

1.

WELCOME

Welcome to Gila Mountain Christian Academy! We are truly blessed to have you as part of our school community. Whether your family is new to our school or has been with us for years, we thank you for entrusting us with the privilege of partnering with you in the education and spiritual formation of your child.

At GMCA, our mission is to glorify God by providing a Christ-centered, academically excellent education that prepares students to serve and lead in their homes, churches, and communities. We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children, and it is our great joy to come alongside you in that calling.

This Parent Handbook has been carefully prepared to provide you with important information about our school's philosophy, policies, procedures, and expectations. We encourage you to read through it thoroughly and refer to it throughout the school year. Clear communication and mutual understanding help foster a strong and supportive environment for every student.

We are committed to maintaining a school culture where biblical truth is taught, lived, and celebrated. Our teachers and staff are dedicated followers of Jesus Christ, and they strive daily to model His love, grace, and wisdom. It is our prayer that every child who walks through our doors will grow not only in knowledge but also in faith and character.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve your family. We look forward to an exciting year filled with growth, discovery, and the blessings of God's faithfulness.

MISSION

To partner with families in providing a Christ-centered, academically excellent education while nurturing each child's spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical development in a safe and supportive environment grounded in Biblical truth.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. The Bible

We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. It is completely true and is our final authority in what we believe and how we live.

(2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105)

2. God

We believe there is one true God who exists forever as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is the Creator of all things and is loving, holy, and all-powerful.

(Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19)

3. Jesus Christ

We believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to save us from our sins, rose from the dead, and is alive today. One day, He will return as King.

(John 1:1,14; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4)

4. Salvation

We believe all people have sinned and need forgiveness. Salvation is a free gift from God, given through faith in Jesus Christ.

(Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:8–9)

5. The Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit lives in every believer. He helps us understand the Bible, grow in our faith, and live in a way that pleases God.

(John 14:26; Galatians 5:22–23)

6. The Church

We believe all believers are part of the Body of Christ, the Church. God calls us to worship together, encourage one another, and share His love with the world.

(Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24–25)

7. Christian Living

We believe Christians should reflect Christ by living with love, kindness, honesty, and humility.

We are called to serve others and live in a way that honors God.

(Colossians 3:12–17; Matthew 5:14–16)

GMCA FAMILY

FACULTY

Edgar Vergara Millan	Pastor
Hadley Mallahan	Director/Principal
Jeniya Brawley	2 nd & 3 rd Grade Teacher/Relief Director
Maricela Hernandez	Pre-K4 Teacher
Leann Crist	Kindergarten Teacher
Melquicedec Hernandez	1 st Grade
Mary Klawuhn	Church Administrative Assistant

PARENTS

We believe that a positive and respectful relationship between parents, staff, and the school community is essential to a child's success and growth in a Christ-centered environment.

By enrolling your child at Gila Mountain Christian Academy, you agree to support the school's mission, values, and biblical worldview, and to uphold the following standards of conduct:

Respectful Communication

Parents are expected to communicate with school staff, administration, and other families in a manner that is respectful, courteous, and constructive. Disagreements should be handled with grace, following biblical principles of reconciliation (Matthew 18:15–17).

Support of School Mission and Values

Parents are expected to support the mission, Statement of Faith, and spiritual goals of the school, both in action and attitude, recognizing that GMCA seeks to honor Christ in all things.

Positive Representation

Parents agree to represent the school positively in the community and on social media. Public criticism of the school, staff, or students is discouraged and should be addressed directly through proper school channels.

Upholding School Policies

Parents are expected to support and uphold the school's policies, procedures, and dress code as outlined in the Parent and Student Handbooks. Proper dress also applies to parents. Please be sure to dress in appropriate and modest attire when on school grounds.

Partnership and Participation

We view education as a partnership between home and school. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's education, attend school events, and volunteer when possible.

Failure to adhere to this Parent Conduct Statement may result in a meeting with administration and could affect a family's continued enrollment at Gila Mountain Christian Academy.

STUDENTS

We believe that how we treat others and how we act reflects our love for God and respect for one another.

