

# Parent Handbook



NEW HEIGHTS  

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ACADEMY

REVISED: 2024

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*New Heights Academy is a non-profit organization that does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, ethnic origin, or religion.*

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Dear Parents and Students,

A thrilling journey awaits us, and we couldn't be more excited to have you join us. Our collective success depends on the strong partnership between parents, staff, and students, working together to create an environment where every child can thrive. This handbook serves to communicate essential policies that will ensure each child reaches the high standards we've set.

We kindly request that you review these policies with your student(s) and keep this handbook accessible for future reference. Thoroughly understanding the expectations at New Heights Academy is crucial, so we encourage you to read the entire document. Once you've gone over it with your child, please sign and return the Handbook Signature and Behavior Policy pages.

We deeply appreciate the trust you've placed in us by entrusting us with your most precious possession, your child. Remember, we are a united team, and you play an integral role in making decisions that impact your child's journey at New Heights Academy. Our commitment to our students is unwavering:

"We firmly believe in your capacity for growth and success."

*Vivian Gesualdi, M. Ed.*

## Our Mission and Philosophy

### Mission Statement

Our mission is to empower all students to apply their acquired skills and knowledge, and to rely upon their personal attributes to lead productive lives and to become contributing members of the global community. Our mission is to provide a high-quality, comprehensive, and meaningful education for all students.

### Philosophy

NHA has a clear and committed promise to our students:

***"We believe you are capable of growth and success" -V. Gesualdi, M.Ed.***

At New Heights Academy, our philosophy revolves around the firm belief that every child possesses the ability to learn, provided they are taught according to their unique needs and through diverse teaching methods. We understand that a standardized curriculum cannot accommodate the individuality of each student, which is why we strive to help them discover their own learning styles and tailor their education accordingly. We recognize that every child has valuable contributions to make and valuable lessons to learn from their peers.

By fostering this symbiotic relationship among our students, we promote teamwork, boost self-esteem, and create an optimal learning environment. Our goal is to ignite a genuine excitement for learning within our children and instill confidence in their own abilities to pursue knowledge passionately, even beyond their time at our institution. We firmly believe that this approach equips them with essential skills and the thirst for knowledge that will last a lifetime.

## General Information Programs and Admission Policies

### Programs

#### Classroom Environment 1 (CE1) Behavior Intervention

Students in this classroom environment range ages 9-14 who need academic remediation and real-world application of skills for a successful transition toward being an independent working adult. Students concentrate on building and expanding reading and math skills such as fluency, comprehension, and math applications. Social studies and science skills are focused on real world experience and application. The maximum class size is 4 students with one certified teacher per classroom. Students in these classrooms must have at minimum of early elementary level of curriculum understanding and application and be able to be independent in a classroom of 4 students and one teacher. Students still have one-to-one teacher-student interaction during school time but benefit from being in a group with other students and teachers, although social interactions may require prompting and modeling. An average of student age accepted in CE1 is (9-14) years old. All curriculum is based on Georgia Core Curriculum Standards.

#### Classroom Environment (CE1-K-1)

This classroom environment is a bridge between CE1-K-1 transition involving intensive instruction and support throughout the day and less restrictive, more traditional classroom settings. This program provides students with a core curriculum schedule. The program is designed to teach independence and communication while matching individual strengths within academic setting that are selected based on student's affinities, abilities, and work readiness. Common Core Georgia standards instruction, social thinking, occupational therapeutic consultation, and self-advocacy skill building as related to the peer environment occur at NHA classroom. Students will attend a rotation model personalized learning experience by working in small groups at a station, so teachers can pay closer attention and to support individual learners. Students in this classroom are within Kindergarten and First Grade socially, emotionally and age group.

#### Classroom Environment (CE1-1-2)

This classroom environment serves as a bridge between the CE1-1-2 transition, offering intensive instruction and support throughout the day, and less restrictive, more traditional classroom settings. The program provides students with a core curriculum schedule designed to teach independence and communication while matching individual strengths within an academic setting, selected based on students' affinities, abilities, and work readiness. Instruction adheres to the Common Core Georgia Standards and includes social thinking, occupational therapeutic consultation, and self-advocacy skill building related to the peer environment. At NHA, students experience a rotation model of personalized learning by working in small groups at stations, allowing teachers to provide closer attention and support to individual learners. The students in this classroom are within the First and Second Grade social, emotional, and age group.

