

The Governor's School for the Arts

Student Handbook

2025-2026



The Governor's School for the Arts Student Handbook

2025-2026

254 Granby Street
Norfolk VA 23510

Phone: (757) 451-4711

Fax: (757) 451-4715

www.gsarts.net

Find us on social media:

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/gsarts.net>

Instagram @govschool2

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/GovernorsSchool>

The Governor's School for the Arts is sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education and the following local school divisions: Chesapeake, Franklin, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Southampton, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.

The school does not discriminate on the basis of sex, religion, race, color, national origin, age or disability in access to, or participation or employment in its programs, services, or activities.

Table of Contents

2025-2026 Academic Calendar	6
Directory	7
Administration	7
Departments	7
Management Advisory Committee	8
Mission and Goals	9
Student Hours	10
Instructional Sites	10
Residency	10
Graduation Requirements	10
Expenses	11
Fees	11
Payments and Plans	11
Student Assistance	11
Grading at GSA	12
Progress Reports	12
Continued Enrollment	12
Non-Returning Students	13
Change of Departments	13
Transcript Requests	13
Withdrawing from GSA	13
Withdrawal before September 15th	13
Withdrawal after September 15th	13
Withdrawal at the end of First Semester	13
Withdrawal at the end of Second Semester	13
Community Service	14
Attendance	14
Overview	14
Closure of Home High School	14
Closure due to Inclement Weather	14
Absences from GSA	15
Early Dismissal From GSA	15
Home School Activities	15
Illness and Injury	16
Overview	16
Accidents and Illness at GSA	16
Medication	16
CHKD Sports Medicine and Mental Health Programs	16
Transportation	17

Overview	17
Bus Schedules.....	17
Local Transportation Contacts	17
Student Drivers.....	18
Field Trips and Student Activities	19
Overview	19
Overnight Field Trips	19
Field Trip Cancellation	19
Student Information	19
Contact Information	19
IEP and Section 504 Documents.....	19
Release of Student Information	19
Filming and Photography of Students	19
Equal Educational Opportunities/Nondiscrimination	20
Student Conduct	20
Overview	20
Self-Supervision	20
Dress	21
Visitors	21
Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs	21
Assault and Assault & Battery	21
Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation	22
Hazing	22
Sexual Harassment and Assault	22
Weapons of Facsimiles.....	23
Disciplinary Measures	23
Required Reporting of Certain Offenses to Law Enforcement Authorities	23
Computer and Internet Use Regulations.....	24
Overview	24
Purposes, Uses of Computers	24
Network Etiquette.....	24
Liability.....	24
Security	24
Cell Phone Use	25
Plagiarism.....	25
What is Plagiarism?	25
Hints to Avoid Plagiarism	25
High Cost of Plagiarism	25
Student Handbook Form	26
Items to Donate to GSA	27

2025-2026 Academic Calendar

July						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Summer Schedule
Closed on Fridays
3: Independence Day Recognition

January						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

1-2: Winter Break
13: End of 2nd Quarter (44 days)
14: Start 3rd Quarter
19: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
24: GSA Auditions
26: Staff Workday
31: GSA Auditions

August						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

13: Dept. Chairs Return
21: Full-Time Faculty Report
21-29: Staff Workdays

February						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

7: GSA Auditions
14: GSA Auditions (If Needed)
16: Presidents' Day
18: Progress Reports

September						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

1: Labor Day
2: Opening Day
25: Progress Reports

March						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

20: End 3rd Quarter (45 days)
23: Start 4th Quarter

October						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

22: End of 1st Quarter (37 Days)
23: Start 2nd Quarter

April						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

6-10: Spring Break
28: Progress Reports

November						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

4: Prof. Development
11: Veterans Day
26-28: Thanksgiving

May						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

25: Memorial Day
29: Senior Grades Due

December						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

1: Progress Reports
22-31: Winter Break

June						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

1: Graduation
5: Last day for students (49 Days)
8: New Student Orientation
11: Last Day for Full-Time
17: Last Day Dept. Chairs
18: Juneteenth Recognition

Holiday: GSA is Closed

Staff work day (No Students)

Directory

Hours.....Monday - Friday 9:30am - 5:30pm
Phone..... 757-451-4711
Fax..... 757-451-4715

Administration

Michelle (Shelly) Cihak, Ed.D.
michelle.cihak@gsarts.net

Executive Director

Rachel McCall
Rachel.mccall@gsarts.net

Assistant Director/Foundation Director

B. Kristen Outlaw-Hartman
kristen.outlaw-hartman@gsarts.net

Office Manager

Wallis Quaintance
Wallis.quaintance@gsarts.net

Student Data Specialist

Departments

Dance Department

Joni Petre-Scholz (Chair)

Joni.petre-scholz@gsarts.net
Extension 1702

Janelle Spruill (Associate Chair)

Janelle.spruill@gsarts.net
Extension 1700

Instrumental Music Department

Amanda Gates (Chair)

Amanda.gates@gsarts.net
Extension 1621

Stephen Cox, Ph.D. (Artistic Director)

Stephen.cox@gsarts.net
Extension 1620

Musical Theatre Department

Chip Gallagher (Chair)

Chip.gallagher@gsarts.net
Extension 1318

Jeff Warner (Associate Chair)

Jeff.warner@gsarts.net
Extension 1311

Theatre, Film, & Design Tech Department

Donovan E. Mitchell (Chair)

Donovan.mitchell@gsarts.net
Extension 1407

Kate Mielish (Technical Theatre Director)

Kate.mielish@gsarts.net
Extension 1609

Visual Arts Department

Liana Courts (Chair)

Liana.courts@gsarts.net
Extension 1521

Benjamin Wright (Associate Chair)

Benjamin.wright@gsarts.net

Vocal Music Department

Shelly Milam-Ratliff (Chair)

Shelly.milam@gsarts.net
Extension 1424

Management Advisory Committee

These individuals serve as liaisons between GSA and the respective school divisions.

