



ONE TEAM. ONE MISSION.
LET'S FLY!

— ★ —
Governors' Village STEM Academy Upper Campus • SY2026-2027

FAMILY / SCHOLAR HANDBOOK

AT A GLANCE • UPPER CAMPUS

One Team. One Mission. Let's Fly!

FAMILY GUIDE

A practical, colorful guide to the routines, expectations, safety procedures, supports, and resources that help every GVSA scholar succeed.

IMPORTANT

This guide summarizes GVSA and applicable CMS expectations. The official CMS Student Code of Conduct and CMS Parent-Student Handbook remain controlling documents.

Welcome to GVSA Upper Campus

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year at Governors Village STEM Academy - Upper Campus! The administrative team, teachers, and support staff are excited to partner with families to ensure a successful and enriching experience for every scholar. GVSA is committed to a supportive and inclusive environment where innovation, collaboration, and excellence in STEM education are at the forefront.

Our Vision

GVSA empowers students’ academic and personal growth by cultivating critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity so students become lifelong learners prepared to excel in STEM pathways in high school, college, careers, and beyond.

Quick Start: What Families Need to Know

SCHOOL DAY Students enter at 8:45 a.m. The student day begins at 9:15 a.m. and ends at 4:15 p.m. Breakfast and lunch is available for all scholars at no cost.	NO CELL PHONE SCHOOL Students turn off personal cell phones, smartwatches, headphones/earbuds, and other personal technology devices and store them in book bags before entering.
EARLY CHECKOUT Early checkouts should occur before 3:00 p.m. The adult picking up a student signs out at the front office and may be asked for identification.	TRANSPORTATION Transportation changes are not accepted after 3:00 p.m. CMS Transportation: 980-343-3665.
DRESS Skirts, dresses, or shorts must be at or below knee length. Dress/grooming must support safety and an orderly learning environment.	RESPECT Courtesy, compliance with staff directions, safe conduct, and protection of school property are expected in classrooms, hallways, buses, online spaces, and school activities.

School Leadership & Family Contacts

Families are encouraged to communicate directly with the administrator responsible for their student's grade level. Conferences should be scheduled in advance by email.

JANIQUEA BARNES Grade Level Administrator — 6th & 8th Grade janiqua1.barnes@cms.k12.nc.us Use email to request a conference or discuss grade-level concerns.	KATRINA LAWSON Grade Level Administrator — 7th Grade katrinal.lawson@cms.k12.nc.us Use email to request a conference or discuss grade-level concerns.
SCHOOL COUNSELORS 6th & 7th Grade: Ms. Whitfield 7th & 8th Grade: Ms. Ziana	CMS TRANSPORTATION Questions about bus times, routes, or drivers: 980-343-3665 Transportation changes are not accepted after 3:00 p.m.

Communication Expectations

- Visitors are welcome on campus by appointment only.
- Parent/teacher conferences must be scheduled in advance and are held outside school hours or during the teacher's planning period.
- Administrators generally are not available at the beginning of the school day until students are in class and buses have arrived.
- Routine calls, messages, and forgotten-item requests will not interrupt instruction. Items/messages may be left in the main office and students will be contacted during class change time.
- In an emergency, school staff will determine the safest and most appropriate time to contact the student.

Administration

Jeff Cook, Principal	jeffreys.cook@cms.k12.nc.us
Ayisha Haskins, Assistant Principal	ayisha.henry@cms.k12.nc.us
Janiqua Barnes, Dean of Students (6th & 8th)	janiqua1.barnes@cms.k12.nc.us
Katrina Lawson, Dean of Students (7th)	katrinal.lawson@cms.k12.nc.us

Counselors

Ailiyah Whitfield (6th & 7th Grade)	aaliyah1.whitfield@cms.k12.nc.us
Vanisha Ziana (6th & 8th Grade)	vanishaa.ziana@cms.k12.nc.us

Social Worker

Alyse Bell (6th- 8th Grade)	alyseg.bell@cms.k12.nc.us
------------------------------------	--

Front Office Team

Sue Kiss — Treasurer — susan.kiss@cms.k12.nc.us

Anna Waller — Data Manager — annam.waller@cms.k12.nc.us

Channie Thomas — Attendance Secretary — channien.thomas@cms.k12.nc.us

Attendance, Arrival & Tardies

Attendance

School attendance is compulsory. Regular attendance is necessary for student success. After an absence, the student should bring a written excuse with the student's name, date(s) of absence, reason for absence, and parent signature on the first day of return to the homeroom teacher. Students are responsible for initiating make-up work.

