

Genesee Community Charter School

Staff Guiding Principles

Have purposeful gatherings

Be present. Our professional development time together is “sacred” and purposeful. We will be respectful of starting and ending times by arriving on time, prepared in advance by having read the agenda and supporting documents provided to us prior to our meeting. Business meeting agendas will be prepared as far in advance as possible, but we will be flexible enough to include new business when warranted.

We will endeavor to stick to the topic at hand and give warm and cool feedback where appropriate. We will be willing to help find a solution to problems, to split up the work for specific tasks or purposes, and to participate openly during spirited conversations.

As a result of our purposeful gatherings, we will bring positive change to GCCS. We will keep open minds and open hearts, be true to the agenda, and make a plan to bring closure to agenda items. Above all, we will nourish our souls with the comradery of staff and nourish our bodies with tasty snacks. We will honor the goodwill of our host classrooms by leaving no trace at the end of our gatherings.

Communicate respectfully & honestly

At GCCS, we value the art of active listening. We will ask if we are not sure, we will clarify if we are misunderstood and we will say what we mean and mean what we say. We will go directly to the source to get the facts and assume best intentions.

We will speak up and speak with our conscience. We will speak in the first person, in a respectful tone, with a sense of humor, and with an open mind. We will keep perspective and be willing to let things go. Feedback will provide opportunities for growth. The words we choose will convey respect and sensitivity, towards all children, parents, and colleagues, but when our choice of words is inappropriate we will apologize and make things right.

Be mindful of differences

We acknowledge our differences and rejoice in them. We will learn from and about each other and try new things. We appreciate the diversity of opinions and will build consensus whenever possible, but may agree to disagree. We accept that we will not always be right and should be willing to compromise. Our language and actions should honor the principle of Diversity and Inclusion.

Stay focused on the mission

We will keep the mission and vision in mind when making decisions. Read and revisit the mission for it is our promise to the community. Communicate it clearly. Bear in mind that we are an EL school with its roots in Outward Bound. Ask, “What are our guiding questions?” and stay focused on the big picture.

Remember that our responsibility includes outreach to educators beyond our school. We do so with humility and the strong belief that we have much to learn from other schools, teachers, and disciplines.

Honor promises, commitments and confidences

We will do what we said we would do and understand what we said we would do. We will be accountable and reliable, but know our limits and get help when we need it. We will be as good as our word and be honest if we don’t know what to do. Keep student names and personal information confidential. Refrain from being in the middle, refer parties to a more appropriate person or venue.

Participate and contribute to your fullest potential

We will always put forth our best work and have confidence in our abilities. Underestimate no one, especially yourself. We will share our ideas and encourage others to contribute outside their areas of expertise. Ask questions and pitch in when needed. We will take care of ourselves and recognize when our potentials have changed. Step back and check-in where people are in their own lives. We will acknowledge our limits and strive for balance between home life and school.

Revise, reflect, revise some more

We will model revision and reflection for students and remember there is always room for further discovery and improvement. Step back and get perspective but remain focused. We will think and plan before we begin and learn from our mistakes along the way. We will provide meaningful warm and cool feedback to each other and listen to and learn from others. We will remember that the process is about the learning and we will keep our comments related to it by following set protocols and common courtesy.

We will take time to reflect on feedback and on our work before moving ahead. We will be responsible for own words and actions and observe Success and Failure.

Take care of each other and ourselves

We will celebrate each other's successes and support each other by checking in during the day and after school. We will help our new colleagues and support them in their journey with us. We will ask if someone is ok and we will listen, be supportive, and know when to respect a person's emotional and physical space. We will give the benefit of the doubt and be sensitive to each other during difficult times. We will ask questions when we don't know and ask for help when we need it. We will take care of ourselves, so we can help care for others.

We will check in with our team and make sure everyone is meeting their needs and celebrate at the end of the day. It is important for us to remember birthdays and important personal events and we will take time to do things together socially as a staff.

Have a sense of humor

We should laugh daily and laugh out loud. Be ready to laugh at your mistakes and laugh together. Smile, sing, and dance, in your classroom, with your colleagues, or by yourself.

We will keep things in perspective, check in and make sure our humor was intended to defuse and release, not insult or stress, or derail conversations. Have inside jokes in your classroom, but not at the expense of others. Most importantly, enjoy the children and each other. "Feel the joy" of working with our children.

Celebrate and share

We will recognize the contributions and achievements of all members and value the time we have to share with each other. We are proud of our individual and group efforts and will appreciate the journey, not just the end. We will compete against ourselves, rather than amongst ourselves. We will be a respectful audience to those who are speaking and we value the importance of greeting, sharing, and celebrations at our gatherings. Take time to have fun together.