CHESAPEAKE

Dr. Dornswalo Wilkins-McCorey

757-547-0153 x257

FRANKLIN

Angela Fair

757-569-8111

ISLE OF WIGHT

Dr. Tiffany Truitt

757-357-4393

NORFOLK

Karla Stead

757-852-4674

PORTSMOUTH

Joe Harmon

757-393-8885

SOUTHAMPTON

Kelli Gillette

757-556-4890

SUFFOLK

Dr. Keisha Melvin

757-925-6750

VIRGINIA BEACH

Angela Boubouheropoulos

757-263-1000

Mission and Goals

Mission: The Governor's School for the Arts is a center for innovation that develops excellence, nurtures creativity, inspires artistic vision and builds communities with a passion for the arts.

Goals supporting the mission are:

- Prepare students to engage the arts thoughtfully and creatively while becoming life-long learners and advocates of the arts.
- Offer instruction through classes, performances, and in cross-disciplinary opportunities by a faculty of professional instructors, artists, and mentors.
- Provide exceptional performance and exhibition experiences in state-of-the-art facilities.
- Prepare and inspire students to meet the most rigorous admission requirements of colleges, universities, conservatories, internships and other career opportunities.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for students to use their talents in service to others.
- Create relationships with educational organizations and partnerships with arts organizations and the community at large.
- Build audiences to appreciate and enjoy the arts within the community.

Student Hours

1st SHIFT: Monday to Friday 1:00pm to 4:20pm
Norfolk, Portsmouth, Southampton, Virginia Beach

2nd SHIFT: Monday to Friday 2:00pm to 5:20pm
Chesapeake, Franklin, Isle of Wight, Suffolk

Instructional Sites

Classes for The Governor's School for the Arts are held at the Perry Family Arts Center, 254 Granby Street in the City of Norfolk.

Classes and/or rehearsals are frequently held at performance venues before, during and after productions. Performance venues include, but are not limited to, University Theatre and Chandler Recital Hall at ODU, Attucks Theatre, Chrysler Hall, Chrysler Museum, Harrison Opera House, Origin Gallery, Sandler Center for the Performing Arts, Hurrah Players, Virginia Arts Festival, and St. Luke's, Sentara Heart Hospital, First Presbyterian Church of Norfolk and Virginia Stage Company.

Exhibitions are held at GSA, Origin Gallery, TCC Art Gallery, the Wise Gallery at Norfolk State University, MOCA in Virginia Beach, the Hermitage Museum and Gardens, Chrysler Museum, and various locations throughout Hampton Roads as approved by the Department Chair.

GSA students may take classes in the same instructional space (classroom, studio, etc.) as Tidewater Community College.

Residency

To be eligible to attend The Governor's School for the Arts, students must meet local school division residency requirements and must be enrolled in a public high school in one of the school divisions participating in The Governor's School for the Arts.

Graduation Requirements

Students attending The Governor's School for the Arts must meet all regular requirements for high school graduation. Since different school divisions may have different graduation requirements, GSA students should work closely with their high school counselor to design a course of study that meets all graduation requirements. Each student who successfully completes a semester of work at The Governor's School for the Arts is awarded 1.5 elective credits toward high school graduation for each semester of study. Credit is awarded by the home school division and GSA grades are translated by the home school divisions using each division's specific formula. Questions about home school grade point averages should be directed to a student's school counselor at their home high school.

Expenses

Fees

There are required departmental fees charged by The Governor's School for the Arts. The departmental fees for 2025-2026 school year are \$250. This fee covers the cost of certain materials, equipment, clothing, performance attire, admissions, etc. A departmental fee reduction or waiver can be requested by completing and submitting the "Request for Reduced or Waived Fees" form, which can be found under student forms on our website. The criteria for the National School Lunch Program are used to grant reductions and waivers.

The Graduation Fee of \$100 is required for seniors. This fee is also eligible for reduction/waiver consideration.

Failure to pay departmental and/or senior fees may affect future enrollment, participation in extracurricular activities (i.e., field trips, prom, etc.), and will prevent seniors from walking at the graduation ceremony.

Field trip costs are additional and vary based on the location and costs for travel and lodging. Field trips will be determined based upon current health metrics and guidance from local, state, and national agencies.

Payments and Plans

Payments can be made at www.gsarts.net. Credit card payment plans can be set up by calling the GSA office. Additionally, families may contact Kristen Outlaw-Hartman, Office Manager, to establish a payment plan for fees, trips, and other GSA fees. She may be reached at 757-451-4711 or by email at Kristen.Outlaw-Hartman@gsarts.net.

Student Assistance

Limited funds are available from The Governor's School for the Arts Foundation for students needing financial assistance for trips, equipment, admission tickets, etc. Contact department chairs for details.