Arrival

Students may enter the building at 8:45 a.m. through the cafeteria entrance by the bus parking lot. The school day begins promptly at 9:15 a.m. Students who arrive after 9:15 a.m. must sign in at the front office and will receive a permission slip to enter class.

Tardy & Skipping

Students are responsible for arriving at every class on time. Bathrooms are closed during transitions. Students receive two restroom passes during the day and may use the restroom during lunch; emergency situations will be accommodated. A student who is out of class without a pass is considered skipping and will receive a consequence under the CMS Student Code of Conduct.

CMS RULE 1 — ATTENDANCE The current CMS Code treats tardiness and skipping as Rule 1 attendance concerns. Minimum and maximum responses are Level I; leaving campus without permission and being in an unauthorized area can carry more serious responses.	FAMILY ACTION Report absences promptly, provide required written excuses, monitor attendance, and communicate with the school when barriers to regular attendance arise.
--	--

Arrival, Dismissal & Transportation

Early Dismissal

- The school day ends at 4:15 p.m.; families are strongly discouraged from early checkout.
- Early checkouts should occur before 3:00 p.m.
- The person picking up the student must come to the front office and sign the student out and may be asked to show identification.
- Students will not be called from class to sit in the office waiting for a parent/guardian.

Dismissal

At the dismissal bell, students participating in after-school activities report immediately to designated areas. Bus riders report to the bus parking lot after their slots are listed on the Live Dismissal Document. Car riders report to the front sidewalk area in front of the school.

Bus Safety

Riding the bus is a privilege. Disruptive or inappropriate behavior is prohibited and will not be tolerated. School rules are in effect on buses and at bus stops. Bus discipline is addressed under the CMS Student Code of Conduct and can result in suspension from riding the bus or suspension from school. Families are responsible for transportation when a student is suspended from the bus.

Deliveries

Student deliveries should not be sent to school. Balloons, candy, cake, flowers, and similar items will not be accepted. The front office will allow parents to drop off lunch.

DOORDASH / UBER EATS

CMS Rule 2 prohibits outside food delivery services during school hours. If a student receives a food delivery, the food will be confiscated and the student will receive a Level I consequence.

Cell Phones, Personal Technology & Recording

GVSA is a No Cell Phone School. Personal cell phones, smartwatches, headphones/earbuds, tablets, camera phones, and other personal technology devices are prohibited during the school day. The GVSA school-day expectation begins when students arrive at 8:45 a.m. and continues through dismissal at 4:15 p.m., including common areas such as restrooms, the gym, and cafeteria.

STORE BEFORE ENTERING Devices must be turned off and placed in book bags before entering the building.	FIRST OFFENSE After a verbal warning/conference with the teacher, a device used or displayed during the instructional day will be confiscated.
SECOND OFFENSE The device will be held in the main/administrator’s office until the end of the school day for student pickup.	ADDITIONAL OFFENSES The device will be held in the main office until the end of the school day, and a parent must come to pick it up.
ADMINISTRATOR REQUEST Refusal to submit a technology device at an administrator’s request is identified by GVSA as an automatic-suspension offense.	RECORDING Students may not use cell phones or other videotaping equipment to record teachers in the classroom. Recording teachers violates individual privacy and will result in appropriate consequences.

CMS also states that personal technology devices must be off and put away during instructional time, and violations may result in confiscation and/or disciplinary action.

Dress & Grooming

CMS Rule 4 requires student attire and grooming to promote safety, health, and an orderly educational environment. GVSA's school-specific standards apply unless a specific exception is made by the school administrator.

APPROPRIATE	NOT APPROPRIATE
• Sneakers, shoes, sandals with a back strap • Crocs with a back strap • Oversized pants/jeans with a belt • Sweatpants worn above the waist • Skirts, dresses, or shorts at or below knee length • Shirts covering the stomach; straps at least three fingers wide • Leggings with a top covering the bottom • Distressed jeans with holes only below the knee • Basketball jerseys with a T-shirt • Hoodies not worn over the head	• Flip flops/slides/slip-on sandals without a back strap • Bedroom shoes/slippers/pajamas • Biking shorts or legging shorts • Pants below the waist/showing undergarments • Shorts/skirts/dresses/slits above knee length • Crop tops exposing stomach/back • Excessively tight, see-through, or low-cut tops • Headgear unless for religious practices • Skinny jeans below the waist • Leggings/jeggings without a covering top • Inappropriate or profane messages/symbols • Distressed pants with holes above the knee

Dress Code Response

1st — The student is given an opportunity to self-correct. 2nd — A parent/guardian is called and required clothing/shoes must be brought to the office; the student remains in ISS until corrected. 3rd — Two dress-code violations constitute a consequence according to the CMS Student Code of Conduct.

