day - School Closed
 3-6 Students Return - Early dismissal for Students
 18 Back to School Night - Grades 6-8 25 Back to School Night - Grades K-5

October 2024
 3 Rosh Hashanah - School Closed
 8 Picture Day!
 21-25 Conferences - Early Dismissal for Students (Mon. - Fri.)

November 2024
 7-8 N.J.E.A. Convention - School Closed
 27 Harvest Festival in Classrooms - Early Dismissal for All (No A.S.A.)
 28-29 Thanksgiving Recess - School Closed

December 2024
 3 Last Day of Trimester 13 Progress Summaries Posted - Oncourse
 20 (No A.S.A.)
 23-31 Winter Break - School Closed

January 2025
 1 Winter Break - School Closed
 2-3 Professional Days for Staff - School Closed for Students PD #4-5
 6 Students Return to School
 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day - School Closed

February 2025
 4 Picture Day for Absentees/8th Grade Cap and Gown
 17 President's Day - School Closed

March 2025
 6-7 Professional Day for Staff - School Closed for Students PD #6-7
 18 Last Day of Trimester 28 Progress Summaries Posted - Oncourse
 31 Eid al-Fitr - School Closed

April 2025
 1-4 Conferences - Early Dismissal for Students (Tues - Fri)
 14-18 Spring Break - School Closed 21 Students Return to School

May 2025
 26 Memorial Day - School Closed

June 2025
 4 Field Day! (Wednesday)
 20 Juneteenth Day - School Closed
 24 Progress Summaries Posted - Oncourse
 25 8th Grade Graduation (2nd to last day of school) final date on website
 24, 25, 26 Early Dismissal for Students (last 3 days of school)
 26 Last Day for Students and Teachers

This calendar reflects 186 student days, 193 staff days.

THIS CALENDAR IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. *EARLY DISMISSAL 1:35 p.m.*

*The Afterschool Academy is open everyday except for November 27 & December 20

This calendar allows for 3 days for emergency closings, which, if taken, will not be necessary to make up in order to meet the 183-day student year.
 Built In Emergency Days: June 24, 25, 26.

If days for emergency closing are not necessary, we will be off on June 24, 25, 26, and the last day for students and staff will be on June 23, 2025.

The length of winter break, spring break, and the last day of school are subject to change in the event we have additional emergency closings beyond those allocated throughout the year. A notice will be posted at GBCS, on our GBCS website (www.greaterbrunswick.org), and on our Facebook page whenever there are changes.

* In the event a delayed opening occurs on a Wednesday, school will continue until 3:00 PM

School Calendar 2024-2025

February - 19 Days				
M	T	W	Th	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

March - 18 Days				
M	T	W	Th	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

April - 17 Days				
M	T	W	Th	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

May - 21 Days				
M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

June - 18 Days				
M	T	W	Th	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

Conferences
Early Dismissals 1:35 pm
 October 21 - 25
 April 1 - 4

Reminders
 School begins at 8:00a.m.
 A.S.A. ends at 5:30p.m.
 Office Number: (732) 448-1052
 School Website:
greaterbrunswick.org
 Like us on Facebook

General Information

Mail

Greater Brunswick Charter School
429 Joyce Kilmer Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Main Telephone

Main Number: 732.448.1052

Fax

732.448.1055

Contact Information

Who should I call/email?

- *If you have a general question, are unsure who to contact, or need someone who speaks Spanish, contact the school receptionist, Ms. Alexa Estrada.*
- *If you want to volunteer at the school, learn about resources for families, or learn about learning opportunities for parents/members contact the Family Coordinator, Lilia Fabila-Guilbot .*
- *If your call/email is related to a discipline issue, contact the Assistant Education Director, Ms. Caitlin Mitchell.*
- *If your concern is related to the education program or a question about the Board of Trustees, contact either Ms. Vanessa Jones or Mr. Hector Alvarez.*

Executive Director: Vanessa Jones

732-448-1052 ex. 139

vanessa.jones@greaterbrunswick.org

Education Director: Hector Alvarez

732-448-1052 ex. 138

hector.alvarez@greaterbrunswick.org

Assistant Education Director: Caitlin Mitchell

732-448-1052 ex. 136

caitlin.mitchell@greaterbrunswick.org

Executive Secretary: Shanina Tavarez

732-448-1052 ex.245

shanina.tavarez@greaterbrunswick.org

Family Coordinator: Lilia Fabila-Guilbot

732-448-1052 ex. 135

lilia.fabila-guilbot@greaterbrunswick.org

Receptionist: Alexa Estrada

732-448-1052 ex.137

alexa.estrada@greaterbrunswick.org

Business Administrator: Dr. Brian Falkowski

bfalkowski@sboffice.com

Assistant to the Business Administrator: Kristine Johnson

732-448-1052 ex.140

kristine.johnson@greaterbrunswick.org

*Note: Updated contact information can be found on the school website, <https://www.greaterbrunswick.org/>.

Administrative Staff

Vanessa Jones, Executive Director
Hector Alvarez, Education Director
Caitlin Mitchell, Assistant Education Director
Dr. Brian Falkowski, School, School Business Administrator
Kristine Johnson, Assistant to the Business Administrator
Shanina Tavaréz, Executive Secretary
Lilia Fabila-Guilbot, Family Coordinator
Alexa Estrada, Receptionist

The administrative staff at GBCS is responsible for the overall operation of the school. In addition to supporting the educational program, they handle communications with the New Jersey Department of Education, our sending districts, and the community at large. In essence, they perform all the tasks of a public school district in New Jersey.

Executive Director

The Executive Director is an important participant in strategic planning, budget development, policy and regulation development, and works closely with the Board to oversee their implementation. The Executive Director supports the school leadership team to ensure the implementation of the school's educational programs and efficient daily operations of the school. The Executive Director evaluates staff members and recommends staff for rehire and tenure.

Education Director

The Education Director is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the school's educational programs as outlined in the Charter and in the annually set School Wide Goals focused on academic growth and school climate. In addition, the Education Director ensures the smooth and efficient daily operations of the school and initiates efforts to promote efficiencies and improvements in running the school. The Education Director supports and evaluates staff members, directs professional development, and recommends staff for rehire and tenure.

Assistant Education Director

The Assistant Education Director supports teachers in proactive strategies to create a safe, respectful, inclusive, equitable, classroom community and school culture. The Assistant Education Director handles all serious discipline issues and serves as the Anti-Bullying Coordinator. It is expected that teachers create a positive and restorative classroom culture in which they prevent and manage normal discipline issues. When something is more serious or is a repeated issue, it is referred to the Assistant Education Director. In addition, the Assistant Education Director supports the academic program, oversees student attendance, evaluates staff members, directs professional development, and performs other duties as well.

School Business Administrator

The School Business Administrator (SBA) oversees school financial processes, including purchasing, payments to debtors, and payroll. He or she also manages the school accounts and bookkeeping, and participates in the annual audit.

Assistant to the Business Administrator

Supports the Business Administrator by performing bookkeeping tasks such as issuing payroll checks.

Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary is responsible for the coordination of office workflow, collection and inputting of accurate data, maintains and protects confidential records, prepares correspondence and reports, schedules conferences/meetings, and supports the Directors with administrative tasks.

Family Coordinator

The Family Coordinator provides support and resources for our families. She also serves as a translator during meetings with administration and staff. Additionally, she plans and facilitates events throughout the year.

Receptionist

The receptionist greets visitors and assures that they sign in before entering the school. She is often the first person people meet upon entering the building. She assists administrators and other staff with translations and also oversees the attendance process and lunch orders.

Support Staff

School Nurses: Carisma Lambert, Ambika Sharma
 Martha Goz, School Social Worker
 Jessica Nazario, School Social Worker
 George Newton, Technology Specialist
 Bonnie Molina, Instructional Coach - Literacy
 Amie Fitzgerald – Instructional Coach - Mathematics
 Julio Perez-Arrieta, Head Custodian

Support Staff

School Nurse

The School Nurse oversees the health needs of our students and staff. This includes performing mandated health screenings for hearing, eyesight, scoliosis (curvature of the spine), and height/weight; finding community resources to meet student health needs; giving medication and treatments as prescribed by students' doctors.

