



**Parent Handbook**  
**2009 - 2010**

# Keys Gate Charter School



*Robin Sandler, Principal  
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August 2009

Dear Parents:

Welcome to an exciting year at Keys Gate Charter School (KGCS). We are thrilled to have the opportunity to work with you and your children to create an enriching learning environment.

This handbook is designed to assist you in understanding the policies and guidelines used at our school. Please read the handbook and discuss appropriate items with your child. After reviewing the handbook, please complete the last page and return it to your child's teacher by September 4th.

We look forward to working with you throughout the year. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the handbook, please contact the school office.

Sincerely,

Robin Sandler,  
Principal

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY/PROCEDURES:**

### ***Absences:***

- Any time a student returns to school after an absence, a note must be sent in to the homeroom teacher within 48 hours. After this 48 hour period, this absence will be recorded as unexcused and will not be changed.
- Acceptable excuses for students' absences are illness, a death in the family, a school-sponsored event or activity that has been previously approved or religious holiday.
- Absences due to sibling or parent illness will not be considered as excused.
- Original doctor's notes will only be accepted by the student's homeroom teacher upon his/her return to school. Original doctor's notes will not be accepted at the end of the school year for an absence that occurred previously in the year. Photocopies of doctor's notes will not be accepted
- Up to 10 parent excuse notes will be permitted per school year for illness. All other absences must be excused by a doctor's note

### ***Early Releases:***

- Early releases require excusal notes to be marked as excused. These notes must also be turned in to the homeroom teacher within 48 hours.
- Any early releases that occur before 9am will be considered an absence

### ***Tardies:***

- Tardies are not excused unless they are documented by a doctor's note
- Doctor's notes for tardies must be received at the time of student arrival and turned into the main office
- Any student arriving after 12pm will be marked as absent for the day

### ***Family Travel:***

- Although the school does not support students missing school for vacation purposes, any student missing school for vacation must notify the administration.
- Notification must be made in writing at least two weeks in advance so teachers can have the appropriate work ready for each student.
- Absences due to vacations are not considered excused.

Students exceeding a combination of 20 unexcused absences, tardies and/or early dismissals will lose automatic re-enrollment privileges.

## **ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN (AIP)**

An AIP is required by the state when a student is not progressing at the appropriate rate in academics and/or behavior. It is designed to help meet a child's individual needs and assist that child in achieving grade level standards.

Students are required to have an AIP if:

- They receive a Level 1 in reading or math on the FCAT.

- Academic grades are a D or below.
- Behavior is negatively affecting academic achievement.

Parents are an important part of a child's AIP. Please make sure to attend scheduled meetings.

### **ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

At KGCS, we hold our students to a high academic standard. We expect our students to complete all of their assignments in a timely manner as directed by their teachers. Students who do not turn in their assignments will receive a zero. A student that fails to turn in multiple assignments may be in danger of academic failure. In order to avoid this problem, we request that our parents carefully monitor their child's progress through the use of SIS, agendas, communication with the teacher and progress reports. After meeting with teachers and administration, students that have a chronic problem meeting their academic responsibilities will be suspended from school and may lose the opportunity to recommit the following academic year.

### **AGENDA BOOK:**

Each student will be provided an agenda book by the PTSO. The agenda book will be used on a daily basis by teachers for communication to parents. Students will use the book to log in their homelearning assignments. The agenda book must be **signed each night** by a parent/guardian to ensure that all communication has been seen. If a student misplaces an agenda book, he/she will be required to purchase another one from the PTSO. No other agenda books will be accepted, as the school has ordered these books with specific items and information. Agendas are also used in the middle school to monitor hall and restroom passes.

### **AFTER SCHOOL CARE (ASC):**

The after school care program begins immediately when school ends until 6:00 p.m. Students are provided a snack and a drink. During an hour of ASC time, students are to work on their homework and/or read a book. Each student enrolled in the ASC should bring a book to read each day as reading logs are part of the nightly homelearning. After home learning time is over, students have time for recess, games, and a variety of structured activities. Please see our web site for program details and payment procedures and policies.

### **ARRIVAL:**

It is important to teach our children the significance of regular school attendance. In addition, it is important that students report to school on time. All students must use the school driveway to be dropped off. Please make sure to follow the directions of school employees in the drive thru.

