

Guidance Academy Family Handbook

Mission Statement

Guidance Academy (GA) seeks to guide the hearts and minds, develop the Islamic character, and enrich the spiritual lives of its students through quality academic and religious instruction. Its purpose is to prepare all students for college and instill in them social responsibility based on the Qur'anic and Prophetic tradition.

Admissions Policy

Priority for admission to Guidance Academy is given to the following:

1. Current/returning students
2. Siblings of current/returning students
3. Children of staff members receive priority admission during the first year they join Guidance Academy
4. New applicants

Philosophy

Guidance Academy is an educational institute rooted in Islamic tradition and progressive learning and pedagogy to help provide families and students a unique method of education. At Guidance Academy, we believe that learning is an integrated pattern of understanding that should challenge yet not overwhelm students. We firmly believe that most instruction and reinforcement should take place in the classroom so that students are able to spend time at home with their families or pursuing other interests.

A school where Islam is the focus, Guidance Academy offers an Islamic Studies curriculum that focuses on practical methods of tarbiyah (personal development) and provides them the fundamentals of Islam- a religion rich in diversity. Classes devoted to proper recitation and memorization of the Qur'an are embedded in our daily schedule, allowing families to pursue memorization of the entire Qur'an if they wish. Our Qur'an classes also focus on understanding the meaning of the Qur'an.

The Curriculum

The curriculum at Guidance Academy has been developed to raise leaders in both the religious and civic realms. Based on the belief that children learn through play, active manipulation of their environment, life experience and communicating with peers and adults, the Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (K4) curriculum is designed to facilitate children's involvement in their own learning. The curriculum, based on the Pearson's OWL Curriculum, balances active and quiet play. Children work both alone and in small groups where teachers facilitate the children's interactions with each other and their environment. Teachers observe each child's activities in order to tailor and expand curriculum to meet individual needs and interests. Teachers encourage parents to maintain close communication with staff, and work closely with parents to develop strategies for dealing with specific issues.

The curriculum for students in Five-Year-Old kindergarten (K5) to ninth grade also has Pearson Education its foundation. Students will learn about all areas of education including math, literature, history, science, and understand their relationship to Islam. Instruction moves from active play in the Kindergarten classroom to writing, map-making, projects, presentations, and complex science experiments in the middle school.

Grading Scale

Guidance Academy uses the following grading scale:

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
59 & below	F

Please be advised that re-testing is not allowed.

Communication with Staff

While teachers welcome and value the opportunity to meet and talk with parents, it is difficult for them to speak with parents when class is beginning or ending or while it is in session. Please communicate with the teacher via email or call (414) 312-8755 between 8:00 AM and 3:30 PM to schedule an appointment.

Communication about your child's progress can be discussed during a planned meeting with the teacher. Please check Gradelink for assignments to ensure you are updated on your child's progress.

Conferences and Meetings

Parent conferences are held two times per year and Report Cards are distributed four times per year. Conferences may also be initiated by the parents or the teacher at any time during the year.

General Information

Calendar: Please see the calendar for vacation days as well as Report Card days.

No School Announcements: School may be canceled or delayed if the weather is exceptionally bad or for some other emergency. The administration at Guidance Academy will contact parents by telephone, email, and/or text message in the event school is canceled. If conditions are almost safe, but the department of Public Works needs extra time to plow the roads or salt the streets, the school day may be shortened. If South Milwaukee Schools District cancels school due to weather, Guidance Academy also closes. Announcements specific to GA that are not weather-related will be made via SMS/Text message and/or email.

Absences/Late Arrivals: Please call (414) 312-8755 or email shussan@guidanceacademy.org to report student absences. If a child is going to be absent, please call the school and leave a message before 8:00 a.m. If your child is going to be late, arriving after 8:00 AM, a parent must come to the front office to sign him or her in and the student will receive a Tardy Pass. Teachers will not admit late students to class without a Tardy Pass.