Grading at GSA

Students receive grades in each course at The Governor's School for the Arts. There are four grading periods, each of which is approximately nine weeks in length. Teachers will provide students with a syllabus of how the grade will be calculated for their classes. All GSA classes will be held in person for the 2025-2026 school year. Should health conditions necessitate a return to virtual instruction, GSA courses will be synchronous via Zoom with asynchronous activities via Google Classroom. Students will receive quizzes, tests, and other assessments dependent on their art form. Students will also participate in mid-year and end-of-year jury assessments (exact procedures will vary by department).

Report Cards are distributed to students at the end of each grading period. At the end of each quarter, grades are reported to students' high schools to be recorded on their high school transcript and grade reports. The grades given to the home high school are then translated into the grading scale of each school district to determine the GSA grade on the high school report card. This is in accordance with the school districts' grading policy. The decision to weight GSA grades is made by individual school divisions in accordance with their specific grading procedures.

Numerical grade values for GSA grades are as follows:

A	100-93	B-	82-80	D+	69-67
A-	92-90	C+	79-77	D	66-64
B+	89-87	C	76-73	D-	63-59
B	86-83	C-	72-70	E	58

Grade point averages for quarters, semesters and year are shown on GSA report cards as numerical value. This value can be translated into a letter grade by using the following table:

A	4.00	B-	2.67	D+	1.33
A-	3.67	C+	2.33	D	1.00
B+	3.33	C	2.00	D-	0.67
B	3.00	C-	1.67	E	0.00

Progress Reports

At the approximate mid-point of each grading period and at other times as needed, progress reports are issued to students who have grades that are a C or below, or to students who are not completing the required work or meeting expectations. Copies of these reports are given to students, as well as sent to the MAC representative of the local school division.

Continued Enrollment

The Governor's School for the Arts is an ELECTIVE program offered to students in the eight participating school divisions. Admission into The Governor's School is by application and audition. Continued enrollment is not automatic but is contingent upon the student's satisfactory progress, achievement (GPA of 3.0 or better), artistic growth, and conduct as determined by the administration and faculty of The Governor's School for the Arts. Students may be removed from The Governor's School due to lack of progress, poor attendance, poor home school grades, and/or unacceptable behavior. This request may be made by GSA's faculty with supporting documentation or by high school faculty/staff. NOTE: Students who withdraw after October 2nd may receive "E" grades and no credit for GSA courses (determined by home school division). A student can be removed at the end of the 1st semester or not be invited to return to GSA at the end of the school year.

Non-Returning Students

Anytime a student knows they will not be returning for the second semester or for the next year, GSA should be notified immediately in writing by the parent/guardian.

Students who withdraw from The Governor's School during the school year, or after completing a year, and wish to re-enroll later may be considered for reenrollment at the beginning of a subsequent school year on the same basis as a new student. A new application and audition will be required.

Change of Departments

Students requesting a change from one department to another for the next school year must go through the regular application/audition process.

Transcript Requests

Requests for transcripts must be made through Parchment. The link to our Parchment request page is under the [Students](#) section of our website.

Withdrawing from GSA

Withdrawal before September 15th

Students may withdraw from The Governor's School before September 15th without penalty. Students who withdraw before September 15th will receive no grade and no credit. Students are cautioned that withdrawal after the beginning of the school year, even prior to September 15th, may present problems in scheduling classes at their high school. Even when classes can be scheduled, entering a class that has been in session for several weeks may present problems. Students should consult their principal or school counselor regarding any such problems.

Withdrawal after September 15th

Students who withdraw after September 15th, other than at the end of the first semester, may receive a failing grade and no credit. The awarded credit for less than a full year will be at the discretion of and according to the policies of the student's local school division.

Withdrawal at the end of First Semester

Students who withdraw at the end of first semester (**January 13, 2026**) will receive the grades assigned. The awarded credit for less than a full year will be at the discretion of and according to the policies of the student's local school division. Students and parents/guardians should be aware that withdrawal before completing a full year at The Governor's School could result in loss of credit, since a local school division may not recognize less than a full year's work for credit. There may also be complications in working out a schedule at the student's high school due to the lack of available semester courses.

Withdrawal at the end of Second Semester

Students who withdraw from The Governor's School after completing a full academic year will receive the grades assigned and if the grades are satisfactory, will be awarded credit for all work completed.

Community Service

It is important for our students to see themselves as a part of the larger arts community. As such, students must fulfill community service requirements and will receive a grade for doing so. Each student is required to serve 25 hours of community service over the course of the school year. A form for reporting/verification and signatures from the organizations served will be available from the GSA Website: www.gsarts.org. Students may begin community service each summer for the following school year. Students that miss the deadline to turn in their community service form will receive an “E” for community service for that school year. More information is available in the Community Service Syllabus.

Attendance

Overview

Founded on the conviction that students can only benefit from a program when they are present, students at The Governor’s School for the Arts are expected to participate in GSA every day that school is in session. The Code of Virginia, §22.1-254, outlines the Compulsory Attendance Law. Once enrolled at GSA, students are required to attend all their GSA classes regularly and on time. Daily attendance will be monitored.

Participation is key to students’ success. All unexcused absences will impact a student’s grades and artistic development.

Attendance is required even if regularly scheduled classes are not meeting due to special activities or performances. Attendance at rehearsals and performances is mandatory unless excused by the department chair.