#### Classroom Environment 2 Transition (CE2 Transition)

The Classroom Environment 2 (CE2) groups maintain a student-to-teacher ratio of up to 4:1 or 8:2. In this setting, the amount of time spent in group activities increases, emphasizing a more rigorous academic focus. Most students are elementary and middle schoolers, aged 9-15. Alongside academics, there is a strong emphasis on independent life skills and personal classroom management. Students in the Group Classroom Environment also participate in field trips, providing expanded opportunities for project-based learning and socialization. All curriculum follows the Georgia Core Curriculum Standards, ensuring that life skills are integrated alongside classwork and other activities.

#### Classroom Environment 2 Academics (CE2 Academics Level 1-3)

This classroom environment serves as a bridge during the CE2 transition, providing intensive instruction and support throughout

the day while preparing students for less restrictive, more traditional classroom settings. The CE2 academics program offers students a core curriculum designed to teach independence and communication, tailored to individual strengths based on students' affinities, abilities, and work readiness. Students in the CE2 academics program begin with Unique Learning System standardized testing to determine appropriate support and grade level academics. Instruction follows Common Core Georgia Standards and includes social thinking, occupational therapeutic consultation, and self-advocacy skill building related to the peer environment in the NHA classroom. Students participate in a rotation model personalized learning experience, working in small groups at stations to allow teachers to provide closer attention and support to individual learners. Students are placed within their peer group at Levels 1-3, depending on their biological age, academic, and social skills.

For students that complete CE2 Level 3 Academics option they may attend colleges inclusive college programs across the state that offer students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) a variety of experiences and opportunities for growth as they prepare for the next chapter of their lives. Transition planning should include college and begin as early as possible during their middle and high school years at the age of 16-17 years old. Some of these options are:

Kennesaw State University Academy for Inclusive Learning (Kennesaw)  
Columbus State University GOALS Program (Columbus) East Georgia State  
College CHOICE Program (Swainsboro) Georgia Institute of Technology  
EXCEL Program (Atlanta) Albany Technical College LEAP Program (Albany)  
University of Georgia Destination Dawgs (Athens) Georgia State  
University IDEAL Program (Atlanta)  
Georgia Southern University EAGLE Program (Statesboro)

Students can attend NHA until the age of 22 years. During the transition, they will participate in a life skills program that includes activities designed to promote independence and prepare them for adulthood.

The life skills class at NHA is designed to equip students with essential abilities for independent living and successful adulthood. This program focuses on practical skills such as personal hygiene, cooking, budgeting, time management, and using public transportation. Additionally, students learn important social skills, including communication, self-advocacy, and interpersonal interactions. By participating in hands-on activities and real-world scenarios, students gain confidence and competence in managing daily tasks and navigating their environments independently.

### Special Note

New Heights Academy is not a one-on-one program and is not staffed for students with aggressive behaviors. School staff can recommend programs that are more appropriate for students that need a greater level of support than can be provided in this environment. Parents are required to sign an acknowledgement that they agree with all the school policies at New Heights Academy.

### Admissions:

The NHA admission process takes place once a year in March during our open enrollment period. To apply, visit our website and add your information to the current waitlist. This ensures that your application is considered for the upcoming academic year. Our admissions team will review all submissions and contact families to discuss next steps. Early application is encouraged due to high demand and limited spaces. The application fee is \$100.00 and includes informal educational testing. The prospective student will meet with school staff for this informal placement testing. The application paperwork should be filled out completely and the application fee must be paid no later than two days before testing. This testing is designed to allow the staff to get to know the student and is done in a relaxed format. We encourage parents to provide any information they can to help staff in making the student feel as comfortable as possible. Throughout the process parents and the child will be interviewed to determine if placement at New Heights Academy is the best fit. All pieces of the admissions process will be taken into consideration when making this decision.