If a student has to leave school early for some reason, please send in a note to the teacher/front office **in advance** alerting them to the time of pick-up, who will be picking him/her up, etc. The child will be accompanied to the front office at the appointed time and should be met there.

Please see our discipline policy for information about repeated absences or times tardy.

Safety and Emergency Plans

Please note that during inclement weather, if you want to pick up your child early, you are encouraged to do so. Parents must come to the school office to sign out their child early, and they **may not** go directly to the classroom.

It is very important for parents to keep the school informed of any changes to phone numbers (work, home, cell phones, emergency contacts), address, day care schedules, etc. During an emergency situation, time is crucial so current data is essential to make sure your child arrives home safely.

Arrival and Dismissal at School/Parking

All students should be dropped off at the main Guidance Academy entrance no earlier than 7:45 AM. K4 students should go directly to their classrooms. All other students should go directly to the cafeteria for the Morning Assembly. Students enrolled in Wraparound care who arrive between 7:30 and 7:50 AM must be taken to the Child Care room. If for any reason you arrive at school after 8:10 AM, the door will be locked and you will need to ring the bell for the main office in order to enter the main entrance.

Dismissal for all students is at 3:30 PM. Children should be picked up from the main Guidance Academy door by 3:45PM.

We ask that every effort be made to be **prompt at arrival and dismissal** times as a courtesy to all children and teachers. Students not picked up by 3:45 PM will be taken to GA Child Care. Parents must then sign in at the office and we will have the child sent down from Child Care. Parents will be charged a late pick-up fee of a \$10 for each half-hour they arrive after 3:30 PM.

Parents needing care between 7:30 and 8:00 AM or between 3:30 and 5:30 PM may enroll their children in wraparound care. For more information please call or email the office.

Authorization Notes

If your child is to be picked up by **any person** not already authorized to do so, you must send a note with your child or contact the office directly. The note should be dated, include the name of the person picking up the child, and must be signed by a parent/guardian. Please inform the person picking up your child that the teachers/office staff will ask for identification.

If your child is going to visit a classmate directly from school, you must send a dated and signed note containing all details of this change.

Dress Code

Though there is no uniform requirement for Guidance Academy at this time, the following guidelines must be followed.

All Students:

No holes in clothing, no jewelry, no pins are allowed, and no faces

Boys:

Kufis, thobes, and traditional Islamic clothing is strongly encouraged. Boys may wear pants (no shorts please) and shirts (no tank tops please) whose bottom edge falls well below the waistband of the pants.

Girls:

Girls are strongly encouraged to wear scarves (hijabs), abayas, and traditional Islamic clothing. They may wear pants (no shorts please) and blouses (no tank tops or sleeveless tops please, no cap sleeves, the entire underarm must be covered) whose bottom edge falls well below the waistband of the pants- preferably at least to the mid-thigh. If dresses and skirts are worn, leggings (not tights) must also be worn.

Girls in grades four and above must wear a slip-on headscarf (no pins please) in addition to long-sleeved blouses whose bottom edge falls to the knees.

Jumu'ah is special at Guidance Academy. In recognition of our weekly Eid, students are encouraged to wear Islamically appropriate cultural clothing. Dress-Up Jumu'ah is optional.

Parents must provide students in K3 to First Grade with a change of clothing to be kept at school in case of an accident. Please put all clothing in a large zip bag clearly labeled with your child's name.

All parents are asked to provide a smock or old t-shirt to protect their child's clothing during those messier projects and art.

Snack and Lunch

Parents may send their children to school with a healthy lunch or purchase lunch from Masjid Al-Huda's lunch program.

Guidance Academy does not offer free lunch. If a student forgets his or her lunch, we will provide a healthy snack or meal and bill the parents for the cost.

All students in Preschool to First grade should also come with one healthy snack. It is critical that parents inform the classroom teachers and administration of **any allergies or other medical conditions** that restrict your child's diet.