A student’s parent/guardian will be notified in writing, indicating dates of each day absent, when he/she has been absent five (5) and ten (10) days during the semester. Students may be penalized for all unexcused absences. This may include academic penalties (i.e., lower grades, denial of credit, etc.) and/or removal from The Governor’s School for the Arts. If students are absent for more than 10 days during a semester, parents/guardians may request a waiver of the penalty for absences. This request should be made in writing to the Assistant Director.

In addition to maintaining the security of our facilities, students’ badges are used for attendance purposes. All lost or stolen badges should be reported to administration immediately. Students are charged a \$30 badge replacement fee.

Closure of Home High School

There are days when a student’s regular high school is closed but GSA is open. On those days, students are welcome to attend GSA but will not be penalized if bus transportation is not provided. There will also be days when GSA is closed, and the student’s regular high school is open. On those days it is the responsibility of the high school, student, and the parent/guardian to arrange the student’s afternoon schedule and any required transportation.

When the regular high school has early release and the student is at the high school at the time transportation departs for GSA, the student is expected to attend GSA. If they do not attend GSA, this will count as an unexcused absence.

Closure due to Inclement Weather

In cases of inclement weather, The Governor’s School for the Arts follows, as closely as possible, the same schedule as Norfolk Public Schools. On days in question, students should listen to the radio and TV for announcements of Norfolk Public School closings. If Norfolk Public Schools is closed due to inclement weather, GSA will also be closed. If Norfolk Public Schools closes during the day when students are at or are on the way to GSA, the GSA will remain open until buses have arrived from all eight school divisions to take students home. Students will not be penalized if a student’s home high school closes due to inclement weather and GSA remains open. During GSA closures, instruction/rehearsals may move online.

Absences from GSA

All absences affect participation at GSA. Absences that may be excused include, but are not limited to: college auditions, tutoring, sickness with a doctor's note, confining illness or injury, quarantine, hospitalization, funeral, family emergency, religious holidays observed by the student, SOL/AP testing. The Executive Director may excuse students for other reasons when arrangements are made in advance.

If students are absent from GSA classes on a given day, they may not participate in extracurricular activities (i.e., rehearsal, performances, exhibitions, etc.) on the same day.

Upon returning to classes, students must provide a written explanation of the absence to their Governor's School department chair or to the office from their parent/guardian. These notes may be emailed to the department chair and to wallis.quaintance@gsarts.net, dropped off in the office, or faxed to 757- 451- 4715. Written excuses must be given both to GSA and the regular high school. There is no provision for excuse notes delivered to the regular high school to be forwarded to GSA. Occasionally, calls will be made to a parent/guardian to confirm student absences.

Students who are absent more than ten (10) days during a semester, for any reason, may receive a failing grade and no credit for their classes. Students who have more than ten absences and believe there are extenuating circumstances, which would justify waiving the denial of credit, must request an appeal to the Assistant Director of The Governor's School for the Arts, in writing with supporting documentation, within 5 days after the 10th absence. The Assistant Director will decide whether to approve the waiver. Parents/guardians may appeal the decision to the Executive Director. Examples of supporting documentation include doctor's notes, college audition notifications, and funeral announcements.

Early Dismissal From GSA

Students who must leave school early for a doctor's appointment or other excusable reason must have written permission, which may be emailed to the department chair and to wallis.quaintance@gsarts.net, dropped off in the office, or faxed to 757- 451- 4715. The written request must include the reason, date, time of release, and the name of the person providing transportation. Students may be released to someone other than parents or legal guardians only when the parent/guardian gives prior written permission. Students must sign out at the 1st Floor Security Desk or Main Office prior to leaving the building.

Home School Activities

Attendance at GSA is required for students to earn course credit, just as with other courses as part of a student's academic program. Students who are thinking about auditioning for performances, trying out for athletic teams, joining clubs, running for election, etc., at their home high school must check with their department chair to be certain the activity will not conflict with obligations to attend GSA.

Participation in academic field trips associated with the home high school will be an excused absence from GSA.

Illness and Injury

Overview

All students, parents/guardians, and employees are encouraged to remain home if experiencing symptoms of illness including COVID-19 and flu. Individuals should be free of symptoms for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications) prior to returning to GSA.

In cases of communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, GSA will follow the mitigation health guidelines as established by Norfolk Public Schools with guidance from the Norfolk Department of Public Health (NDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Current health metrics will be used to make decisions regarding instruction, field trips, and additional GSA-sponsored events. All faculty, staff, and parents/guardians will play an important role in monitoring illnesses and symptoms among our students before, during and after the instructional day.

Accidents and Illness at GSA

In case of an accident, illness, or other medical emergency, an effort will be made to contact the student's parent, guardian, or other person designated as an emergency contact. While GSA staff are trained in basic first aid, GSA does not have a nurse onsite. If GSA staff believe a situation requires immediate medical attention, medical care will be sought in the most expeditious manner possible.

Parents/guardians should be aware that physicians and hospitals may provide only limited medical attention without authorization from a student's parent or legal guardian and without satisfactory assurances for payment of bills. In the event of an emergency, students should have evidence of medical insurance coverage.

Medication

GSA must be notified in writing by the parent or guardian if a student has permission to take over-the-counter or prescription medicine while in school. Students must have a Medical Authorization form (provided separately) on file for any prescription medication. Parents/guardians should bring the completed form and the medication to the GSA Office. Additional forms are available at gsarts.org under the PARENTS tab.