The Nurse also provides Health instruction in sex education, personal hygiene, nutrition, and other areas as needed. The Nurse is the primary point of contact for parents/guardians who wish to discuss the health or medical needs of their students.

School Social Worker

The Student Counselor is a licensed School Social Worker who provides counseling services to students, initiates character education programs, and organizes child study team meetings and other meetings at which a student's well-being and related services are discussed. The Student Counselor is available to address any concerns parents, students, or teachers may have about a student's well-being, academic, emotional, or physical.

Custodians

The Custodians maintain our building and grounds, performs repairs, and assists in the overall running of the facility. The Custodians are also viewed as other adults within the school who are available to students to provide mentoring or support within the limitations imposed by his/her other responsibilities.

Technology Specialist

The Technology Specialist provides leadership in the development, implementation and coordination of the GBCS technology plan; enhances instruction through technology across the curriculum; and, promotes efficiency in the school with the use of technology.

Instructional Coach - Literacy

The Instructional Coach - Literacy works with classroom teachers and other instructional staff to develop strategies, skills, tools, techniques, and capacity to effectively teach reading and writing to all students.

Instructional Coach - Mathematics

The Instructional Coach - Mathematics works with classroom teachers and other instructional staff to develop strategies, skills, tools, techniques, and capacity to effectively teach mathematics to all students.

Teaching Staff

Teachers

Teachers are the leaders and managers of their classrooms. All GBCS teachers are certified in the State of New Jersey in Elementary Education or other areas as needed to comply with Highly Qualified Teacher criteria as per the No Child Left Behind Act.

Teachers have complete authority to implement the school's programs and policies and assess student work, and they are the main point of contact for members who have questions about the educational program and related policies as implemented in their classrooms. Within their classrooms, there is no higher authority, including school administrators.

Teachers are charged with implementing the school's curriculum, supervising teaching assistants and volunteers, collaborating with students and parents/guardians to create Personal Education Plans for all their students, and maintaining a peaceful and respectful classroom.

GBCS teachers are specially trained in Positive Discipline, Differentiated Learning, the Adaptive Learning Environment Model, Constructivist teaching techniques, the Schools Attuned methodology that emphasizes accommodation for different student learning styles, and many other techniques and practices that support our school's mission.

Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants instruct students in collaboration with teachers. They assist the teacher in generally running the classroom and provide particular support for students as needed. They participate in professional development activities similarly to Teachers.

Special Education Teachers

Special Education Teachers provide instruction as mandated by student Individual education plans (IEPs), participate in child study teams, and ensure that student goals are addressed with the general education classroom.

Success Program Instructors

Success Program Instructors provide Basic Skills support to students who have been identified through assessments and teacher referrals. They may provide services only with parent/guardian permission.

English Language Learner Instructors

ELL Instructors are specially trained to support students whose native language is not English. They also help families work effectively with the other teachers and staff.

Hours

School Hours

8:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
 8:00 AM to 1:35PM, Wednesday and Early Dismissal Days

Office Business Hours:

8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday – Friday

After School Program Hours:

Dismissal - 5:30 PM

Breakfast

Greater Brunswick Charter School continues to make breakfast a priority. GBCS topped the list of School Breakfast Champions according to a recent report released by the Advocates for the Children of New Jersey.

Breakfast is provided to all students. Students eat breakfast in their classrooms after arrival. This time is also considered instructional time and students are expected to arrive at 8:00.



Arrival



philipmarin.com

The front door of the school will be open and attended by staff every day at 8:00 AM. Please do not drop your child off any earlier than 8:00 AM, as he or she will not be able to enter the building before that time.

Please get your child to school on time! 8:00 AM! The first twenty minutes of the day are crucial to helping our students get off to a good start.

Classes begin at 8:00 AM for all K-8 Students. Students are expected to be in their classrooms and ready to learn at 8:05 AM, not entering the building. Students are marked tardy at 8:10 AM. In general, tardies are unexcused and three tardies equal one day absent. A tardy may be excused for a legitimate reason. Please see the section on absences for a list of acceptable reasons.

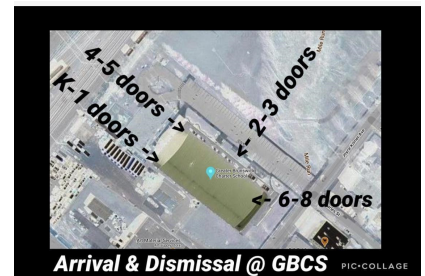
Morning Drop Off

The GBCS parking lot is closed to vehicles at arrival time for GBCS families; it is only open to school staff and school buses/vans. No other early arrivals are allowed.

School begins at 8:00 AM. Staff members are located along the sidewalks and patios beginning at 7:45 to supervise arrival. You may drop off your children along the sidewalk on Joyce Kilmer Avenue. If you are in a car, be sure to park your car next to the curb before letting your children exit the vehicle; please do not double park. **Children and adults must walk to the crosswalk, where the crossing guard is, for safe crossing.** If you drop off children on the GBCS side of the street, closer to Food Universe, they will not need to cross the street and may simply walk up the GBCS sidewalks to their arrival location.

Be sure to have your children cross at the crosswalk with the crossing guard. That is the safe way to cross!

Parking is permitted along Joyce Kilmer Ave., along side-streets, and in the Food Universe parking lot. Be sure to obey signs and only park in allowed areas. You may NOT park in the parking lots directly across the street from GBCS, by the apartment building or the small shopping center. Please help us be good neighbors and respect this expectation. Once your vehicle is parked, **you are welcome to walk your children to their assigned entrance doors.** (See image→)



A car drop off greeter/s will be available for those who would like one, in front of GBCS, on our Joyce Kilmer Avenue sidewalk, between Charles Street and Elizabeth Street. Drivers must remain in their cars in this area. Students may exit the car on their own or with a greeter to assist them, when needed.

Dismissal

3:00 pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday

1:35 pm, Wednesday and Early Dismissal Days

Students who ride the bus are dismissed directly to their bus.

Students who wish to walk home must have signed permission slips from their parents (we have a form for parents to complete). No student will be allowed to walk home without a signed permission slip.

When dropping-off or picking-up your child, please follow the directions below.

*See form in Addendum

Pick-up at Dismissal:

The parking lot will remain closed at dismissal time. Parents or designated adults must park and walk to the school grounds to pick-up their child. Only children who have permission to walk home will be allowed to leave the school grounds without an adult.

Parking is permitted along Joyce Kilmer Ave to the left of the parking lot and along side streets. Be sure to obey signs and only park in allowed areas. We have also secured permission to park in the lot next door in the Sports Complex at dismissal times. Cars must be out of the lot by 3:30 when the gate will be locked, so if you expect to be in the school beyond this time you must find alternate parking.

Pick-up after Enrichment Clusters and After School Academy:

- You may enter the parking lot for pick-up. Stay to the right as you enter and drive around the loop before picking up your child.
- **Do not make a U-turn.** This puts everyone in danger.
- Do not double-park
- You may park in front of the school, as no busses will be present.

Attendance

Parents/guardians are responsible for their child’s punctuality, attendance, cleanliness and appropriateness of dress. **School begins at 8:00 AM, daily!**



Absences

State school attendance laws require that students between the ages of 6 and 16 attend school during all of the days and hours that the school is in session.

Procedures for Student Attendance

In an effort to improve student attendance and communication with families, the following procedures will be followed for the 2024-2025 school year.

1. Regular communication with parents regarding student absences/tardies is important. The chart below outlines the procedure and person responsible for parent contact at varying intervals.