*Drop off is from 7:50 a.m. to 8:25 a.m. so that children are sitting in class by 8:30 a.m. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child arrives to school on time. Please plan accordingly to meet our 8:30 AM start time.*

There is no supervision before 7:50 a.m. for students who are **not** enrolled in the

Before School Care Program. All students dropped off before 7:50 a.m. will be placed in Before School Care and charged the daily rate of \$5.00.

### **BEFORE CARE:**

Before care is a service KGCS provides for all parents for a monthly fee. Please see our web site for program policies & monthly payments due date. Students who will be attending the Before School Care (BSC) program are expected to report directly to the cafeteria upon arrival. Students in BSC will have time to eat breakfast and review the previous day's assignment.

### **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS:**

Students are welcome to celebrate their birthday at school in Kindergarten through Fifth grade. Individual snacks (cupcakes, cookies, etc.) and a drink may be brought to school to share with your child's class during lunch. Arrangements must be made in advance with the classroom teacher. *No party bags, balloons, decorations, etc. are permitted. Siblings may not attend this celebration as it would be disruptive to another class.*

### **BOOKBAGS:**

Students may not use book bags on wheels unless they have a current doctor's note on file indicating that it needed for medical reasons. All book bags must be in good repair. Students may not draw or write messages on their book bags. Any student found with inappropriate drawings and/or messages on their book bags may result in suspension.

### **CAFETERIA PROGRAM:**

Breakfast and lunch will be served in the cafeteria. Occasionally, students may lose or forget lunch or lunch money. When this happens, the student will have cereal and milk. Students will not be permitted to call home. LUNCH CHARGES CANNOT be made since public funds do not allow schools to extend credit. Students are not allowed to bring sodas, coffee (hot or cold), energy drinks (i.e. *Red Bull, Full Throttle*), candy or gum to school. Glass containers are not permitted. In an effort to promote healthy eating habits, we request that fast food not be brought to school. If you insist on bringing your child lunch and/or fast food, it must be placed in a regular lunch box or brown bag and must occur during the child's scheduled lunch time. The toys must be removed and remember, no sodas.

**Payment:** All parents must pay for lunch monthly or weekly. Pre-payment for the coming week is made on the **Wednesday** before the lunch is received. Pre-payment for the month is made only the **Wednesday** before the new month begins. Payment should be made in cash or check. Please note that there are no credits given for days when a child is absent. Please check our website to review the menu for the month.

**Free/Reduced Price Lunches:** An application for free or reduced price meals will be sent home in the beginning of the school year. Parents must apply for this benefit yearly. The applications should be completed and returned to your child's teacher within the first week of school. A random selection of applicants will be

asked for additional information regarding verification of income. Notification pertaining to qualification for free/reduced lunch will be sent promptly. *Parents are responsible for providing their child a lunch until the application is approved, however, prior year lunch status is valid for the first two weeks of school only.*

**Behavior:** Conduct in the cafeteria reflects a student's home training. Students should eat in an atmosphere that is pleasant and conducive to good habits. Please discuss good cafeteria manners with your child. Students may receive a detention for improper cafeteria behavior.

**Students Will:**

Use low voices during lunch.

Not play or throw food.

Raise their hand if they need something.

Remain seated during the lunch period at the assigned table.

**CELL PHONE POLICY:**

Cell phones and other electronic devices are not allowed on school campus. Students may not bring a cell phone to school. School phones are available for emergencies. All cell phones or other electronic devices will be confiscated by school personnel and kept in the main office until the last day of the school year. Parents are discouraged from text messaging and/or calling their children on their cell phones during school hours as it will result in the phone being confiscated.

The only exception to the cell phone policy is for those students that ride the bus, walk or bike ride home. Those students must have their cell phones turned off and kept inside their book bags at all times. If at anytime a student that rides the bus, walks or rides their bike home is found with a cell phone out in site, turned on and/or in use while on campus, will have their phone confiscated until the end of the school year.

Keys Gate Charter School and its staff are not responsible for the loss, theft and/or damage of any cell phone or electronic device.

**CHARACTER/CITIZENSHIP:**

Students are expected to demonstrate superior character and citizenship. We encourage students to always do the right thing and seek the assistance of staff members when a troublesome situation arises. Follow the golden rule: Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you. Lend a helping hand whenever possible, always make good choices and act responsibly.