CHKD Sports Medicine and Mental Health Programs

Through a partnership with Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters (CHKD), GSA students have access to onsite medical screenings through their Sports Medicine Program, as well as onsite mental health skills groups through their Mental Health Program. These programs are provided free of charge. Additional information, and required permission forms, are provided separately.

Transportation

Overview

Local school divisions provide transportation for students to and from The Governor's School for the Arts. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians and students to be familiar with their school division's plan, rules, and regulations for transportation. GSA expects students to follow their school division's rules for conduct on school buses. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by GSA's administration and the administration of a student's home high school.

Students must ride their designated bus when leaving GSA. Students visiting other student's homes from another school district, will have to be transported by a parent/guardian. Students being transported by parents/guardians must be picked up no later than 5:30pm from GSA, or at the timely conclusion of rehearsals and events. We appreciate the support so that we can make sure that students are supervised and staff are able to maintain their schedules.

Bus Schedules

Local school divisions provide bus schedules to students prior to the beginning of the school year. Students are expected to adhere to the schedule. Students who miss the bus from their high school to The Governor's School must arrange their own transportation. Students who miss the bus departing from The Governor's School must also arrange for their own transportation home. Students who miss their bus from The Governor's School should inform the Executive Director or Assistant Director immediately.

The Governor's School has no provision to transport students who miss their bus. It will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians of the students to arrange transportation. Buses departing from The Governor's School depart 17 minutes after the hour. The buses will not wait for late students. 1st Shift departs at 4:17pm. 2nd Shift departs at 5:17pm.

Questions or concerns related to bus transportation while at The Governor's School, or issues related to the use of private vehicles should be addressed to department chairs or the GSA Office.

Local Transportation Contacts

The following information has been provided by division transportation supervisors. Questions or problems concerning transportation to and from GSA should be addressed to the transportation office of the student's school division.

Chesapeake 757-547-1617

Students are picked up from and delivered back to their high schools. Students must provide their own transportation home from their high school. No transportation will be provided on exam days, or when schools are closed.

Franklin 757-569-8111 x 6

Students are picked up at Franklin High School by a Franklin car. Students are delivered by the driver to their homes. The Franklin driver comes to GSA everyday Franklin Schools are in session. No transportation is provided on days Franklin is closed.

Isle of Wight 757-357-9926

Students are picked up from and delivered back to their regular high schools. Students must provide their own transportation home. The Isle of Wight bus comes to GSA every day GSA is in session. Students must provide their own transportation to and from their high school if their high school is closed.

Norfolk..... 757-892-3320

Students are picked up at their high schools and delivered back to their neighborhoods within walking distance of home. On days Norfolk schools are closed and on exam days, no transportation is provided.

Portsmouth 757-393-8269

Students are picked up at their high schools and are taken to I.C. Norcom High School where they transfer to another bus for transportation to GSA. Students are picked up at GSA and returned to I.C. Norcom High School where some students transfer to another bus. These two buses deliver students to their neighborhoods within walking distance of home. No bus is provided on early release days. No transportation is provided on days Portsmouth Schools are closed.

Southampton 757-653-2692

Students are picked up at their high school and delivered back to their homes. No transportation is provided on days Southampton High School is closed.

Suffolk 757-925-5572

Students are picked up from and delivered back to their high schools. The Suffolk bus is provided whenever GSA is in session. Students must provide their own transportation to their regular high school on days Suffolk schools are closed.

Virginia Beach 757-263-1545

Students are picked up at their high school and delivered to GSA. Students are picked up from GSA by three buses and delivered to Kempsville High or Plaza Middle School where they transfer to another bus that delivers them to their neighborhoods within walking distance of home. On days that Virginia Beach Schools are closed and during exams, no transportation is provided.

Student Drivers

Students are encouraged to use bus transportation provided by their local school division, but students may drive to The Governor's School for the Arts if (1) their high school or school district's policy permits it and (2) they have written permission from their parents/guardians. Students who wish to drive, and who meet the two conditions above, must use the Driving Permission form (provided), must have it signed by their parent/guardian, and return it to their department chair.

Students who do not drive to GSA on a regular basis should park at MacArthur Center where an hourly rate, set by the City of Norfolk, is charged. Students planning to drive to GSA on a regular basis can secure a parking pass for the Freemason Garage from the City of Norfolk. This can be done in person at the Main Street Parking Building, which is located at 230 W. Main Street, Norfolk, Virginia 23510. They can be contacted at 757-664-6222 and are open from 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday. Students should see Wallis Quaintance in the GSA Office to obtain a letter certifying enrollment at GSA for the current year, as this is required by the City of Norfolk for a discounted rate.

The Governor's School for the Arts assumes NO responsibility for parking or traffic fines/violations incurred by students. Please be familiar with all parking regulations at the location where the student is parking.

Field Trips and Student Activities

Overview

Many special activities are provided for students during the school year. Activities are publicized as information becomes available throughout the year. All students are encouraged to attend performances or exhibits given by fellow students in their own department, as well as other departments. Also, students are encouraged, or may be required, to attend professional performances and exhibitions conducted throughout the community. For activities and trips that have a cost associated, families may establish a payment plan by calling the GSA Office. Additionally, limited financial assistance is available through The Governor's School for the Arts Foundation.