CMS Rule 4 identifies student dress as a Level I response category, while GVSA's local procedures provide the school-specific steps above.

Schoolwide Behavior & Character Expectations

GVSA focuses on a teaching and learning environment conducive to quality instruction. Students are expected to behave in ways that allow all students to benefit from educational opportunities. Self-discipline, respect, responsibility, and safe choices are central expectations.

RESPECT Treat students, staff, visitors, and property with courtesy. Profanity directed at others, disrespect, and inappropriate language will be addressed.	RESPONSIBILITY Follow reasonable directions, report to the office/ISS when directed, bring appropriate materials, and actively engage in classroom learning.
SAFETY No fighting, aggressive behavior, threats, weapons, drugs, vapes, alcohol, tobacco, or unlawful items. Safe conduct applies on campus, buses, at bus stops, online, and during school activities.	LEARNING Students must protect the learning environment by avoiding constant disruption, horseplay, unauthorized movement, and conduct that interferes with teaching and learning.

CMS Rules That Commonly Apply

- Rule 1 — Attendance: tardiness, skipping, leaving campus without permission, and unauthorized areas.
- Rule 2 — Food/Beverages: students eat and drink only in authorized areas; outside food delivery services are not allowed during school hours.
- Rule 4 — Student Dress: attire and grooming must promote safety, health, and an orderly learning environment.
- Rule 5 — Personal Property: personal technology and other items must not interfere with teaching and learning; violations may lead to confiscation and discipline.
- Rule 7 — Insubordination: students must comply with lawful directions from authorized staff and communicate respectfully.
- Rule 8 — Bullying/Profanity/Obscenity/Derogatory Language: bullying and harassing behavior are prohibited.
- Rule 9 — Generally Disruptive Behavior: students must maintain behavior appropriate for instruction and school activities.
- Rule 10 — Trespassing/Unauthorized Areas and inappropriate technology use: students must remain in authorized areas and may not use electronic communication to violate school rules or law.
- Rule 35 — Student Health and Safety: students must follow adopted safety rules and procedures.
- Rule 36 — Conduct Away from School Property: certain off-campus conduct may be addressed when it has or may have a direct and immediate impact on school operations or safety.

These CMS rules and response levels are summarized from the current CMS Code of Student Conduct. The full Code should be consulted for definitions, response ranges, procedural protections, and circumstances affecting consequences.

Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination & Online Conduct

All students have the right to attend school and school-related activities without discrimination. Students are expected to treat other students and school employees with courtesy and respect, avoid offensive behavior, and stop such behavior when directed.

Reporting

A student who believes they have been harassed by another student or school employee should report the incident to a teacher, counselor, or school administrator. Allegations will be investigated and addressed. A substantiated complaint will result in disciplinary action consistent with the nature of the offense.

Online Conduct

CMS Code provisions can apply to conduct away from school when the conduct has or may have a direct and immediate impact on the orderly and efficient operation of schools or the safety of individuals. Technology may not be used for bullying, harassment, threats, discrimination, or other prohibited conduct.

Say Something / Safety Reporting

Students should immediately report threats, weapons, dangerous behavior, harassment, bullying, or other safety concerns to a trusted adult or through the appropriate CMS reporting pathway. Emergencies should be reported immediately to school staff or emergency services.

Drug, Tobacco, Alcohol & Prohibited Items

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools prohibits the use of drug/tobacco products on district-owned, leased, or maintained buildings, property, or vehicles and at instructional programs or school-related activities, including field trips and athletics. The policy applies to students, employees, visitors, guests, vendors, and private vehicles while on school property.

PROHIBITED Weapons or items that may be used as weapons, drugs, vapes, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, lighters/matches, and items that appear unlawful are prohibited at the bus stop, on the bus, and on school property.	ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES CMS prohibits unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and/or alcohol on school property or at school functions. In addition to school consequences, certain conduct must be reported to law enforcement and may trigger other legal reporting requirements.
SAFETY SCREENINGS CMS may use safety-screening tools and procedures designed to keep weapons out of schools, including metal detection and other screening methods.	AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION — GVSA GVSA identifies fighting; failure to identify oneself; lighters/matches, smoking on campus, or tobacco violations; refusal to leave a classroom/follow administrator directions; being under the influence of drugs/alcohol; and refusal to submit a technology device at an administrator's request as automatic-suspension offenses.