As a student at GMCA, I will:

Love God and Others

- Show kindness, patience, and respect to teachers, staff, and classmates
- Use words that build others up, not tear them down
- Treat others the way I want to be treated (Luke 6:31)

Tell the Truth and Take Responsibility

- Be honest in my words and actions
- Admit when I make mistakes and work to make things right
- Take care of my own responsibilities (Galatians 6:5)

3. Obey with a Good Attitude

- Listen and follow directions the first time
- Speak respectfully to all adults
- Try my best, even when things are hard (Philippians 2:14-15)

4. Be a Peacemaker

- Work out problems peacefully and ask for help when needed
- Forgive others, just as God forgives me
- Help create a safe, caring environment (Matthew 5:9)

5. Take Care of Property

- Treat school property and other people's belongings with care
- Keep my area clean and organized
- Use technology and materials wisely and responsibly

6. Be a Good Example

- Show Christ-like character at school, at home, and in the community
- Follow school rules whether others are watching or not
- Encourage others to do what is right (1 Timothy 4:12)

We want every student to grow in wisdom, character, and faith. When a student chooses not to follow this Code of Conduct, teachers and administrators will respond with correction, grace, and guidance—partnering with parents to help each child learn and grow.

PTO

GMCA sponsors a Parent-Teacher Organization. The organization serves as an extension of the school to help foster communication between the school and the parents. The PTO helps to sponsor and organize school events and programs including fundraising and field trips.

Participation in the PTO is not mandatory, but we highly encourage at least one parent from each student volunteer for school events and fundraisers.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ADMISSIONS

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Packets are available at our Administrative Office. A registration packet along with a student's birth certificate and immunization record are required for a student's enrollment.

If for any reason disenrollment is necessary, our school will need a letter on file notating disenrollment and all tuition will need to be paid current. Tuition is non-refundable if for any reason disenrollment happens.

A student must register each new school year and registration fees are due each year for your child and is non-refundable. Registration secures your child's spot in the classroom and pays for the Abeka curriculum needed for your child. At the end of each school year, any remaining curriculum will be sent home with you to keep.

TUITION/FEES

All tuition and fees are annually evaluated and adjusted to accommodate the changing needs of the school. These annual fee rates are published at the beginning of the enrollment process for a new year.

Pre-K4: Tuition is billed monthly and due by the 5th of each month. If payment has not been received by the 5th, a late fee of \$25.00 will be accessed. If tuition is behind by 1 month, the school will have the option to withdraw the student until the account is current, unless the parent has communicated arrangements with the school director.

Kindergarten – 5th Grade: Tuition is billed quarterly unless other arrangements have been made with the school director. If tuition for the quarter has not been paid a late fee of \$75.00 will be accessed. The school will have the option to withdraw the student until the account is current, unless the parent has communicated arrangements with the school director.

Scholarships: If your child is on a scholarship, the school will need a copy of the scholarship contract agreement.

AGE REQUIRMENTS

Pre-K4: Student is required to be 4 years of age before December 31st of the new school year for which they are enrolling.

Kindergarten: Student is 5 years of age before December 31st of the school year for which the student is enrolling.

1st Grade: Student is 6 years of age before December 31st of the school year for which the student is enrolling.

2nd Grade: Student is 7 years of age before December 31st of the school year for which the student is enrolling.

3rd Grade: Student is 8 years of age before December 31st of the school year for which the student is enrolling.

4th Grade: Student is 9 years of age before December 31st of the school year for which the student is enrolling.

5th Grade: Student is 10 years of age before December 31st of the school year for which the student is enrolling.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

GMCA admits students of any race, color, national 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 on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

As a Christian school, Gila Mountain Christian Academy reserves the right to make decisions based on biblical principles and the school's Statement of Faith in matters of admissions, discipline, and other policies, particularly when behavior or beliefs conflict with the school's core religious beliefs.

CUSTODY

The school must have copies of pertinent court orders relating to any custody arrangements made with a family. The school cannot be responsible for monitoring court restrictions if we do not have written knowledge of the restrictions. We kindly ask if you have a custody arrangement, please provide the school with a calendar of when each parent has the child during school time. Furthermore, please note that GMCA does not and will not participate in any custody dispute or be a mediator between two parental parties.

CLASS PLACEMENT

A child's placement is based off of several factors and is at the sole discretion of the school. The factors that determine this are the following :

- Child's age
- Academic level
- Grade assessment
- Social and emotional maturity

WITHDRAWAL

If disenrollment is necessary, our school will need a letter on file notating disenrollment and all tuition and fees will need to be paid current. Tuition is non-refundable if for any reason disenrollment happens. GMCA will release all records upon receipt of any outstanding fees.

PRIVACY

GMCA is committed to protecting the privacy of its students and families. Academic and health records and family information are treated as confidential materials and will not be disclosed without the written consent of a parent or legal guardian, except under a court order or a life-threatening emergency.

CHILD ABUSE

Mandated reports are required by law, as defined by A.R.S. § 13-3620 to report all concerns of child abuse or neglect. All staff members of GMCA are mandated reporters.