### Special Note:

We understand that testing can be a scary and intimidating thing for the child (and the parent!). At New Heights Academy, our testing is to see what your child can generally do so we can get a base line of what their academic functioning level is at the time. All the accommodations and supports that your child needs will be incorporated to help your child be successful in this environment. The interview is a “get to know you” interview and is informal. This will give everyone time to ask questions of each other, including the child if they wish. We also encourage you to bring your child to school, so they feel as comfortable as possible. The testing and informal interview, along with the application information and question sheet will be used to determine if we ALL believe our environment is the best fit for your child.

## Parent Commitment

At New Heights Academy, parental involvement is key to a child's success. Parents must sign a commitment to read the handbook, attend scheduled conferences and IEP meetings, support school goals at home, and follow behavior intervention plans if applicable. Additionally, parents are required to regularly check emails and notifications through the Praxi school portal for updates from NHA.

## Tuition

Contracts must be signed, and the first payment must be made by March 15 to guarantee placement for the school year.

Existing students will always be given priority.

Parents are required to sign a contract for the entire school year. Parents will be responsible for paying for the entire school year even if the parent decides to remove their child during the school year. Extenuating circumstances may arise, such as a family relocating out of state that would make it impossible for the student to continue to attend New Heights Academy. Occasionally there may be an instance where after much trial and error, the school and the parents mutually decide that this is no longer an appropriate environment for the child. These circumstances will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Please remember we must budget for our staff for the entire school year to ensure your child has the support they need. Changes in enrollment could greatly affect our ability to keep tuition costs at the most reasonable level possible.

## Tuition Payments

The number of slots for each class is set by open enrollment. Remaining slots, if there are any, are open to eligible students during open enrollment. In the absence of open slots, a waiting list will be started. A deposit is required to hold a slot on the waiting list.

For students eligible for SB10 funding, that funding will be deducted from the student’s total tuition. Due to changes in The GA Department of Education’s reimbursement policy, New Heights Academy has had to change its policy regarding the amount of this funding we can immediately apply to student tuition. 100 % of the student’s SB10 funding amount will be deducted from the tuition. Parents will be refunded any additional funds, minus any adjustments made by DOE or they can be applied to their child’s account for the upcoming school year.

The remaining tuition amount (if using SB10) or the full tuition amount will be divided by 4 to determine the quarterly payments that are due. Payments can also be made monthly. New Heights Academy does accept credit card payments. Please add 3% to cover credit card fees.

New Heights Academy offers other programs to help parents with tuition costs. Scholarship funding through HB1133 scholarship organizations is available to all eligible students. Please contact Louis Gesualdi [Louis@newheightsacademyga.org](mailto:Louis@newheightsacademyga.org) for further information on this funding source. Additional scholarship programs are often offered from year to year as well. Fundraising is not required at New Heights Academy, but we do offer an incentive to parents who need other ways to help pay for tuition or who are interested in helping to fundraise for the school. New Heights Academy will give parents a credit of 50 percent of the fundraising dollars raised toward their child’s tuition. For example, if a family can raise \$1,000 in fundraising dollars, they will receive a credit to their account of \$500. There will be a \$50 late fee for all tuition payments received after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month.

SPECIAL NOTE: Due to IRS regulations parent(s) may be issued a 1099 form for tuition that is deducted due to direct fundraising.

## School Calendar

New Heights Academy generally follows the calendar for the Forsyth County school system with some adjustments as needed. The school year runs August – May Monday – Friday from 9:00AM – 3:00PM each day

## Drop off and Pick Up Time

Students can be dropped off at school 5 minutes before school each morning (8:55AM). The school building will not be open to accept students before this (according to the school office clock) unless that student is part of the before care program. It is important to drop your child off on time every day. Excessive tardiness is disruptive for the students and staff and impedes the learning of our students. NHA's carpool service is located at the back of the building and operates from 8:50 AM to 9:10 AM for drop-off and from 2:50 PM to 3:10 PM for pick-up. If parents are running late, they should visit the front office after carpool times to drop off their student. This ensures a smooth and safe transition for all students outside the designated carpool hours. Parents are encouraged to stay in their cars and allow NHA staff to escort their child from school to their car.