Overnight Field Trips

Many students may experience at least one overnight trip during the year. For each trip, students and a parent/guardian must attend a "trip meeting" to review the itinerary and expectations, to complete the necessary information and for other items to be determined by the department chair.

Field Trip Cancellation

Any field trip is subject to last minute cancellation due to local, state, national and/or international situation(s), including transmission rates of communicable diseases. Cancellation may also be necessary for other unexpected circumstances. There can be no guarantee that a refund of payment(s) will be made.

Student Information

Contact Information

It is imperative that GSA students have current and correct information in case of emergencies and for academic and enrollment purposes. The school must be notified in writing of high school changes, new addresses and phone numbers, changes in names or emergency contacts, etc.

IEP and Section 504 Documents

If a student receives services or accommodations under IDEA or Section 504, it is the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian to arrange for a copy to be forwarded to GSA (to the attention of the Executive Director). Once received by GSA, a copy will be provided to the student's department chair and instructors. Please know that home schools do not forward this information to GSA.

Release of Student Information

Information on students including name, grade, and high school is regularly included in programs and media releases by the school and on the GSA website.

Filming and Photography of Students

Students attending The Governor's School are frequently photographed/filmed in class while performing and/or in interviews with the media and our community arts partners. Recording, filming, and photographing of student work also occurs. Should a family not wish for a student/student's work to not be publicized, please contact the Executive Director. Please refer to the technology form provided separately.

Equal Educational Opportunities/Nondiscrimination

GSA, the Committee of Superintendents and the Regional Board follow the policy of the fiscal agent, Norfolk School Board: JB. Equal Educational Opportunities/Nondiscrimination. As such, equal educational opportunities are available for all students, without regard to sex, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity, religion, disability, ancestry, marital or parental status or any other unlawful basis. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students. Additionally, GSA, the Committee of Superintendents and the Regional Board do not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the process of admitting students to GSA.

Student Conduct

Overview

The Governor's School program takes place in settings that require above-average maturity and judgment. These locations do not provide the sheltered and controlled environments of typical middle and high schools, and therefore require students to make responsible choices. This section covers behavior expected by students while at GSA, as well as behaviors prohibited at GSA. Additionally, behaviors prohibited by the Code of Virginia are also prohibited at GSA, even if not expressly enumerated below.

Students' schedules vary from day-to-day and from semester-to-semester (much more so than in the typical high school). Students are required to follow this changing schedule, to meet bus schedules, and to get from one place to another on their own. The relationships students develop with their instructors provide a unique opportunity, but also require a level of discipline and judgment that may not be demanded in a regular high school.

A few simple rules apply:

- Be where you are supposed to be and be on time. (No skipping.)
- Pay attention and follow instructions of GSA staff.
- Do all of the work assigned both in-class and out-of-class.
- Show proper respect and courtesy for your fellow students and all GSA administration, faculty, and staff.
- Use appropriate behavior at programs, concerts, and recitals.
- Do not damage or misuse property.
- Clean up after using canteen area.
- Follow each school division's rules for conduct on school buses.
- Do not enter the VSC areas on the 1st and 2nd Floors.
- Students may use the elevator with the permission of their department chair only.

Self-Supervision

During extra time before and after classes, during class breaks and occasionally on rehearsal and performance days, students will be responsible for themselves without direct adult supervision. This may occur after the regular school day is over, before rehearsals or performances begin, or at scheduled breaks or mealtimes. If students are given permission to leave the building, they are to always stay in groups. Students are not to be alone when walking from building to building or when standing on any street or at any location. Students who drive to school must try to walk with someone to and from parking garages and lots. Students must inform the responsible adults of their whereabouts. If students need an individual to accompany them to another location, they can report to the GSA Office for assistance.

Dress

Student dress (including footwear) and any accessories should be appropriate for class and not disrupt learning. The variety of classes and instructional activities at a school for the arts require students to make careful judgments in selection of dress and accessories. Students should ask themselves questions such as the following: Is it safe to wear for the activities? Does it keep me from participating?

Students should not wear:

- underwear as outerwear,
- clothing that displays lewd graphics, offensive or obscene language,
- or is gang-related,
- or clothing that promotes tobacco, alcohol, or drug use.

Department chairs may prohibit students from wearing clothing or carrying accessories that they consider inappropriate for the instructional activity. Chairs may also require students to wear specific articles of clothing for specific activities such as dance classes or working with power tools.

Visitors

Outside visitors will be allowed during the school day by appointment only. All visitors to the Governor's School must be approved in advance by a department chair and the Executive Director. Visitors must check in at the security desk or the administrative office on the 2nd floor.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

Using, possessing, transmitting or being under the influence of any illegal drug or alcohol by a Governor's School student while on the site of any Governor's School facility or in attendance at any Governor's School function at any location is strictly prohibited; trips are included. Violation of this rule will result in being withdrawn from GSA, referral to the student's high school and referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

The possession or use of tobacco or tobacco products or e-cigarettes (including all vape devices) is not permitted at The Governor's School or at any Governor's School activity, including trips.