The licensee or staff member shall report the suspected or alleged child abuse or neglect to the Arizona Department of Child Safety or to a local law enforcement agency as prescribed in A.R.S. § 13-3620.

The licensee or staff member shall also send documentation to the Arizona Department of Child Safety and any local law enforcement agency previously notified within three calendar days of the initial report and maintain documentation of a child abuse or neglect report on facility premises for 12 months after the date of a report.

Mandated reporting is not a tool for parents to use for prompting a child or staff member to report alleged child abuse. Mandated reporting happens organically when a staff member suspects or witnesses neglect/abuse.

HARRASMENT

Our goal is to provide a safe and secure environment for our students. Bullying and harassing behavior will not be tolerated. Reported or observed instances of behavior determined to be bullying or harassment will immediately be dealt with according to our Bullying/Harassment Policy.

ACCIDENTS & EMERGENCIES

If while attending the facility an enrolled child has an accident, injury, or emergency that, based on an evaluation by a staff member, requires medical treatment by a health care provider, a licensee shall ensure that a staff member:

1. Notify the enrolled child's parent immediately after the accident, injury, or emergency.
2. Documents:
 - a. A description of the accident, injury, or emergency, including the date, time, and location of the accident, injury, or emergency.
 - b. The method is used to notify the enrolled child's parents.
 - c. The time the enrolled child's parent was notified.

SAFETY & SECURITY

In accordance with AZ State law, we have one fire drill per month. We will also have a lock down drill quarterly.

Safety and security of all staff, students and visitors is our number one priority. Our school and church grounds are monitored by cameras. The school and church building doors remained closed and always locked. For entry into the building, the doorbell must be rung, and everyone is vetted at the door before being allowed to enter the building.

VISITORS/CLOSED CAMPUS

A parent has access to the facility premises where their student is attending school. All visitors, including parents, relatives, and community visitors, shall make their way to the administrative offices upon entering the school. Every visitor is required to sign in and out. A visitor's pass will be given to you and must be visibly worn on your person while on the school premises. Our school is fully secured and the doors remain closed and always locked.

VOLUNTEERS

We love and encourage parents, guardians and family members to volunteer at GMCA. If you would like to volunteer in a certain area or areas, please let our administrative office know. If your volunteer work includes being involved with the students a background check is required. If your volunteer work becomes more regular and helping in the classroom a fingerprint card will be required.

DAILY OPERATIONS

SCHOOL HOURS

During the school year, Gila Mountain Christian Academy will be open from Mon –Thurs 8:00am-3:00pm and Friday 8:00am -1:00pm. The office will be closed during all scheduled school breaks, determined by the school calendar. Our school calendar coincides with Yuma District One.

Summer office hours are Mon – Thurs 9:00am- 1:00pm and Friday by appointment only.

The school can be reached at (928) 345-1520 or thelearningpad@live.com

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is one of the greatest contributing factors to a student's success in the classroom. If your student is going to be absent, please call the school office. Absences and tardiness should be limited. Regular attendance is a critical component for success in school. It is the position of GMCA, that students are expected to be present every day while classes are in session. Parents will be contacted if a negative pattern of absences is

noted. If tardy, students will need to come to the office with their parent/guardian to get an admission slip to enter class. If a student arrives after 10am that student will be marked absent for the day regardless if they do attend class that day. To be marked present you must have a valid excuse. Students will not be permitted to attend class for the day if they do not show up before 11am as this is a disruption to the class.

If a student is attending school on a scholarship, it is very important to be mindful of absences and tardiness. Surpassing a scholarship limit of absences, may disqualify the student from maintaining that scholarship. *For questions regarding this matter, please reach out to your students scholarship program*

YUMA COUNTY TRUANCY PROGRAM

As of age 6, Arizona law requires that children attend school. GMCA upholds the Yuma County Truancy law. If your child is absent for 5 or more unexcused absences, we will give you notice. Yuma County Attorney's Office will be contacted depending on the reason of the student's absences and whether they are excused or unexcused.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Each family will be given a windshield tag with the student's name and grade. Please have these up for drop off and pickup. This allows us to quickly and properly identify you when dropping off and picking up your child. If you are not picking up your child, the person picking them up must be on the Emergency Contact Form and have a photo ID available upon request.

Drop off and pick up is located in front of the black doors next to the playground area.

Parents can drop off students as early as 7:45am.