## School Closing

New Heights Academy will announce school closings or delays via email/text/Facebook page or via Praxi. Parents will need to go to these sources to confirm if school is in session, dismissing early or closing before the regular end of the school day. New Heights Academy will follow Forsyth County for weather related school closings.

## Food Policy

Food will not be provided at New Heights Academy apart from Pizza Fridays. This includes breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Please try to make sure that your child has a balanced breakfast before coming to school. We encourage you to send your child to school with healthy snacks that enable your child to be at their optimal learning level throughout the school day. It is the parent's responsibility to have lunch prepared for their child every day. Please remember that at New Heights Academy we do not have the facilities available to provide meals or snacks for your child.

These food items are not permitted at New Heights Academy, unless used for therapeutic purposes:

No soft drinks

Please be aware that we may have some students at our school with food allergies. We strongly encourage parents to become aware of what their children eat and how it affects their health, behavior, and academic performance.

## Health Information

## Immunization Policy

State law requires that all children in elementary and middle school must have an updated Georgia Certificate of Immunization. Immunizations are required for measles, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, polio, mumps, whooping cough, and hepatitis B. Georgia DHR Form 3231 is acceptable for students in pre-kindergarten programs; the Georgia DHR Form 3231, Certificate of Immunization, must be used for students in grades K-12. A local health department computer-generated form is acceptable. For entrance into the sixth grade, each student must have at least one additional dose of MMR vaccine. Georgia DHR Form 3189 is acceptable for showing this additional immunization. New Heights Academy respects the right of parents to make decisions concerning the vaccination of their children. The school does not discriminate against children who have not been vaccinated.

Every child MUST have immunization paperwork that follows state law. We will be happy to help you to obtain the necessary paperwork to follow this law.

## Illness and Medication Policy

If a child becomes ill or injured during the school day and is not well enough to stay in class, the parent/guardian will be notified to pick the child up. The school does not have the capacity to watch over and care for ill children. It is necessary to have updated emergency contact numbers on file in the school office in case no one can be contacted at home.

New Heights Academy will only administer medicine to a student who has an official note on file, describing the prescribed medicine, the required dosage, and the required frequency. Such notes must be brought to the school's main office by the parents along with the medication required. Medicine will be kept away from the classroom and administered by the office administrator. Medication **cannot** be left in backpack and accessible to others.

Students with over-the-counter medicine or supplements must also bring their medicine/supplements to the office along with a note from their parent describing the required dosage and frequency. All medication/supplements must be checked into the front office. Supplements will be kept away from the classroom and administered by the school's staff.

### Emergency Medication (medication administered in an emergency, i.e. seizure nasal spray, epi pen, etc.)

Parents hold the responsibility of providing both relevant information and medication to the front office, ensuring that we can appropriately store and administer the medication when necessary. Additionally, it is the parents' duty to ensure that the NHA office administrator is supplied with up-to-date and accurate dosage details, along with the current expiration date of the medication.

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that the school has up-to-date contact and health information. If a child has needs, we do not know about, we cannot provide for those needs, and if a child has an emergency, we must be able to reach the parent. If a child is sick in the morning, the school expects him/her to stay home for the day. If your child has a fever, please do not give them fever-reducing medicine, and send them to school. If your child is running a fever, then they are probably contagious and could spread their illness to others. Please call the school in the morning to inform the school of the child's absence if they will be out. In addition to the phone, please email a note informing the school of the reason for your child's absence. A note or an email from the parent is REQUIRED for any absence. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school if a student is absent more than one day in a row. If there is a matter with your child or family that will affect your child's ability to be at school, please notify the school staff in writing. As a required reporter, New Heights Academy is obligated to report excessive or unexcused absenteeism so if this issue should arise, please contact school staff to ensure there is an excuse note on file for your child.