Assault and Assault & Battery

Assault is defined as an unlawful threat or attempt to harm another physically. Assault and battery is defined as the carrying out of threatened physical harm. Battery is defined as any bodily hurt, however slight, done to another in an angry, rude or vengeful manner. Battery, assault or assault & battery will result in being withdrawn from GSA, referral to the student's high school and referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation

Intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication, that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being, and is:

- motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression religion, ancestry, physical attribute, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability.
- threatening or seriously intimidating.
- occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus.
- substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school. Electronic communication means communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including a telephone, cellular phone, or computer.

Bullying and cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and biased behaviors are unsafe and will result in disciplinary action, referral to the student's high school, and possible referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies. GSA is a bully-free zone. If a student, or someone they know, is a target of one of these behaviors, it can be reported to any staff member, emailed to safespace@gsarts.net, or submitted by anonymous note to the office.

Bullying is

- Behavior **intended** to hurt, harm, or humiliate.
- Behavior that includes a **power imbalance**. Power can mean the person is older, bigger, stronger, or more popular.
- **Repeated** over time. The unwanted aggressive behavior continues when the aggressor realizes it is hurting another.

Bullying is NOT

- Not liking someone
- Being excluded
- Accidentally bumping into someone
- A single act or telling a joke about someone.
- Arguments
- Isolated acts of harassment, aggressive behavior, intimidation, or meanness

Hazing

Hazing or any type of activity considered to be initiation is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Sexual Harassment and Assault

Sexual harassment is forbidden. It shall be understood to be: unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors and other sexual verbal communications; or physical conduct of a sexual nature in which the conduct substantially interferes with a student's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school environment.

Sexual assault and/or harassment will result in disciplinary action, referral to the student's high school, referral to the home school division's Title IX Compliance Officer and possible referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Weapons of Facsimiles

Possession of firearms, knives, explosives, or other dangerous weapons, B-B/pellet guns, mace, pepper gas, or facsimiles on the site of any GSA facility or in attendance at any GSA function at any location, including trips, is forbidden. Items used as props for productions are to be secured at the conclusion of each rehearsal/performance under the supervision of the director. Violation of this rule will result in being withdrawn from GSA, referral to the student's high school, and referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Disciplinary Measures

The Executive and Assistant Directors of GSA have the authority to exercise appropriate disciplinary measures in dealing with student misbehavior, while affording students their due process. Such measures include short term suspension, as well as withdrawal from GSA. School staff may question or interview minor students regarding violations of the Code of Student Conduct and criminal matters without the consent or presence of parents/legal guardians. At the discretion of the Executive Director, the high school may be notified of misconduct. Suspension from a student's home high school will also result in suspension from GSA; however, suspension from GSA may not result in suspension from the high school. Students who have serious or repeated behavior problems, either at GSA or their home school, may be withdrawn from The Governor's School for the Arts. While at GSA events and activities, students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct of their home school divisions.

Required Reporting of Certain Offenses to Law Enforcement Authorities

§ 22.0-279.3:1.D. of the *Code of Virginia* requires principals to immediately report to the local law-enforcement agency any act enumerated in clauses (ii) through (vii) of § 22.1-279.3:1.A. that may constitute a criminal offense. A principal may report to the local law-enforcement agency any incident described in clause (i) of subsection A. When there is injury, or the battery is against school personnel, reporting is mandatory.

Section 22.1-279.3:1.A. of the *Code* lists offenses as follows:

- i. The assault or assault and battery, without bodily injury, of any person on a school bus, on school property, or at school-sponsored activity;
- ii. The assault and battery that results in bodily injury, sexual assault, death, shooting, stabbing, cutting, or wounding of any person, or stalking of any person as described in § 18.2-60.3 on a school bus, on school property, or at a school sponsored activity;
- iii. Any conduct involving alcohol, marijuana, a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or an anabolic steroid on a school bus, on school property, or at a school sponsored activity, including the theft or attempted theft of student prescription medications;
- iv. Any threats against school personnel while on a school bus, on school property, or at a school sponsored activity;
- v. The illegal carrying of a firearm, as defined in § 22.0-277.07, onto school property;
- vi. Any illegal conduct involving firebombs, explosive materials or devises, or hoax explosive devises, as defined in § 18.2-85, or explosive or incendiary devices, as defined § 18.2-433.1, or chemical bombs, as described in § 18.2-87.1, on a school bus, on school property, or at a school sponsored activity;
- vii. Any threats or false threats to bomb, as described in § 18.2-83, made against school personnel or involving school property or school buses;
or
- viii. The arrest of any student for an incident occurring on a school bus, on school property, or at a school sponsored activity, including the charge therefore.

Be advised The Governor's School for the Arts Assistant and Executive Directors may request, at any time and in any situation, the presence of law enforcement personnel and may report any situation determined necessary to maintain a safe environment.

Computer, Internet and Cell Phone Use Regulations

Overview

GSA is committed to providing students with the appropriate technology needed to be successful in his/her art specialty. All students authorized to use the computers/Internet provider services and their parent or legal guardian are required to read the following regulations which govern the use of the Internet and sign an accompanying agreement to abide by stated regulations.

Purposes, Uses of Computers

The Governor's School for the Arts provides computers and Internet provider services throughout the building. While the use of computers and Internet services may differ from department to department, regulations regarding the use and restriction remain the same for all. Department chairs may authorize certain students to use computers and Internet services for the following purposes: running of software programs approved as part of the department's instructional program, such as film editing, music theory and composition, computer graphics, and scenic design; valid instructional research; generating of materials required for a class; or, in special instances, using computers and the Internet for career and/or college research.