Absence and Tardiness Remediation Chart

Number of Absences/Tardies	Procedure	Person responsible
Each day absent	Call home by 9:30 AM	Automated call or Receptionist
5	Letter from office- Cc. teacher	Office staff
10	Parent/child meeting with Assistant Education Director	Assistant Education Director
10 +	May be referred to court system	Education Director
15	Parent/child meeting with Director	Education Director
20	Board Hearing	Trustees/Directors

2. Students absent more than 5 days may be required to stay after school to complete lessons or classwork they have missed due to their absences.
3. As per Board policy, 16 days of unexcused absences may result in retention.
4. A phone call from parent/guardian advising the school of an absence is required.
5. Upon returning to school a note explaining an absence is required.
6. Parents will be expected to submit a doctor’s note after a child’s long-term absence (more than 3 days).
7. A note from parent/guardian documenting a reason for a child leaving school early. Notes should be submitted no later than the morning of the designated day.
8. Parents/guardian must sign out their child. Office staff will call the classroom when the parent arrives for early dismissal.

**Parents should NOT sign students out early after 2:45 PM.
(1:20 early dismissal days)**

9. In order to participate in after school or evening events, students must be present in school that day. This includes all 8th grade end of year events and graduation.

What constitutes an excused and unexcused absences?

Administration and the Board of Education recognize that from time to time compelling circumstances will require that a pupil be late to school or be absent from school. As stated earlier, the school requires advance notification of such absences by written request of the student's parent/guardian, which shall state the reason for the tardiness or absence.

Excused Absences:

- Religious observance
- "Take Our Children to Work Day"
- Participation in observance of Veterans Day (N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-13.2) or district board of election membership activities (N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-33)
- The closure of a busing district that prevents a student from having transportation to the receiving school.

Unexcused Absences:

- Illness (after three days, a doctor's note is required)
- Uncoverable and/or uncovered weeping skin lesions
- Medical or dental appointments which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours;
- Medical disability
- Death or critical illness in immediate family
- Court appearance
- Suspension from school
- Such good cause as may be acceptable to the administration.

Readmission to school after any absence:

1. A pupil returning from an absence of any length must present to the main office a written statement of the reasons for the absence, which must be dated and signed by the parent or guardian.
2. A note explaining a pupil's absence for non-communicable illness for a period of more than three school days must be accompanied by a physician's statement of the pupil's illness.
3. A pupil who has been absent as a result of a communicable disease must present to the school nurse written evidence of being free of the disease.

Tardiness

Students must come to school on time. Children who are not in class and ready to learn before 8:10 (K-8 students) are late and must sign in at the Office with their parents. Refer to the **Absence/Tardiness Remediation Chart** on the previous page for guidance.



Please make every effort to arrive on time!

Unexcused Absences or Tardiness

Parent/Guardians, who habitually bring their students late to school, or whose students have excessive unexcused absences, may be required to attend a Board hearing to address the issue. The Board may act to exclude students who are absent or late excessively (without an adequate excuse) from the program for the following year. Excessive unexcused absences also fall under state laws regarding truancy, and the school may pursue legal action in extreme cases.

Vacations

Parents/guardians must encourage students to attend school whenever school is in session. We strongly encourage you to schedule vacation in accordance with the school calendar. The school does not encourage trips taken during school time. Vacations are considered an unexcused absence. If a child is going to be absent for any period of time due to vacation, it is the student and parent's responsibility, prior to the absence, to make arrangements with the teacher regarding schoolwork that may be missed. Parents/Guardians are required to notify the front office and student's teachers two weeks prior to their travel dates.



Permission to Leave School Early

We ask parents not to arrange medical and dental appointments during the school day. When this is absolutely necessary, please notify the school in advance and come to the Office when you arrive to sign out your child.

**Students cannot be signed out early after 2:45 pm.
(1:20 pm on early dismissal days)**

Students will not be allowed to leave school early on a routine basis unless there is a documented medical need.

School Closings/Early Dismissal

In the event that the Greater Brunswick Charter School is closed due to bad weather or emergency conditions, please check the resources below:

Web Site

<https://www.greaterbrunswick.org>

Social Media

Greater Brunswick Charter School - Facebook

Greaterbrunswickcs - Instagram

Email

Email notifying you of school closings, delayed openings, or early dismissals will be sent to all members who provide the school with a working email address.

Telephone

An automated phone message and/or text message will go out to community members regarding closings and delayed openings.

Radio

<u>Radio Station</u>	<u>Dial Setting</u>	<u>Announcement / Website</u>
WCTC	1450 AM	on air - between 5:45 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. http://www.centraljerseysnow.com/members/closings/ .
WMGQ	98.3 FM	on air - between 5:45 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. http://www.centraljerseysnow.com/members/closings/
NJ 101.5	101.5 FM	http://nj1015.com/closings/

Television

News 12 New Jersey	Channel 12	http://newjersey.news12.com/
--------------------	------------	---

Delayed Openings

If it appears that early morning weather conditions make it advisable to delay opening, the school will open one-and-a-half (1 ½) hours later than usual and all morning pupil transportation will be delayed for one-and-a-half (1 ½) hours.

In the event a delayed opening occurs on a Wednesday, school will continue until 3:00 PM.

Early Closings (1:35pm)

In the event that school closes early due to bad weather or an emergency situation, the After School Academy will not run. Parents or their emergency contacts will be notified to pick up their children at school. Please arrive promptly to pick up your child.



Transportation

Buses

Bus transportation is handled by your local school district. GBCS coordinates information with the districts and the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission. Be sure to complete and return the Transportation Form provided at enrollment and on a yearly basis thereafter. This form is absolutely required for transportation services or reimbursements.

New Brunswick/Highland Park Department of Transportation = 732-777-9848 (follow the prompts)

North Brunswick Department of Transportation = 732-289-3026



Transportation Reimbursement

Parents should check with their home district to see if they are eligible for aide in lieu of bussing.

Bus Conduct and Discipline

Students must abide by the GBCS code of conduct and the bus driver's rules while on any bus going to and from GBCS. Inappropriate behavior can lead to the distraction of the bus driver and affect the safety of all students riding the bus. Students must wear seat belts whenever the bus is moving.

Students riding the bus must obey the bus driver or aide. Students who misbehave on the bus or refuse to cooperate with the driver or aide will not be allowed to ride the bus.

When the school bus does not arrive at the bus stop on time because of mechanical failure or road or weather conditions, please wait for at least 30 minutes.

Bus Drop-off Changes

Students generally cannot change bus stops. If it is necessary to change stops, please contact your local department of transportation.

If your child is not going to ride the bus home on a particular day, you must notify the office in advance. The student will be instructed to board the bus if we do not receive other instructions.

Carpooling

Many families elect to carpool to and from school. If you are interested in carpooling, reach out to the families in your child's class and/or network during arrival and dismissal times.

Walking Home

Students may walk home from school only with written permission from a parent/guardian. We will provide a form for granting this permission. No student will be allowed to walk home without written permission.

Changes to Transportation Arrangements

All changes in your child's transportation arrangements must be provided to the school in writing. Notes may be emailed to our office (732.448.1055). **In emergencies only**, a phone call is acceptable if it is impossible to provide written permission. **Please make pick-up arrangements before students arrive at school. It is disruptive to classroom instruction when there are interruptions regarding transportation arrangements.**

We will not allow students to walk home, go home with friends, or accept rides from other parents unless we have written or direct verbal permission from a parent/guardian.