COVID-19

See Appendix A

## Transportation

Parents must provide a full name and phone number for any person authorized to pick up their student. **STUDENTS WILL ONLY BE RELEASED TO PEOPLE ON THE AUTHORIZATION LIST.** Please make sure authorized persons bring a government issued identification when picking up the student. Parents are expected to pick their children up in a timely manner at the end of each school day. Parents must inform the school office in advance if this timeline cannot be met. If a student remains at school past dismissal without prior arrangements or if the student is not enrolled in after care or tutoring, families will be charged \$1 per minute to compensate the staff member who must stay after school and watch over the child. These charges will be based upon the time indicated on the school office clock and **are not negotiable.** We really hope to not have to enforce this policy, so PLEASE let us know if you are unable to pick your child up on time. Please remember to be respectful of the staff's time so that they can have the time to be prepared every day for your child.



## Emergency Drill Procedures

Students are to follow their teacher outside in the event of a fire drill, fire, or natural disaster and to stay with their class. Students must proceed directly to the designated area and wait for instructions.

In the event of a tornado warning, the staff will be responsible for communicating directly with students about the impending danger. Students will be escorted to the designated area in the school building and will remain in this area until the tornado warning is over. Staff will use reasonable judgment in implementing this policy.

## Procedure for Parent/Guardian Concerns

If a parent has a concern or disagreement, they should schedule an appointment to discuss the matter with the Vice Principal and then the teacher and attempt to resolve the disagreement through informal discussion. Parents will not be allowed to address concerns with teachers during instructional time. If there is a matter you would like to address at pick up time, please notify the school staff. Staff may need to ensure that all other students are picked up before they are able to meet with a parent at pick-up time, especially if that conversation should be done in private. Please be conscious of the subject you would like to discuss and notify staff if you need to have a moment of their time in private.

### Dress Code Policy (*Uniforms are Required*)

#### Daily Uniform

##### GIRLS (Grade K – 12)

- Uniform Polo/T-Shirt
- Uniform Blouse
- Uniform Pants/Shorts/Skort
- Running Shoes or shoes appropriate for outdoor sports

##### BOYS (Grade K – 12)

- Uniform Polo/T-Shirt/Oxford Shirt
- Uniform Pants/Shorts/Joggers
- Running Shoes or shoes appropriate for outdoor sports

#### Acceptable Uniform Variations (Grade K – 12)

- School Logo Sweatshirt/Vest/Coats/Jackets

#### Shoes and Socks (Grade K – 12)

- Closed-toed running shoes need be worn as part of the daily school uniform.
- No boots, clogs, sling back, moccasin, open-toed, slipper-type, platform style or shoes with wheels.

#### Vocational Outing/ Field Trips Uniform (Grade K – 12)

#### School Uniform T-Shirt/Sweatshirt/Shorts/Sweatpants/Tennis shoes

#### Ordering Uniforms - *Lands' End are our providers*

#### Dress Down Days

*During designated special occasions, as declared by the administration, students are allowed to participate in "dress down" days, where they are not required to adhere to the standard NHA school uniform policy. However, it is essential to note that arriving at school without the proper uniform may result in the student being sent home for the day. In such cases, the school will enforce the uniform policy along with the requirement of appropriate shoes.*

## Personal Belongings

Students may bring electronics to school if they are put away when the student is asked – and are appropriate for a school environment. PARENTS UNDERSTAND THAT THE SCHOOL CANNOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY PERSONAL BELONGINGS INCLUDING PHONES OR IPADS. Parents allow students to bring these items at their own risk. Students are not allowed to make phone calls, surf the internet, do personal emails or be on You Tube without direct teacher supervision. Games of a violent nature are not allowed at school even on a student’s personal device. Any student not following the rules will not be allowed to bring these items to school.

## Weapons

Weapons of ANY sort – toy or otherwise-- will NOT be tolerated at New Heights Academy. Parents need to be sure these types of toys are not in their child’s backpack. Bringing weapons on to school property could result in expulsion of your student. Expulsion due to weapons on campus will NOT release parents from financial obligation to New Heights Academy for the school year.

## Harassment/Bullying

Any form of harassment or bullying will NOT be tolerated at New Heights Academy. Any incidents will be handled by the staff and parents will be notified. Unresolved or continuous problems may result in expulsion.