Dismissal will start at 2:50pm. After 3:05pm, the child will be taken to the office for pick up. Students, who have not been picked up by 3:05pm, will result in a late pick-up fee being assessed. The late fee is \$1.00 per minute per child you are picking up late. Late fees will be due upon arrival. We ask that you keep us informed of any problems preventing you from being on time by calling the school office.

Pre-K4 pickup and drop off: Arizona state licensing guidelines require that Pre-K4 children must be signed in and out of their classroom. A full legible signature is also required.

We please ask that if you need to exit your vehicle's driver seat that you park your vehicle in a safe place. The drive through areas must keep moving. Also do not pull around other vehicles in the lane.

COMMUNICATION

Class Dojo

Class Dojo is a form of communication used by GMCA. It is used by GMCA staff and parents to communicate with your child's teacher about your child as well as the school informing you about events and/or happenings around the school. Please note that Class Dojo is a privilege. It is not a platform for gossip or slander. If it is discovered that a parent is abusing Class Dojo, said parent will be removed from Class Dojo and will no longer be allowed to participate in Class Dojo. GMCA also reserves the right and sole discretion of who is added to Class Dojo. Parties that are not listed as a parent, guardian or emergency contact will not have access to Class Dojo. Parents are not allowed to send links or invites to other parties. Class Dojo invites come only from the school directly.

Communication

Parents are welcome to voice their concerns. Before consulting your child's teacher, please refer to the handbook to see if your concern may be addressed under the policies and procedures. If not, your first form of contact is with your student's teacher. Please communicate with your student's teacher as you are to resolve all matters pertaining to your child with them first. A teacher will not discuss someone's child with you as they would not discuss your child with another parent. Parents are also not to discuss a teacher with another teacher in a negative manner as it violates the other teacher's privacy. If you feel that your concerns/questions need further attention, please communicate with the school principal.

Teacher Conferences

Teacher conferences are held in the 1st and 3rd quarters of the school year. Dates and times are scheduled with your student's teacher.

Questions

Please direct classroom/curriculum questions to your student's teacher. Tuition or billing questions please see the school director. If you have any other questions, concerns or issues you may address them by stopping into the director's office, by phone or by email.

CHAPEL

Chapel is held each Monday at 8:30am-9:00am. Chapel is conducted in the Gila Mountain United Methodist Sanctuary. School staff leads students in prayer, song and worship. A Bible story/lesson is then given by Pastor Edgar Vergara Millan.

DRESS CODE

We require that your child wear their school uniform Monday through Thursday. Uniforms may be purchased at:

Z Trendz
773 S. Orange Ave.
Yuma, AZ 85364
928-783-3370

Or

Yuma Clothing
101 W 16th St.
Yuma, AZ 85364
928-782-4912

Girls: Collar Button down Shirt in navy, burgundy and grey. Khaki or Navy uniform skirt, dress, short or pant.

Boys: Collar Button down Shirt in navy, burgundy and grey. Khaki or Navy Uniform short or pant.

Every Friday will be a free dress day, uniform will not be required.

Shoes: ALL shoes or sandals worn by students must have straps on the back and be closed toed. Shower type sandals or flip flops are prohibited. Croc style shoes cannot be worn to school. No skate shoes or shoes with heels higher than one inch.

LUNCH

Please provide your child with a well-balanced lunch that provides them with the proper nutrients they need to make it through the school day. Please do not send food items that need to be heated up. We will not be able to provide that service. If you do want your child to have a warm meal, please send in a thermos that can keep the food warm.

Afternoon snack time will be discussed with you by your child's teacher.

SNACK

Classrooms do have morning and/or afternoon snacks. Snack time will be discussed with you by your child's teacher as each family will be in a snack rotation of providing snacks for the classroom Monday through Thursday.

WATER BOTTLE

Students are required to bring a water a bottle every day to school. The water bottle must be leak proof. No water bottles with straws that cannot be secured. The water bottle is to have water only. Juice and other electrolyte drinks are for lunchtime only. NO soda.

ACADEMIC POLICIES **AND PROCEDURES**

CURRICULUM

Gila Mountain Christian Academy uses the faith-based curriculum Abeka. If you would like further information on Abeka you can visit their website at <https://www.abeka.com/>

HOMEWORK

Kindergarten through 5th Grade have homework policies in which students and parents are to abide by. Homework is a tool used to help a child retain what they have learned in the classroom and further their growth while working independently. Bible verses are part of the homework. Please practice with your child. Homework that is completed by a parent and not the child will result in a zero.

GRADING SYSTEM

GMCA uses a 10-point grading scale for Kindergarten through 5th Grade.