GBCS Bus Expectations

GBCS Bus Expectations

Be Responsible

- Take care of your belongings, bring all of your items off the bus
- Follow all the GBCS Code of Conduct and all bus rule
- Tell the driver if someone falls asleep

Be Respectful

- Keep your hands and feet to yourself, stay in your seat
- Respect yourself, everyone, and your environment on the bus

Be Ready

- Use appropriate language, treat everyone with kindness
- Have all of your belongings ready
- Arrive at your stop on time

Be Safe

- Be ready to get off the bus at your stop
- Stay in your seat until the bus stops



Listen to the driver at all times, know and follow their hand signals



Parking and Visiting

We encourage all our members, as well as the wider community, to visit our school. Once students have entered the building at 8:10 AM, teaching staff are no longer on arrival duty and the outside doors will be locked. While this is an inconvenience at times, it is important to know who is entering the building. Visitors **must** enter the front door and ring the bell next to the office door. Visitors who enter the building must return to the office to sign-out and exit. **Everyone entering Greater Brunswick is required to sign in and receive a visitor badge at the Office. In order to assure that all our students are safe while at school, parents will not be allowed to go to classrooms during the instructional day unless they have made an appointment with the teacher. Lunches, forgotten homework, etc. will be delivered to the classroom by office staff. We thank you for your understanding of our efforts to make GBCS a safe and secure environment.**

VISITOR

Name: _____

Company: _____

Date: _____ Time In: _____

VALID Today...

Lunches and Snacks

Our students have 30 minutes for lunch every day, including early dismissal days. Kindergarten – Fifth grade students also have a 20-30 minute recess.

Please Note: Our online free and reduced lunch application are typically ready for parents in mid-August. A link for the application can be found on the Food Service page of the school website and may be announced on our social media pages as well. **Parents must fill out a new application every year.** Student’s new lunch status will go into effect on the day that the school meals application is approved. Student’s school meal status can be carried over from the previous school year for the first 30 days of the current school year. If a student was free or reduced last year, they will be free or reduced for the first 30 days of the current school year.



If a student has not qualified for free or reduced lunch in the past, families **MUST** pay for school lunch until they are notified that their household application has been approved. If a student qualifies for free meals through New Jersey SNAP or Medicaid programs, parents will receive an email notification and will not need to complete a free/reduced application.

Students who do not qualify for free or reduced lunch can purchase lunch for \$3.00 per day. Milk by itself is available for \$0.40. Parents are encouraged to pay for lunches and milk in advance; this can be done in the main office. A statement will be sent home on a bi-weekly basis to let parents know how much credit their student has in their lunch account.

If children forget their lunch or lunch money, they must notify their teacher by 9:00 am. The school cannot guarantee them a lunch.

If your child brings a lunch to school, please be sure that it is labeled with his or her name. Refrigeration and microwaves are not available. Please do not send any glass containers.

Breakfast and lunch menus can be found on our school website on the Lunch Menus page. Paper menus are posted in all classrooms for students to read. All meals served by Greater Brunswick Charter School must meet the standards for child nutrition set by the USDA.

Wellness Policy – Healthy Foods

Lunches and snacks should consist of nutritious foods and drinks only. Candy, cookies, cakes, soda, highly sweetened beverages, potato chips, fast food (McDonalds, Burger King, Dunkin, etc.) and other junk food should not be brought to school. Staff members may confiscate inappropriate foods and replace them with school-provided food or drinks.

Student Records

All student records are kept confidential, maintained securely, and limited in access to authorized persons as mandated by law. Parents are encouraged to periodically review their child's online records. All requests to review their school file should be made in writing to the Director.

If You Move

If you move while your child is attending GBCS, you must notify us immediately (preferably in advance of the move). If you are moving to a different school district, you must register in the new school district and complete a transfer form—just as you did in your previous district.

Failing to register in your new district will cause a loss of funding to the school and may result in the loss of your child's place in GBCS.

Health Services

Greater Brunswick Charter School has a full-time and part-time School Nurse who provides health services, health instruction, and contributes to the healthy living environment of the school. According to State regulations, treatment by the School Nurse is limited to first aid care for injuries occurring at school.



Health Screening

The School Nurse conducts regular health screenings during the year, including visual, auditory, height and weight measurement, scoliosis (curvature of the spine), and blood pressure monitoring. These screenings are completed as required by law, and parents/guardians are notified of the results if abnormal.

Immunization Requirements

State law requires medically validated records of immunization to be on file for all students. Immunization records must show month, day and year of every immunization. Any student whose immunization records are not complete will be subject to exclusion. The required immunizations include:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP, DT, or TD) – 4 or more doses (1 dose on or after their 4th birthday).
- Polio – 4 doses (one on or after their 4th birthday)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) – 2 doses (1 dose after their 1st birthday and the 2nd dose prior to Kindergarten)
- Hib – 1 dose or more
- Hepatitis B – 3 doses
- Varicella – 1 dose



Requirements for 6th grade:

Children entering the 6th grade whose birthday is January 1, 1997 or later; or transferring into a New Jersey school from another state or country are required to receive a booster dose of tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine, and one dose of the meningococcal vaccine.

PHYSICAL EXAM: Grades K, 3 and 7; and all new students entering the school from other schools. All physicals must have medical verification.

Please contact the School Nurse if you have a question about state requirements or have a problem completing these requirements due to religious or medical reasons. Free clinics are sponsored by the Health Department; call your local Health Department for information on dates and locations of clinics. Middlesex County Health Department can be reached at 732-745-3125.

Communicable/Infectious Diseases

Students with a fever greater than 100 or communicable diseases cannot attend school. Parents/guardians must pick up their children as soon as possible should the child become ill or injured. **Please make sure that you—or someone you designate—is available to pick up your child within one hour after receiving the call that they are sick. This is especially important if you do not work nearby or are unable to leave your job.**

If your child exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease, he or she must be excluded from school until proper treatment and care has been initiated and the condition has improved. The ultimate decision concerning exclusion issues rests with the School Nurse. A physician's statement may be required before a child is allowed to return to school.

Special Health Needs

To address your child's special health condition such as asthma, allergies or diabetes, the School Nurse will require a physician's letter to be kept on file at the school. The letter should state the required medication, Physical Education limitations, and/or emergency care and actions necessary at school. The School Nurse will contact the

physician for any information regarding any special health need, requiring medications, procedures, or care at school. Special health needs and information will then be shared with the appropriate school staff that care for your child.

Medication

All medication to be taken during the school day requires a written prescription from a doctor or dentist; this includes over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol. Please make every effort to give all medications at home; if you are sending medications to school, they must be in their original container. The School Nurse will keep all prescribed medications in a locked closet and administer them as prescribed. The School nurse must distribute any medications to your child. No self-medication is permitted, except asthma inhalers if a written prescription is received by a doctor.

Emergency Contact Information

Please make sure that the School Office and Nurse have current emergency contact information, and notify them of any changes to your home and/or work phone numbers, as well as the phone numbers of your emergency contacts. It is crucial that we have updated information in the event that your child becomes ill or injured while at school.

Academic Program Our Mission

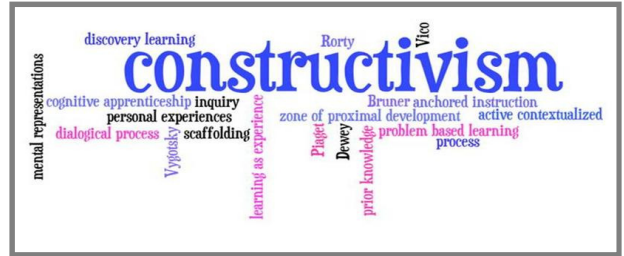
The mission of the Greater Brunswick Charter School is to provide our students with an education of the highest standards that engages their individual interests and learning styles, and develops their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical well-being within a learning community. Our teachers use a constructivist method of teaching, and set up their classrooms as learning centers that support independent student work.



At GBCS, we strive to understand each student as an individual and to differentiate the instruction to meet each student's needs. This requires a strong partnership between teachers, parents/guardians, and students.

Constructivism

Constructivist learning is based on students' active participation in problem-solving and critical thinking, where they regard learning as an activity that is relevant and engaging. They are "constructing" their own knowledge by testing ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience, applying these to a new situation, and integrating the new knowledge gained with their prior experience. The teacher is a facilitator or coach in the constructivist learning approach.



Constructivism is a movement away from the days when students sat at their desks in rows and listened to someone lecture them. Constructivism is based on the theory that all people learn best when they are given the opportunity to discover material themselves and relate it to their own experiences and prior knowledge. Our teachers are trained to introduce curriculum materials to our students in ways that will engage both their prior knowledge and their individual learning styles.