## Abuse

All school personnel are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately when they have “reasonable cause to believe that a child who is 17 years of age or younger and known to them in a professional or official capacity has been harmed or is in danger of being harmed – physically, sexually, or through neglect – and that a caregiver either committed the harm or should have taken steps to prevent the child from harm.” After a report has been filed, school staff members are prohibited from discussing the details of the report with parents or any other party. Moreover, the school will not receive feedback or follow-up from the reporting agency once a report has been filed.

No one in the workplace, even a supervisor, is permitted to suppress, change, or edit a report of abuse. A mandated reporter who willfully fails to report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect is subject to license suspension or revocation and commits a misdemeanor. Falsely reporting information is also a misdemeanor.

## Discipline Policy

Behavior intervention plans, if needed, will be individualized for each student. For safety reasons, certain behaviors cannot be tolerated at New Heights Academy, and will require intervention from school staff and parents. The following outline will describe behaviors that require intervention.

Intervention Behaviors Requires Parent-Teacher Conference:

- Screaming
- Sensory overload
- Perseverative behaviors that interfere with class such as noises or singing
- Wandering out of the classroom
- Continuous issues with distractibility that are interfering with learning

Behaviors that Require a Parent Pick-Up:

Behavior that continues even after interventions have been tried and affects the safety of the child, other children, and/or staff. Some of these behaviors may include:

- fighting with another student or staff member

- inappropriate language
- continuous noncompliance
- Aggressive behaviors to include self-injury, property damage, staff injury

**Expulsion Behaviors:**

- Aggressive behaviors
- Bringing a weapon to school
- Sexual assault
- Drugs and alcohol
- Repeated behaviors that require a parent pick-up and have not responded to multiple interventions New Heights Academy reserves the right to add to or change this list at any time

Parents need to be sure they have read and understand the behavior policy. Any time a student is exhibiting behaviors that could injure themselves, staff, other students or damage school property, staff will call the parent to notify them that they need to pick up their child. The student will need to have a written behavior intervention plan in place if the student does not have one. A behavior plan will be required before the student can return to school. The student’s strategies in his or her intervention plan must be able to de-escalate the behavior for the student to remain at New Heights Academy. Students that have displayed any aggressive behavior may be required to have additional staff support to return to school. This additional support will be billed to the parents if it is determined that is what is needed for a student to return to school. The cost of this will be determined and be in writing in the student’s behavior plan.

Parents need to understand that New Heights Academy is not staffed to deal with severe or aggressive behavior problems. Parents will be required to sign an acknowledgement that they understand and agree to all parts of this behavior policy.

## Marcus Autism Center Crisis Prevention Policy

New Heights Academy provides a safe and supportive learning environment for all our students. To maintain this commitment, our staff are trained in the Marcus Crisis Prevention Program (MCP), a set of techniques designed to de-escalate crisis situations and ensure the safety of everyone involved. MCP is a comprehensive approach that includes verbal de-escalation, non-violent physical intervention, and post-crisis support. These methods are used only when necessary to protect the student in crisis, other students, and staff members from immediate harm.

New Heights Academy staff are trained in and may utilize MCP techniques during crisis situations. These techniques are intended to ensure the safety and well-being of all students and staff. MCP techniques if deemed necessary by trained staff during a crisis involving your child. New Heights Academy prioritizes the dignity and rights of each student and that all interventions are conducted with the utmost care and respect. New Heights Academy, its employees, and agents are release from all claims, liabilities, and damages arising from the use of MCP techniques in crisis situations involving your child.

### Academic Policy

## Academic Overview

The academic program at New Heights Academy is designed to challenge every student while providing the accommodations needed for success. The school’s curriculum is based upon the Core Curriculum and Georgia Performance Standards but then again is tailored to meet the needs of the individual student. The class will work on math and reading with each child or groups of children working on an individual curriculum based on their needs. The academic program is geared towards constant assessments and making changes as needed to meet the needs of the students.