A – 100-90

B- 89 – 80

C 79 – 70

D 69 -60

F 59 - 0

ELECTRONICS USAGE

2nd grade through 5th occasionally uses laptops for learning purposes and to play Dojo Island. Please refer to the laptop waiver you signed.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson plans are posted on Class Dojo weekly by your student's teacher. This will allow you to see what your child is learning during that week. If you have questions please reach out to your child's teacher.

TESTING

Testing for a child's next grade placement takes place in May each year. If your child does not pass at 80% or higher how we proceed forward will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are distributed at the end of each 9 weeks. If you have concerns regarding your child's grades or progress please consult your child's teacher as soon as your concerns arise.

VALUABLES

Anything of value to you or child is to be kept at home as we are not responsible for the missing or broken item. Toys will not be permitted in the classroom unless stated otherwise by the child's teacher for show and tell.

BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Please refer to Student Code of Conduct. Please review the Student Code of conduct with your child.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Each student is a gift from God and will be treated with respect at all times. Positive guidance, re-direction, and teacher modeling will be used in and out of the classroom. If a student becomes disruptive where the teacher is unable to perform their duties, a parent will be called for pick up. Incidents will be evaluated on a case by case; the director/principal will then make the final decision based upon the best interests of the child and the school.

BULLYING POLICY

At GMCA our goal is to provide a safe and secure environment for our students. Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated. Reported or observed instances of behavior determined to be bullying or harassment will immediately be dealt with. Any situations that occur in the classroom or on the playground will be dealt with accordingly and noted with the teacher. If these offenses continue to occur, a conference with the student, teacher, principal and parent/guardians will be held to discuss the seriousness of these actions. If the behavior continues, a second meeting will be held to discuss the student's enrollment status.

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

Suspension and expulsion is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. When other methods of discipline do not result in improvement of behavior, or in the case of severe misbehavior, the principal has the discretion to suspend or expel a student. Expelled students may not return to classes or participate in any school activities. However, serious or unlawful offenses may result in immediate expulsion.

OTHER

Birthday Celebration

Birthdays are celebrated with teacher approval. Parents will need to make prior arrangements before bringing in treats. These treats will need to be store bought. Please be mindful of your child's classroom allergies that will be posted.

Campus (NO NUTS)

We are a Nut Free Campus. This includes peanuts and all other nut butters.

Field trips

Fieldtrips and coordinated events for students off campus will require parents to transport their own children to and from; parents are to remain with their child/children at all times.

Fundraising

Families are invited and encouraged to participate in school fundraisers.

Fry's Food Store: Please help support us by linking your rewards card to our Fry's community organization account. Account Number AY161. Our Community Rewards program makes fund-raising easy. All you must do is shop online or at your local store and swipe your Loyalty Card and funds will be donated to GMCA at no added cost to you.

Illness

We ask that you please have your child stay home if sick. Please notify the school immediately in the event of exposure to any contagious disease. (i.e. pink eye, flu). Child must be fever free without medication for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school. This also includes vomiting and diarrhea.

Immunization

The State of AZ requires a complete copy of the immunization records for each student to be on file at his or her school. Required AZ immunization information can be found in the administrative offices. Medical & Religious Waivers are available if needed.

Inspections

Each year Gila Mountain Christian Academy Pre-K4 program is inspected by the Arizona Department of Health Services. Inspection reports are available on-site and, on the AZDHS website www.azdhs.gov.

Liability Insurance

Gila Mountain Christian Academy has liability insurance covered under Lightwell of Arizona, LLC.

Home of the Knights

Medication

AZ CCL-302 Medication Consent Form will have to be completed in its entirety and placed in the student's file, prior to any medication administered. All medication will be stored in the Director's office and locked up.

Pesticides

AZDHS requires notification posted at least 72 hours before a pesticide is applied to the school premises.

Photograph Release

A photograph release is requested for every student. Please see the registration packet, as this is where you will sign the release form. Photos for items such as, but not limited to memory books, classroom displays, and school advertisements. Photograph release is voluntary and not required.

Prohibitions

The use of cigarettes, drugs, alcohol and profanity is forbidden on premises. Fighting and bullying is prohibited on our premises. Willful destruction of our building, equipment, and/or furnishings is prohibited. Parents are responsible for replacing or repairing the damaged items.

Transportation

Transportation is not provided at this time.

Yearbooks

Yearbooks will be available for purchase before the end of each school year. Parents will be notified when they become available for purchase. Please note that yearbooks are not included in the registration fee or tuition.

Handbook Update Policy

GMCA reserves the right to modify, amend or change all or part of the handbook at any time at our sole and absolute discretion.

Home of the Knights