Curriculum development and instruction are a three-step cycle in a constructivist classroom:

The teacher provides an open-ended environment where students interact with carefully selected materials and learning centers. The students will generate questions and hypotheses, and thus make "discoveries." These "discoveries" are derived from the student's own world of experiences and knowledge.

The teacher then presents the "concept" and uses the students' discoveries and questions to provide meaning to the concept. In other words, the teacher helps the student take his or her own world's experiences and knowledge to the understanding of the concept.

The teacher then gives the students opportunities to practice, experience, and apply the new concept.

Greater Brunswick Curriculum

The Greater Brunswick Charter School Curriculum combines the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) and the Common Core Curriculum Standards with the mission, goals, and objectives of the GBCS Charter. Teachers modify the instructional program according to a student's needs to accommodate student learning styles and interests.

The curriculum addresses not only academic goals, but social and emotional goals as well. We are committed to educating the whole child—programs to develop social skills are an important part of the program.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

Personal Education Plans are a unique and integral part of the educational experience at GBCS. They reflect our school’s mission and vision to support individual learning and to encourage all of our students to become independent and self-directed learners.

Each child at GBCS has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that lists their interests and learning styles. It also lists individual goals and strategies for success as developed by the student, teacher and parent/guardian.

Your child’s Personal Education Plan will contain:

- an assessment of the child’s individual learning styles – Multiple Intelligence Inventory
- the child’s interests, Interest Survey and Interest Inventory
- 1-3 goals - Teachers have the flexibility to encourage students to choose from 1 to 3 goals (this could vary by student or by trimester)
- suggestions related to learning strategies that will work with the child’s style;
- final product and/or assessment for each goal

During the Fall conferences, the teacher, student and parent develop the child’s academic and intellectual goals for the trimester. The completed PEP then becomes the blueprint for the individual education that GBCS provides. The Personal Education Plan is reviewed and updated, as needed, minimally at each of the two annual parent-student-teacher conferences.

Progress Summaries

The evaluation of your child’s progress takes place in the form of the Progress Summary three times throughout the year. Progress Summaries offer parents and teachers an alternative to traditional report cards, providing a more detailed view of a student’s progress and performance

Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences

Parents and students must attend two conferences each year with the student’s teacher(s) during the Fall, and Spring. The dates for these conferences are noted on the school calendar. Parents will sign up digitally for conferences—you must sign up for an appointment and arrive on time.

At these conferences, teachers, students and parents draw up the goals of the Personal Education Plan, with its curriculum requirements, areas of strength, areas for growth and strategies to achieve that growth. You are able to review your child’s Portfolio and/or work samples, discuss concerns and satisfactions and commit to the course of educational progress that you, your child and your child’s teacher will follow for the upcoming semester. These conferences are the place to set goals not just for this year, but also for the course of your child’s education at GBCS.

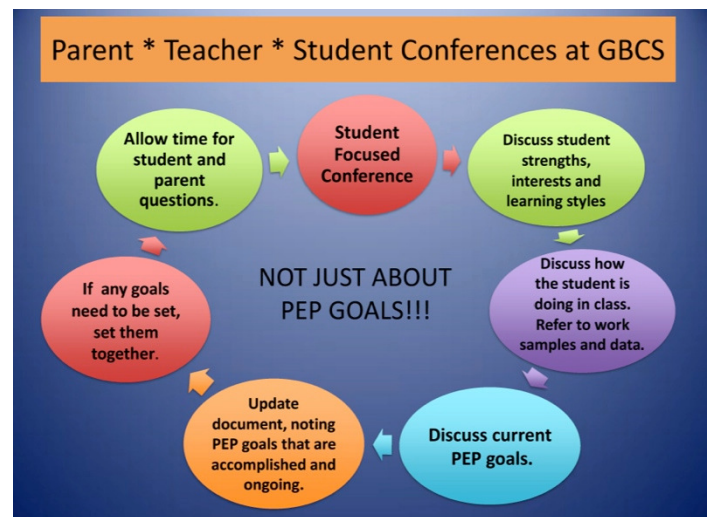
Standardized Testing

Like all public schools in New Jersey, the Greater Brunswick Charter School administers the statewide tests required by New Jersey law **NJSLA** for 3rd through 8th graders.

Why do we need PEP goals?

PEP Goals help students:

- make connections between concepts and life experiences
- develop verbal and written expression
- develop persistence in becoming successful, confident, and self-aware
- learn self-help skills and good study habits



Standardized tests are a valuable tool when considered in the context of broader assessments. GBCS is committed to helping our students do well on these tests, and we conduct test preparation that is consistent with our overall educational program.

ML (Multilingual Language Learner) testing: The state mandated ACCESS test is used to assess student progress acquiring English.

Reading Assessment: Teachers assess student reading level/progress using the benchmark assessments F&P, IRLA, ENIL Assessment.

Homework

Homework helps students to develop good study habits, reinforces materials covered in class and communicates to students the concept that learning takes place within our entire community. Homework can also help to develop organization and time-management skills as well as build a sense of responsibility.

In line with the GBCS philosophy of child-centered learning, we do not have a fixed guideline based on grade levels for the amount of time or homework that should be done each day. Homework requirements will be set according to the child's individual needs, in coordination with the student, the teacher and the parent/guardian.

Computer/Technology Policy

Greater Brunswick Charter School provides network access to enhance students' technological capabilities and to support achievement in academic courses. It opens limitless possibilities; users may go virtually anywhere and interact with anyone. With such opportunity comes responsibility. Use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and will be withdrawn if abused. Student access of any network services is strictly limited to educational purposes. All computer use must comply with local, state and federal laws and with school policy. A student who thinks that his computer activity might be interpreted as inappropriate should consult with a member of the computer staff before proceeding. All members of the GBCS community must understand that technology should be used with good judgment, common sense, and integrity.



All students and parents must sign the school's Acceptable Use Policy before they may use school computers.

Field Trips

GBCS encourages field trips that support and enhance the curriculum. Well-planned and supervised field trips may be scheduled during the year. Written permission from the legal guardian is required for any student taking the trip; without written permission, a student will not be able to accompany the class and must remain on school premises. A permission form for field trips is sent home with students prior to the activity. Parents are encouraged to allow students to participate in the field trips, since they are planned to enhance the educational experience and information gained in the classroom.



Students are expected to abide by all Greater Brunswick Charter School rules of behavior while participating in all off-site school activities.

Textbooks

GBCS philosophy of a child-centered, constructivist-learning environment means that each child's course of instruction will be individually guided while still meeting state curriculum standards. This means that textbooks may or may not be utilized in your child's classes. The teacher's curriculum determines the use of textbooks by your child.

Support Services

Greater Brunswick Charter School participates in all mandated Special Needs, Basic Skills/Title I, and ESL academic support services. Please contact the Educational Director or refer to the Greater Brunswick Charter School

Policy Manual for details. If you believe that your child may benefit from evaluation for any of these services, please speak with your child's teacher.

Special Education

GBCS complies with all state and federal laws and regulations applicable to special education. Our program emphasizes inclusion in the general education classroom for all students to the greatest extent possible.

Occasionally, our Child Study Team determines that a student's needs cannot be met within the GBCS program. The Team will then identify a suitable public or private school placement for the student that best meets the student's needs and facilitate their placement in that program.

The Success Program

The GBCS Success Program is a Basic Skills Instruction program for students who meet the criteria for this service. Parents must approve the testing and placement of their students in this program.

The Success Program teacher, or another staff member, will contact you as needed to discuss your child's participation.

Guidance and Student Counseling

Greater Brunswick Charter School has an on-site student counselor, who provides counseling, guidance, drug and substance abuse training, and assists in Character Education courses.

Physical Education/Recess

Every student must take at least 150 minutes of Physical Education/gym and Health per week. If you wish your child to be excused from physical education activities, she or he must have a note from her or his guardian. If the excuse is for more than three days, a statement from a medical doctor is requested.