### Reading

- During Reading instruction, students focus on the following: Decoding skills
- Vocabulary development
- Fluency and reading with expression
- Reading comprehension with a variety of genres

## Language Arts

During the Language Arts class, students focus on the following: Grammar and mechanics

Spelling

Fluency and organization in written expression with a variety of genres Creativity in writing

Research skills

## Mathematics

The mathematics class focuses on developing the students' foundational computational and problem-solving skills necessary for their future success in math. At the beginning of the year, students are assessed to identify areas of concern in their mathematic abilities, and instruction is geared to reviewing the necessary concepts and skills.

As teachers progress through the mathematics curriculum, there is the constant spiraling of material. Teachers use a variety of instructional approaches in teaching mathematics, including the use of manipulatives, chants and rhymes, daily drills, games, and mathematics technology.

## Science

Developing students with experience in scientific inquiry, problem solving, and reference skills is an essential part of the science curriculum at New Heights Academy. Activities, experiments, and real-life applications will be used to help students learn the science curriculum.

## Social Studies

Geography skills are an important component of the Social Studies curriculum at New Heights Academy. Geography skills will be taught in all grades. The rest of the curriculum is based on the Georgia Performance Standards. A variety of instructional strategies are used in familiarizing the students with the social studies curriculum.

## Attendance Policy

Daily attendance at school is important for the student's academic success. Absences and tardiness are expected, however please keep them to a minimum and communicate with staff members whenever a situation should arise. New Heights Academy takes pride in being flexible to provide an optimal learning environment for the students. If a student is having a matter that is making it difficult for the student to be at school or be on time at school, please communicate with the staff so a plan can be put in place.

Excessive tardiness and/or absences without communicating with the staff may result in the student not being offered re-admittance at the beginning of the new school year.

## Homework Policy

At New Heights Academy, we believe homework is important for daily practice of new and previously learned skills. It also helps with retention of these skills and encourages students to learn responsibility for their own education. Homework is given 1-4 days out of the week, and it is important that the student completes it.

Homework is not busywork and should not take the student hours to complete. Homework will consist of reading, practice of daily math skill (usually consisting of 5 – 10 problems), and possibly language arts, science, or social studies. Homework will be individualized based on the student's needs and skill level.

## Grading/Report Cards

Students at New Heights Academy will be graded based upon academic performance. The staff, parents, and students must work together to help with student achievement. Four reports cards will be distributed throughout the school year. Grading periods are long enough to allow students several opportunities to demonstrate mastery of specific skills. In addition, multiple means are used to determine students' grades and assess their skill levels. Report Cards will be emailed to the parent for each quarter via Praxi School Portal.

The grading scale will be as such:

- A ----- 90-100%
- B ----- 89-80%
- C ----- 79-70%
- D ----- 69-60%
- F ----- 59% and Below

## Evaluation Tools

New Heights Academy believes that there needs to be a wide array of assessments including school-developed assessments to track specific skills and learning as well as state exams to ensure that students are meeting all state standards. New Heights Academy measures the impact and success of its academic programs utilizing several forms of evaluation and assessment. Evaluation and assessment are conducted on a daily, weekly, quarterly, and annual basis in all curriculum areas.

Teachers also develop their own pre- and post-assessments to determine what skills each student has mastered and what skills need to be worked on. The staff does daily formal and informal assessments to check progress on skills being taught and on retention of previously learned skills. We believe that we need to use a variety of assessment tools to have a solid understanding of each student's academic progress and functioning level.

## Standardized Testing

ULS standardized testing refers to assessments provided by Unique Learning System, which are designed to evaluate students' academic progress and determine appropriate educational support. These tests help identify students' strengths and areas for improvement, guiding the development of personalized learning plans and ensuring that each student's educational needs are met effectively.

## Computer/ Internet Usage

Computers are used to support learning and enhance instruction. Students will use computers frequently in their regular classrooms. However, computer privileges depend on students using the technology in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner. A student may not:

- Use the Internet for any illegal purpose.
- Use profane, obscene, impolite, or abusive language. Change computer files that do not belong to the user. Violate someone else's privacy.
- Share his/her password with anyone except adults at the school.

Students must also observe classroom rules set by their teachers for computer usage in the classroom. Students are not allowed to randomly surf the Internet, play violent video games and must be on appropriate sites if on You Tube. Students must be supervised if You Tube is being used.