Limited computers with Internet services are available and not all students may have access to this equipment and service. Students may use the Internet only for purposes approved and arranged for by the department chair. No installation of software is permitted without the approval of the department chair.

Transmission of any material in violation of federal or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. Use of Internet for commercial activities, advertising, or political lobbying is prohibited. Use of the Internet service to retrieve inappropriate materials is always unacceptable and will result in loss of Internet privileges and possible disciplinary measures.

Network Etiquette

Users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. Those include, but are not limited to the following:

- Courtesy in wording messages to others is expected at all times.
- Use of appropriate language (without vulgarities, swearing, or other inappropriate language or image) is expected.
- Do not reveal addresses, phone numbers, or personal information about yourself, students or instructors.
- Illegal activities are strictly forbidden. Messages about or relating to illegal activities may be reported to the authorities by people who operate the electronic systems and have access to messages sent out on web pages.
- Remember that you will be representing GSA; do not send out messages potentially damaging or embarrassing to the school.

Liability

GSA does not make any warranty, expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. Use of any information obtained from the Internet is at the student's own risk. GSA does not accept responsibility for losses suffered due to non-deliveries, loss of data, miss-deliveries, or service interruption(s).

Security

Security on the computer and the Internet is always a high priority and breaches of security will not be tolerated. Files stored on the computer hard drive are subject to review by the department chair and administrators. Inappropriate files will be deleted, and loss of computer privileges and disciplinary measures may follow. Files relevant to class work should be stored on Google, thumb/zip drive, or CD and not the hard drive.

Cell Phone Use

Given the unique nature of GSA and our location in Downtown Norfolk, students are encouraged to keep their cell phones on their person as they navigate between instructional locations and local establishments for safety purposes.

As a result of GSA's professional partners and pre-professional training, there may be times when instructors give *specific* permission for the use of a personal communication device for use in a professional capacity (i.e., electronic sheet music on an iPad, playing music through Bluetooth speakers for a student choreography piece, etc.). Outside of this specific use, all personal communication devices should be off and out of sight.

Plagiarism

What is Plagiarism?

A student will have committed plagiarism if he or she reproduces someone else's work without acknowledging its source; or if a source is cited which the student has not cited or used in their work. Examples of plagiarism include: submitting a research paper obtained from a commercial research service, the Internet, or from another student as if it were original work; making simple changes to borrowed materials while leaving the organization, content, or phraseology intact; or copying material from a source, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks. Plagiarism also occurs in a group project if one or more of the members of the group does none of the group's work and participates in none of the group's activities but attempts to take credit for the work of the group.

Hints to Avoid Plagiarism

- *More than three words copied in sequence is plagiarism.* This is ordinarily a good yardstick to use when wondering whether or not quotes are appropriate; they are, if you are copying more than three words in sequence that are not part of a common phrase (e.g., "up-to-date").
- *One source is not "common knowledge."* Common knowledge does not require citation. But something is not common knowledge if you have found just one source for the information.
- *When in doubt, cite!* If you have any doubt about whether or not to cite a source, err on the side of making the attribution.
- *If your co-author sounds surprisingly eloquent, make sure the contribution is his/her own.* We often work in groups and co-author papers and projects. You should ask the question of your co-author if you doubt the work is his/her own. In group work, you are responsible for the project/paper in its entirety.
- *Look away.* When you are writing, do not have open books or papers in front of you as you type. Read your sources, and then put what you have read into your own words.
- *Writing is hard work.* Paraphrasing is relatively easy, writing is hard. Learning to be a good writer is part of what your education is about. Staring at an empty screen does become less daunting over time!
- *Just because it's on the Internet, doesn't mean it's yours.* The Internet is a fantastic resource and search engines are terrific research tools. But what you find on the Internet was written by someone. You must cite Internet web sites, and if you use a quote, use appropriate quotation procedures.
- *Paraphrasing is more than changing a verb tense or reordering a list.* Essentially, paraphrasing is used to summarize another author's text. A paraphrased passage must be cited.

High Cost of Plagiarism

Plagiarism can ruin your reputation and cost you your professional career, along with the respect of your peers and family. Plagiarism at GSA is an act of academic dishonesty that has serious consequences which may include no credit for work submitted, reprimand, probation, suspension and/or expulsion.

The Governor's School for the Arts

Student Handbook Form

2025-2026

This form is for your records. Please sign and return the form that is in the first-day packet.

We have read The Governor's School for the Arts 2025-2026 Student Handbook and agree to meet the expectations contained therein. We understand and agree to follow all regulations including those pertaining to use of the Internet and plagiarism.

PRINT STUDENT NAME

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

PARENT SIGNATURE

DATE

Items to Donate to GSA

The following items are needed at GSA and donations are greatly appreciated:

- Tissues
- Copy Paper
- Disinfecting wipes
- Hand Sanitizer
- Hand Soap
- Pain Relievers
- Disinfecting spray
- Instant Cold Packs
- Antiseptic Wipes – Individual
- Antibiotic ointment – Individual packs
- Batteries
- Individually Wrapped Snacks for Students

We have put all of these items on an Amazon wish list that you can find at:
<https://a.co/6KwvJJR>

You can choose similar brands to the ones on the list.

Thank you for any donations that you can provide!