The children at Greater Brunswick Charter School LOVE playing in the gym and exercising during recess. Because of this, we want to make sure that they have a safe environment to play. **The Nurse's office is reporting many injuries as a result of improper footwear.**

In the interest of keeping our students safe, please review the following information.

Athletic style SNEAKERS that have good traction are essential to the safety of your child. Rubber soled work boots, crocs, heeleys, sandals, Uggs, flip flops, heeled shoes, twinkle toes and slip-ons are **PROHIBITED**. When buying sneakers, be sure to look at the **BOTTOM** of the sneaker to be sure it is not made of anything but rubber. Many converse and sketcher type sneakers have a felt bottom. Felt bottomed sneakers can cause your child to slip and slide during physical activity. **The SAFETY of our students is our primary concern.** Although the children only have gym twice a week, **they do exercise EVERYDAY in the classroom and during recess.** **Appropriate footwear is important EVERYDAY.**

OUTDOOR RECESS- Children must wear rubber soled shoes to participate on the playground equipment. Under no circumstance will a student be permitted to wear flip flops to school.

The following footwear is not safe for physical education..



The below footwear is perfect!



All students are expected to wear appropriate clothing for gym class. Please bring sneakers to gym class. Hard-or black-soled shoes, Crocs, open-toed shoes, sandals and thongs are not permissible, as they can damage the gym floor or pose a health risk.

After-School Academy

Greater Brunswick has an After-School Academy (ASA) from dismissal until 5:30 each day. Students must register in advance to attend; there is a \$10 yearly registration fee per child and a daily fee of \$12.00 per day, \$10.00 for siblings. Registration forms are in the main office.



***** Due to a government grant, registration & daily fees are waived at the present time. *****

The ASA provides students with quiet time for homework, reading, and small group play (board games, puzzles, card games, etc.) as well as opportunities for physical activities and arts and crafts. A snack is provided for each child.

Students are expected to abide by all GBCS rules of conduct while participating in the After-School Academy. Students who behave violently or disruptively, or who do not cooperate with staff, will be excluded from the After School Academy.

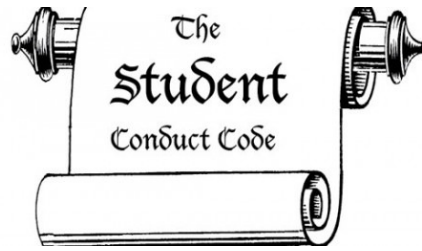
There is no After-School Academy on days when school closes early for bad weather and often times there is no ASA when there is a half-day before a school break/holiday. Please check with the program calendar to verify.

After School Academy Coordinator:

Daniela Suastegui, daniela.suastegui@greaterbrunswick.org

Conduct and Discipline

Greater Brunswick Charter School is a school committed to creating and maintaining a peaceful and respectful environment where all staff members are role models for the school membership by acting and speaking respectfully to students, parents and each other. Respect for one another at all times is the foundation of our interactions. The simple rules of courtesy and consideration for and encouragement of others should govern student behavior. Conduct must support the mission of the school, which is to nourish personal excellence, support and encourage one's peers, and practice collective responsibility.



GBCS has adopted the use of the Positive Discipline program to ensure a universal approach that is kind and firm when dealing with conflict. In conjunction with Positive Discipline, the students and staff use Conflict Resolution and participate in a variety of school programs in which respect skills are taught, practiced, and implemented.

Positive Discipline

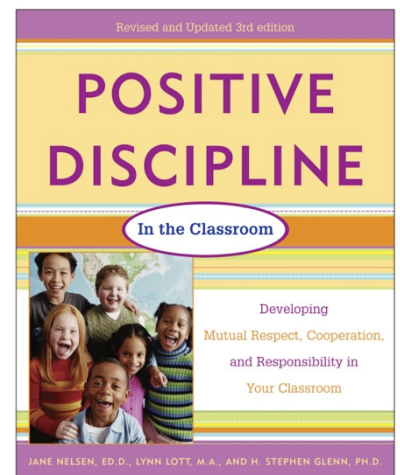
An essential purpose of education is to prepare children for responsible citizenship. Positive Discipline in the Classroom is a program that prepares children for responsible citizenship by encouraging the development of emotional intelligence and the important life skills and perceptions of capable people.

Positive Discipline is based on the philosophies of Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs who believed that all human beings have equal rights to dignity and respect. All Positive Discipline methods are non-punitive and non-permissive. They are kind and firm at the same time: kind, because that shows respect for the child (and for the adult), and firm because that shows respect for what needs to be done.

All Positive Discipline methods meet the following "Three Criteria for Discipline that Teaches":

- Is it respectful?
- Is it effective long-term?
- Does it help children develop valuable life skills for good character?

Positive Discipline in the Classroom is an excellent character education program in which children are involved in the creation of safe and caring communities. GBCS teachers use Positive Discipline Class Meetings to teach students essential skills and empower young people with a positive attitude for success in all areas of life: school, work, family, and society.



GBCS Code of Conduct

The GBCS Code of Conduct consists of behaviors, rules and procedures developed by the Student Body, as well as the School Review Committee, and formally adopted by the Board of Trustees.

In the first year of our school's operation, the Student Body developed and adopted the following rules:

- No hurting people.
- Use good language, nice language, at all times.
- Don't call names and don't be mean.
- Threats will be taken seriously whether they are words or object and things.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- No gum chewing.
- Only bring the things you need for school to school – no toys.
- No running in school and on the street.
- Listen to your teacher.
- Be here on time, every day.

These rules continue to be affirmed by students and members year after year.

Rules and Procedures developed by the School Review Committee:

Lunchroom / Classroom

- Create a calm, relaxing atmosphere.
- Talk in conversational voices.
- Ask permission to use the restroom. Only two students are permitted in the restroom at a time.
- Remain seated, except to clean up.
- Cleanup the whole table, including under the table, as well as your place.
- Place (not throw) trash in designated garbage can.
-

Hallways and Entrances

- Walk and be respectful, no running, pushing, shoving.
When in line, keep to the right hand side of the hallway or stairwell, and hold door open for others.
Quiet talking or no talking, as staff instructs
Be quiet. No yelling or loud noises in hallways.

Bathrooms

All students in K-1 use bathrooms contained within their classrooms. When necessary other students will be escorted to the bathrooms or use the buddy system.

2nd-8th grade students may use a sign-out system for bathroom privileges and must receive permission from the teacher or teachers' assistant when leaving the room.

Media Center-

- Students are allowed in the Media Center only with adult supervision.
- Students are not allowed to play non-educational computer games during school hours.
- Games, websites, and applications must be respectful/peaceful and may not involve shooting, fighting, or violence of any type are permitted. The prohibition on shooting games includes games that target non-human or “mechanical” targets.
- Games, applications, or web sites containing materials deemed inappropriate by supervising staff are also prohibited. Inappropriate materials are any materials not suitable for classroom use by K-8 students.
- Students found to be playing inappropriate games will lose computer privileges.
- All students and their parents/guardians must sign the GBCS Acceptable Use Policy before using Internet-connected computers.

Assemblies and Performances

- All students must sit in their class's pre-assigned seating area. Students should not sit against the walls.
- Respectful behavior only, no rude or disruptive behavior while in the community room.
- Students must be silent and respectful during performances and speakers.
- Students must follow instructions of the teachers while moving to and from the assembly.

Discipline and Suspension Policy

Greater Brunswick Charter School follows the Positive Discipline model in its daily activities. Our students are expected to be respectful and responsible. We believe that all members of our community deserve respect and to exist in an atmosphere of peace and safety. Our expectations of respect and civility are one of the foundations of our charter and are taught and explained to our students and members, along with our discipline policy.