Birthday celebrations are not allowed at Guidance Academy. Please do not send treats to school with your child.

Please do not send gum, candy, cupcakes, donuts, or soda with your children to school. We may give "treats" for special occasions in school.

Backpack

Your child should have a backpack to transport books, notices, art projects, and snacks. The backpack should be user friendly and the appropriate size for the child. The backpack and snack containers should be appropriate for the child to learn to manage independently. Please check your child's backpack daily since we will be communicating with you through written notices. Also please be sure to remove any food from your child's backpack each day.

Please do not allow your child to bring cards, toys, phones, iPads, etc. to school. If they bring an item for "Show and Tell," it must remain in their backpacks until needed. Any such items will be confiscated and parents will be required to come to school to retrieve the item. Students may not give their toys to classmates.

Behavior Management Plan

The goal of discipline is to assist and guide the children in the development of self-control. Teachers will discipline in a consistent way, based on an understanding of varying developmental levels. Simple and understandable rules will be established so that expectations and limitations will be clearly defined. Discipline will be constructive in nature, including such methods as diversion, separating the child from the situation, encouragement, and reinforcements for appropriate behavior and effort. Students sent to the office for discipline will receive a Disciplinary Referral form and a copy will be placed in his or her student file. Please see the GA Discipline Policy for more details.

School Health

Please make sure that your child's immunization records are up to date and that Guidance Academy has the most up to date copy.

Illness Guidelines

Here are some guidelines that might be helpful in keeping your child as healthy as possible. Young children can be in very close contact with each other while they play. This information will assist you in making decisions about when to send your child to school if he/she is not feeling well.

- ◆ A Fresh Cold - Continuous nasal discharge, cough, watery eyes which has developed within the past 24-48 hours is considered contagious and **the child should be kept at home.**
- ◆ Fever - Must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school
- ◆ Vomiting/Diarrhea - Keep at home for 24 hours after symptoms have resolved and the child can keep food and fluids down. If your child is vomiting in the morning, please do not send him or her to school.
- ◆ Strep Throat – Parents must notify the school and must wait 24 hours after antibiotics have begun before returning to school.
- ◆ Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) - If conjunctivitis is diagnosed, your child will be prescribed eye ointment and should not return to school for 24 hours.
- ◆ Head Lice - Until treated and has been checked by a public nurse.

In addition, if your child is only mildly ill but is irritable and cannot fully participate in the day's program, he/she should remain at home. If a child appears ill at school, the administration will call you to come pick up your child as soon as possible.

Please do not send medication to school with your child. If your child must take medication during school hours, parents must bring the medication to the office with clearly written instructions on administering the medication. Teachers may not administer medicine to students.

In cases of absence due to illness, students will be allowed to make up any assignments missed.

We can't prevent all illness, but if we work together we can minimize the spread of germs. It is very important to keep the school aware and up to date on any medical conditions, and/or medications your child is taking. Please contact the main office at (414) 312-8755 or mkeguidance@gmail.com with any updates.

If your child is absent for more than two days due to illness, please provide a doctor's excuse upon return to school.

Parent Input

Guidance Academy recognizes the important and valuable role of parents in the learning process. We welcome and encourage you to take an active role in your child's education.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child at GA, please contact his or her teacher directly.

We also hope that you will enjoy new friendships with other families as a result of your child's experience. Please feel free to contact us at (414) 312-8755 with any questions or concerns.

Visitors

For safety purposes, **any non-school personnel – including parents – must report to the front office upon arrival at the school.** If you have a scheduled appointment with a staff member or are volunteering in the school, you are required to sign in and get a nametag or a visitor's badge. If you have an important message or something to deliver to your child during the school day, please leave it in the main office. We will make sure that the child gets whatever is needed in a timely manner. This policy is meant to keep disruptions to children's learning to a minimum as well as for safety.

Please be advised that these policies are subject to change. Insha'Allah we will keep families updated with the latest information and post it on our website.