Reflection Center / ISS & OSS

Reflection Center / In-School Suspension

When behavior escalates and disrupts learning or a student fails to comply with classroom or school rules, the student may be assigned to the Reflection Center/ISS. The purpose is to provide an opportunity to reflect, realign with expectations, complete academic work, and develop better decision-making tools. Parents/guardians will be notified.

- Students must complete assigned ISS time before returning to the regular classroom.
- Absences during ISS assignments are made up upon return to school.
- Inappropriate behavior in ISS will result in OSS.
- Assigned work must be completed before leaving ISS; failure to do so may result in further disciplinary action.
- Students remain silent while in the Reflection Center/ISS.
- No electronic devices are permitted in ISS.
- Chromebooks are used solely for assigned work.

Out-of-School Suspension

GVSA policies will be enforced fairly, equitably, and consistently. Parents will be notified whenever a student is suspended. Suspension length and response are governed by the CMS Code of Student Conduct and the circumstances of the incident.

Assemblies, Activities & School Events

Assembly Expectations

- In formal situations, clapping is the correct method of applause. Whistling, stomping, and cheering are not acceptable.
- Absolute silence is required during public performances. Students must not talk during any part of a program.
- Students sit attentively and act as courteous audience members.
- No books or papers are brought to assemblies unless specifically directed by staff.
- Students remain in place until the assembly is dismissed.

After-School Activities

At the dismissal bell, students involved in after-school activities report immediately to their designated areas. Students are expected to follow all school, staff, transportation, and activity-specific expectations.

Important 2026–2027 dates from the Family Handbook

DATE	EVENT	TIME
AUG 19, 2026	GVSA Open House — Upper Campus Only	5:30–7:00 p.m.
SEP 10, 2026	GVSA Family Networking & Empowerment Session	5:30–7:00 p.m.
SEP 17, 2026	GVSA Fall Curriculum Night	5:30–7:00 p.m.
FAMILY ACADEMIC RESOURCES Families are encouraged to use the academic resources provided to support learning at home. The Family Handbook references the GVSA Upper Parent Connection Page and the GVSA Upper Generic Scholar Supply List — Updated July 2026.	AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT ASEP provides a safe, nurturing environment with homework time and enrichment such as art, music, science, and cooking. Students must be enrolled. Contact ASEP Coordinator Takia Denmark by calling the school after 12:00 p.m.	
IMMUNIZATIONS All students must meet district immunization guidelines. Families should keep records current and submitted to the school nurse. The Family Handbook includes English and Spanish requirement links.	ATHLETICS Students in grades 7–8 participating in athletics must maintain academic eligibility and have a current physical on file.	

Family Partnership & Student Success

FAMILIES CAN HELP Review this handbook with your student; monitor attendance and grades; reinforce device, dress, transportation, and behavior expectations; communicate concerns early; and ensure emergency contact information remains current.	STUDENTS CAN HELP Arrive on time, be prepared to learn, follow directions, protect school property, use technology appropriately, treat others with respect, and ask for help when needed.
STAFF WILL SUPPORT Teachers and administrators will teach expectations, respond to concerns, communicate with families, and use school and district procedures to support a safe, orderly learning environment.	WHEN CONCERNS ARISE Start with the staff member closest to the concern when appropriate. If additional support is needed, contact the Grade Level Administrator by email to schedule a conference.

Family Acknowledgment

Please acknowledge that you and your student have read and understood the information in this handbook by typing in or clicking the following link:

<https://bit.ly/4dP5abt>

Family Resource Hub

CMS FAMILY ACADEMY Family learning and support resources through Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.	CMS STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT The full 2026–2027 Code of Student Conduct is the controlling district reference for rules, definitions, response levels, and disciplinary procedures.
CMS PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK Use the official CMS Parent-Student Handbook for districtwide procedures and annual information. CMS schools publish the 2026–2027 handbook and Code of Conduct resources.	CELL PHONE / PTD POLICY CMS 2026–2027 guidance requires personal technology devices to be off and put away during instructional time; school-level expectations may be more restrictive.
EMAIL COUNSELORS FOR AN APPOINTMENT Ms. Whitfield-6th & 7th Grade Ms. Ziana- 7th & 8th Grade	TRANSPORTATION CMS Transportation: 980-343-3665 Questions about bus times, routes, or drivers should be directed to CMS Transportation.

Important School Resources

[CMS Family Academy](#) • [CMS Student Code of Conduct](#) • [CMS Parent/Student Handbook](#) • [Cell Phone Policy](#) • [2026–2027 CMS Academic Calendar](#)