Teachers invite children to help them make class rules and social contracts. Children have ownership, motivation, and enthusiasm when they are included in the decisions. A social contract is a description of ideal behaviors – what works, not what is forbidden. It frames everything in clear, positive terms, and provides something to work towards every day. Each classroom also has a Classroom Management Plan, describing the steps followed when students behave in ways that do not support their social contract and they need to reflect and redirect. Students are guided to Notice -> Redirect -> Problem Solve -> Return & Repair. Occasionally, behavior contracts/conduct agreements are used to establish agreements about future behavior. (For more information, see Responsive Designs for Middle School – Origins and Positive Discipline – Jane Nelson.)

In general, teachers handle the vast majority of disciplinary issues within the context of the classroom. However, disciplinary incidents that move beyond those addressed by the teacher within the classroom may qualify a student for suspension or expulsion.

Aggressive and disrespectful behavior of any kind is not permissible and will result in consequences. This includes, but is not limited to, incidents that happen in school, outside of school, or online, that impact learning. Any instance of violent behavior—such as physical assault or fighting—will result in an immediate suspension, either in school or out of school, as per the GBCS Discipline Policy.

Behavior incidents are divided into three categories: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. Those behavior incidents noted here as Level 2 and Level 3 incidents are directly related to issues of safety and law; for these, the consequences are clearly stated and consistently applied and always result in some level of immediate suspension (in or out of school).

Suspension and expulsion of students from the Greater Brunswick Charter School will be done in compliance with all applicable state laws, particularly N.J.S.A 18A:36A-9 Charter School Program Act of 1995. The criteria for either suspension or expulsion include, but are not limited to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2:

Level 1 Incidents

Level 1 behavior incidents include:

- Continued and willful disobedience;
- Open defiance of the authority of any teacher or person having authority over him/her;
- Verbal Threats
- Cheating/Plagiarism
- Academic Misconduct
- Unexcused Absences
- Forgery
- Verbal Abuse
- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Lying

Level 1 incidents are addressed through Positive Discipline techniques, and handled in a consistent and fair manner. Repeated infractions may also result in additional consequences. Excessive behavior in these areas may also be grounds for suspension or expulsion. Other behavior incidents as determined by teachers and staff will also be handled by Positive Discipline techniques.

Level 2 Incidents

Level 2 behavior incidents include:

- Conduct of such character as to constitute a continuing danger to the physical well-being of other students;
- Physical assault or emotionally abusive behavior toward another student, teacher or staff member;
- Fighting;
- Aggressive Behavior towards school staff;
- Taking, or attempting to take, personal property or money from another student, or from his/her presence, by means of force or fear;
- Theft of property or money from school premises or any member of the Greater Brunswick Charter School community which occurs on school grounds;
- Willfully causing, or attempting to cause, substantial damage to school property;
- Participation in an unauthorized occupancy by any group of students or others of any part of any school or other building owned by any school district, and failure to leave such school or other facility promptly after having been directed to do so by the director or other person then in charge of such building or facility;
- Incitement which is intended to and does result in unauthorized occupation by any group of students or others of any part of a school or other facility owned by any school district
- Incitement that is intended to and does result in truancy by other students.
- Gang Activity

Level 2 behavior incidents have the following consequences:

The first incident will result in immediate in-school suspension in the quiet room or designated site.

However, incidents that involve any physical violence, inappropriate physical contact, insulting or aggressive behavior towards staff may result in an immediate out-of-school suspension. The student cannot be released from school until parents or guardians retrieve the student before the end of the school day. A responsibility conference with parents, student, and teacher must be held at that time.

The second incident will result in an immediate suspension from school, the length to be determined by the school administration in consultation with teaching staff. **However, if the second incident involves any physical violence or inappropriate physical contact, or if it involves insulting or aggressive behavior towards staff, the student will receive a long-term suspension, pending a hearing before the Board of Trustees to determine whether it is possible for the student to safely attend GBCS.**

The student cannot be released from school until parents or guardians retrieve the student. A responsibility conference with parents, student, teacher and Director must be held at that time with additional meetings or hearings scheduled as needed.

The third incident will result in immediate long-term suspension from school with the possibility of expulsion. The student cannot be released from school until parents or guardians retrieve the student.

Expulsion from Greater Brunswick Charter School may also be determined at any time by the Board of Trustees depending on the seriousness of the behavior incident. No suspension of a student shall be continued longer than the second regular meeting of the Board of Trustees after such suspension unless the same is continued by action of the Board, and the power to reinstate, continue any suspension reported to it or expel a student shall be vested in the Board of Trustees.

Level 3 Incidents

Level 3 behavior incidents require mandatory immediate out-of-school suspension. The student will be removed from the school according to law and the Memorandum of Agreement between the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office and the Board of Trustees. Excessive behavior in these areas will be grounds for expulsion.

Level 3 behaviors include:

- Drug and alcohol violations.
- Possession of deadly weapons and dangerous implements
- Firearm violations

Any student who commits an assault upon a teacher, staff member, board member or other visitor to the school not involving the use of a weapon or firearm, shall be immediately suspended from school.

Suspensions

The Educational Director or Executive Director in consultation with other staff members determines the length of a suspension. Persistent negative behavior, such as disruptiveness, disrespect, or bullying—even if it is non-violent—can result in longer suspensions and a hearing before the Board of Trustees if it is repeated.

It is the right of the student/parent to request a full hearing at which he/she may be represented by counsel and may confront and cross-examine witnesses when the suspension extends to ten or more days or when the Board of Trustees expels a student from GBCS.

Please review the policy and be prepared to discuss it with your child/children. We must all speak with one voice in letting our children know that hitting and violence are never permitted at GBCS.

Expulsions

Expulsion at GBCS is very rare—as of the publication of this edition of the Parent Handbook (August 2022) none have occurred. However, the Board of Trustees has placed students on Home Instruction for periods of time as the result of persistent disciplinary incidents.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Greater Brunswick Charter School believes that every student has the right to attend our school and school-related activities free from all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. We consider sexual harassment of students to be serious and will consider the full range of disciplinary options, up to and including expulsion, according to the nature of the offense. All students are expected to treat one another courteously, with respect for the other person's feelings; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop these behaviors when asked or told to stop. All students are prohibited from engaging in offensive verbal or physical conduct directed toward another student or adult. This prohibition applies whether the conduct is by word, gesture or any other intimidating conduct. Students and/or parents are encouraged to discuss their questions or concerns about the expectations in this area with the Director.

Weapons Policy

The possession of knives, other weapons, and matches on school property is totally prohibited. Disciplinary measures will be followed according to the Greater Brunswick Charter School Weapons Policy, available in the Office.

Bullying Policy

GBCS has adopted a bullying policy that protects the rights of students to a safe and comfortable learning environment and we enforce it strictly. The policy is posted on our website.

Anti-Bullying Coordinator: Caitlin Mitchell

Anti-Bullying Specialist: Martha Goz

Dress Code

GBCS is committed to promoting and providing an environment that supports student learning, while allowing for students to express their individuality. Consistent with this belief, the School maintains a dress code to establish standards for appropriate attire. It is important that the dress code reflect the beliefs of the school community and be updated as necessary. To this end, the School has committed to revising the existing dress code, which has been in place for many years. Through this revision, the goal is to develop a code that will provide for an environment that is conducive to learning, is applicable to students at all grade levels and is not gender-specific.



All community members, parents, students, and staff were invited to provide feedback on our current dress code and the proposed changes, once they are created. The current dress code and the [proposed draft dress code](#) will be available on the website. All feedback received will be reviewed by a representative, stakeholder-based committee that will make recommendations to the School Review Committee and the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will then take this feedback into consideration to inform the adoption of a new dress code.

Below is the existing dress code that we will follow until the proposed dress code is approved.

Greater Brunswick Charter School has a flexible dress code that emphasizes individual expression within responsible limits.

Students should always be neat and clean while in school. Clothing should not be distracting or offensive, and should always embody respect for others in our school community. Hats and head coverings may not be worn in the classroom unless they are required by religious observance. All clothing and footwear should be compatible with safety, and should not interfere with the ability to participate in classroom or school activities. For example, flip-flops or thong sandals are not allowed, as well as clothing that limits physical mobility.