## Textbooks and school owned instructional materials

The school will provide each student with a variety of textbooks and instructional materials (including workbooks, magazines, journals, books, etc.). It is the responsibility of each student to keep up with their textbooks and instructional materials borrowed from the school. The school has a very limited budget for funding such instructional materials; therefore, parents of students who lose or damage any of these materials will be charged the appropriate replacement costs and will be expected to pay these charges promptly.

## School Guests

At NHA, we welcome guests and visitors who contribute positively to our educational environment while prioritizing the safety and security of our students and staff. To ensure a productive and secure learning atmosphere, the following guidelines govern all visitors to our school:

**Pre-Approval Process:** All guest visits must be pre-approved by the school administration. Visitors are required to contact the main office in advance to schedule their visit and provide the purpose of their visit, date, and time of arrival.

**Identification and Sign-In:** Upon arrival, all guests must report to the main office. Visitors will be required to present a valid form of identification (such as a driver's license or government-issued ID) to obtain a visitor's pass. This pass must always be worn visibly while on school premises.

**Escort Requirement:** All guests, unless otherwise specified and pre-approved, must be accompanied by a designated staff member or student host during their visit. The host will guide the guests throughout their time at the school.

**Behavior Expectations:** Guests are expected to adhere to the same behavioral standards as our students while on school property. Any disruptive, inappropriate, or unsafe behavior will not be tolerated, and the guest may be asked to leave the premises.

**Confidentiality and Privacy:** Guests are required to respect the privacy of students, staff, and other visitors. Discussions or observations about individual students should be kept confidential.

**Time Limitations:** Guest visits should be limited to the designated purpose and time approved by the administration. Extended stays may be allowed only in exceptional circumstances with prior approval.

**Health and Safety Protocols:** All guests are expected to comply with the school's health and safety protocols, including wearing face masks, following hand hygiene practices, and any other relevant safety measures.

**Restricted Areas:** Certain areas of the school may be designated as off-limits to guests for security or educational reasons. Visitors must respect these restrictions and only access approved areas.

**Emergency Procedures:** In case of an emergency or drill, guests must follow the instructions given by school staff and adhere to evacuation or safety protocols.

**Reporting Concerns:** If a guest observes any safety or security concerns, they must immediately report them to the host or school administration.

By following this guest policy, we can ensure a safe and conducive learning environment for all our students, staff, and visitors. We appreciate your cooperation and commitment to the well-being of our school community.

## Outstanding Fees

Students may be subject to fees for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to lost or damaged textbooks or instructional materials or childcare fees related to tardy pick-ups. As a rule, parents have up to 30 days to pay any outstanding fees. Report cards will not be issued to students with outstanding fees. Students with outstanding fees may also be denied re-admittance at the beginning of a new school year until all outstanding fees are paid.

Accounts that are past due are subject to finance charges of 20% per year. In the event tuition payments are past due and the parent has not planned with the school staff, the student will be disenrolled from New Heights Academy. Re-admittance would depend on classroom availability and would require the account to be settled in full for the current year and any future school year terms would have to be paid in full before the start of the school year. We truly hope this is not a policy we would ever have to enforce and again encourage parents to contact school staff should the potential for this situation arise so an agreement can be worked out.

## NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

New Heights Academy, Inc., admits students of any race, color, national origin, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

# Acknowledgement of Receipt and Acceptance of the 2024-2025 New Heights Academy Parent Handbook

I, Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) Printed Full Name \_\_\_\_\_,

the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of (Student's Printed Name) \_\_\_\_\_,

acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the New Heights Academy Parent Handbook for the academic year 2024-2025. I understand that this handbook contains important and binding information and policies regarding the school's expectations, guidelines, and procedures for students and parents.

I accept and agree to abide by the terms and conditions outlined in the Parent Handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with its contents. I will ensure that my child, who is enrolled at New Heights Academy, is also aware of and complies with the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook.

By signing below, I confirm that I have received and accepted the New Heights Academy Parent Handbook, and I pledge to support the school's mission and values in fostering a safe and positive learning environment for my child.

Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) Printed Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_