No clothing with offensive, violent, vulgar, or sexually suggestive messages will be allowed. For example, clothes that have words such as "Hottie," "Sexy," or promote violent films or other media are not allowed. Also, clothing that is inappropriately revealing, immodest, or uses graphic techniques to draw attention to students' bodies in sexually explicit ways will not be allowed. Underwear must remain covered.

Students who arrive at school dressed in violation of the dress code will be given an opportunity to change to more appropriate clothing (if it is available) or sent home with their parents. Teachers are the primary authority within their classrooms to implement the dress code.

Prohibited Items

Greater Brunswick Charter School can assume no responsibility in the event of loss, theft or damage of personal property. Therefore, your child should not bring to school large sums of money, valuable jewelry, or any other items of value such as Airpods, smart watches, hand held electronic games, cameras, cell phones, etc.



Smartphone/Cell- phones present a particular problem—they are extremely disruptive during school and are often misplaced or taken by other students. The school is not able to investigate the disappearance or misuse of student cell phones that are not properly secured. In addition, we have seen an increase of misbehavior, including Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) since students began having personal Smartphone/Cell- phones at home and school. We have also seen a negative impact on mental health and increased distractibility. This mirrors what research is showing, globally, as four foundational harms of Smartphones/Cell-phones and Social Media: Social Deprivation, Sleep Deprivation, Attention Fragmentation, and Addiction. (Jonathan Haidt, *The Anxious Generation*)

Smartphones/Cell- phones/Smartwatches, if required by parents, must remain turned off during the school day and secured in cell phone lockers in homeroom classrooms for the day. Students may not use personal phones during the school day, during the After School Academy, or on class trips. Supervised students may use a classroom phone or an office phone for calls to parents or guardians.

Students are expected to keep their cell phones in designated lockers during the school day to support a focused and productive learning environment.

Any cell phones seen by staff during school hours (including After School Academy) will be taken away and put in the cell phone locker. If there is a second incident, the parent will be required to retrieve the cell phone from the office. If a cell phone is taken away, the incident will be recorded in OnCourse to reinforce the school's technology guidelines.

In addition, toys, trading cards and other non-school-related items that interfere with or distract from the educational climate should remain at home. If your child brings any of these items to school, it will be confiscated for the day, and held in the Office until school closing.

Please give this policy your support and remind your son or daughter to leave these items at home.

School Governance

This section covers the democratic governance of Greater Brunswick Charter School. It contains information on the General Membership as a body, the Board of Trustees, the various standing Committees of the school, and the Student Council.



General Membership

We in the Greater Brunswick Charter School community have come together because we believe that the education of children is a joint responsibility, shared between all members – parents/guardians, staff, students and the community at large. To ensure that the best interests of the child are served in this process, a strong program of communication between home and school must be maintained, and parental involvement is strongly encouraged. Events such as Membership Meetings, Family Sharing Night, and Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences, as well as Weekly Updates and Monthly Newsletters, help to facilitate communication between home and school.

Parents and guardians have a primary responsibility to the school as members of the General Membership. More than a traditional Parent-Teacher Organization or Association, the General Membership plays an integral role in the governance of the school. This role is expressed in a number of ways:

Parents/guardians are also relied upon to provide their expertise and labor directly to the school. Parent expertise may take any form of involvement, from Board committee membership, classroom volunteers, classroom presenters, Enrichment Clusters, or other involvement as needs arise.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the formal legal entity responsible for proper management of the school. It represents all parts of the school community—parents/guardians, staff and students—and serves as trustees for the interests of the children attending the school.

The Board of Trustees consists of eight parent/guardians who vote as members of the General Membership. The Board may appoint four additional voting members from the larger (non-school) community. The Directors and staff representatives hold non-voting positions.

The Board of Trustees has all powers and authority necessary for the management of the school. It has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that we fulfill the school's mission. The Board has all the authority to decide matters related to the operation of the school, including, but not limited to, budgeting, hiring, and operating procedures. Board meetings are where the official business of the school, such as contracts and resolutions, is carried out.

The five main responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are:

- Development of school policy.
- Financial and legal responsibility and oversight.
- Evaluation of the Directors.
- Long-term planning, and the development (with the Directors) of annual goals.
- Oversight and support of school committees.

Trustees have the following duties:

- Attending and publicly posting regularly scheduled Board meetings and publishing its proceedings
- Planning and participating in general meetings
- Articulating the school's mission and ensuring broad access of information about the school
- Approving major expenditures, curriculum and policies
- Participating in the annual evaluation of the Director
- Developing the school's long-term strategic goals & annual goals and periodically reviewing the progress towards their attainment
- Receiving state-mandated Board Member training
- Attending functions of state-wide charter school organizations

Working to ensure the interests of charter schools are protected in state legislation
Keeping up with developments (internal, external, financial) affecting the school
Building involvement of Charter School community members and organizations in the wider communities

Board Meetings

The Board of Trustees meets every month as per its published schedule. Meetings generally start at 5:30PM, unless otherwise noted. There is always a Public Comment section where school members can address any item that is on the agenda. Suggestions for items of business from any staff member, student, parent/guardian or citizen of the sending districts are welcome but must be introduced, in the form of a resolution, by a Trustee. If you have an item of business for the Board to consider, please approach a Board member to have it included on the agenda at least ten days before the scheduled Board meeting, in order to give all Trustees sufficient time to review the item before the meeting.

Committees

Our parent-student-teacher committees are where a lot of the discussion, brainstorming, research and work on school issues take place. Committees are formed of Board members, Administration, parents and teachers. Typically, a Trustee will coordinate each committee and provide communication between the Board and the committee. We have both Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees, which are assembled as needed. Examples of Ad Hoc Committees include the Hiring Committee and Technology Committee.

Governance Committee

The governance committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees to assume the primary responsibility for matters pertaining to Board of Trustees recruitment, nominations, orientation, training, and evaluation in accordance with the bylaws of the school as well as established policies and practices approved by the Board of Trustees.

School Review Committee

The School Review Committee, comprised of professional staff and parents, makes decisions related to the educational program. Program changes go before this committee before being brought to the Board of Trustees. This committee ensures that the curriculum and educational program reflect the mission of the school, the expertise of our educational professionals, and the concerns of the General Membership.

Development and Community Outreach Committee

The development and community outreach committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees to assume the primary responsibility for raising non-grant funds to support the school's mission and serving as a link between the school and the surrounding communities.

Finance and Facilities Committee

The finance committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Board of Trustees. It has the responsibility for working with the School Leader and Business Administrator to create the upcoming fiscal year budget; presenting budget recommendations to the Board; monitoring implementation of the approved budget on a regular basis and recommending proposed budget revisions; recommending to the Board appropriate policies for the management of the charter school's assets. The finance committee shall be assisted by the School Leader and Business Administrator.

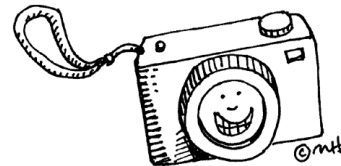
Miscellaneous Lost and Found

All of your child's personal items, such as lunchboxes, jackets, gloves, and other pieces of clothing, should be labeled with his or her name. If an item does get misplaced, you can look for it in the Lost and Found Box located in the Office. Please check it on a regular basis for your child's items – it can fill up fast! Items not claimed by the final day of the school year will be donated to charity.



Student Photo and Videotaping

From time to time, students may be photographed or videotaped as a part of school activities or for educational purposes. Photographs may be displayed at GBCS, used in our school yearbook, shared on our website and our Greater Brunswick Charter School Facebook page.



A photographic consent release form must be signed to grant or deny permission for GBCS to use photographs of your child for the purpose of publicly advancing the school.

Occasionally, a special project such as a documentary or publication may require an additional release form to use your child's image. Please complete the photo/video release forms and contact us if you have any questions about them.