- Items found should be turned over to the office or placed in the lost and found. Never keep unclaimed items as your own
- Do not participate in situations with peers that can get you into trouble
- Report wrong doing or dangerous situations
- Do not take things that do not belong to you including personal items and/or lunches

Students that steal items from others will be suspended from school. This includes consuming another student's lunch (labeled or not labeled).

### **COLD WEATHER:**

On occasion during the winter months, we have very cold weather where the temperature drops below average. As part of our uniform policy we have included long sleeve undershirts, jackets, sweatshirt and pants for days like these. We recommend that you purchase these items at the beginning of the school year in order to be prepared for cold winter days.

If at any time the temperature drops below 50 degrees, students may wear a heavier jacket of their choice on top of their Keys Gate jacket while outside. Once inside, students will be asked to remove the additional jacket since our school is equipped with a heater. Girls wearing skirts may also use solid colored opaque stockings. If an undershirt is worn, it must be white.

### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

Communication is absolutely essential for success in any human endeavor. The administration and staff recognize this and will strive to facilitate open and frequent communications with parents at all times.

Your child's agenda is usually used as the first means of communication between the teacher and the parent. We ask the parent/guardian to review and sign the agenda nightly. Parents can view their child's daily progress by logging on to the SIS system. User names and passwords will be sent home the first two weeks of school.

*Please feel free to consult with the office regarding any problems or questions that concern your child. However, it is imperative you speak with the child's teacher first for classroom issues. It is the desire of the administrators and the faculty to be of service to both parent and student, and every teacher welcomes a conference with any parent. At no time is it appropriate for a teacher to meet with parents while students are present, including the arrival time from 7:50 – 8:30 a.m. Therefore, conferences need to be scheduled ahead of time, so the teacher and/or administrator will be available to meet with you.*

It is the parents' responsibility to stay informed. We are also striving to become a paperless school. Information about KGCS be posted on our website. If you do not have access to the internet, a copy of the information will be posted in the school lobby. Also, please check your child's back packs daily for emergency notices and [www.keyscharter.org](http://www.keyscharter.org) every two weeks for new information.

Automated phone calls and/or emails are sent out periodically through our “**Parent Link**” system. These phone calls and/or emails contain attendance notifications, special reminders and important messages from the school. This system may also be used to notify families of emergencies such as hurricanes and school closures. We ask that you please listen carefully to each message that is delivered.

If you have changed any of your contact information, including cell phones and email addresses, please update this with information with the office staff.



**Uniform:** The first time a student is out of uniform guidelines, a warning will be given to the parent and child. A warning will be written in the child's daily agenda. The second time a student is out of uniform, a detention will be issued. After three detentions for uniform infractions, a suspension will be issued. Each time a student is out of uniform, a parent will be required to bring a uniform to school. Please check your child's uniform each morning before arriving at school.

**Behavior/Conduct:** Each teacher enforces classroom rules and expectation with their students. Students are required to adhere to these expectations. When a student misbehaves, the teacher will provide the student with a verbal or written warning. When the student receives a second warning, the teacher will again warn the student and notify the parent that further misconduct will result in a detention. Parents will receive this notification in their child's agenda book, via email or phone call.

The third time a student receives a warning (either verbal or written), the teacher will assign the student a detention. If misbehavior or misconduct continues, the teacher will assign another detention or may refer the student to school administration for disciplinary action which may result in suspension.

Once the detention has been assigned, it is the child's responsibility to return the signed detention notification form to the teacher. Failure to return the signed detention form will result in additional consequences.

*Please note- Certain misconduct or misbehavior may warrant an immediate consequence. Numerous verbal and written warnings during the same school day may lead to the assignment of a detention and/or administrative referral. Depending on the misconduct, parent notification prior to the assignment of a detention or referral may not be required.*

The Miami-Dade County School Board established a Code of Student Conduct that lists violations and disciplinary actions that may be taken in order to deal with student misconduct. The following website link will allow you to view the complete MDCPS Code of Student Conduct online.

<http://www.dadeschools.net/ehandbook/Code/index.htm>

### **DISMISSAL:**

Students must leave the school grounds immediately after dismissal unless enrolled in the After Care Program or enrichment programs. Parents must wait for their children **outside** the school. **Students will not be dismissed early after 2:00 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. on Wednesdays.**

*Any child picked up early must bring a doctor's note the following day or it will be an unexcused early dismissal.*

Only individuals listed on the EMERGENCY CONTACT card will be allowed to pick-up students from the school. A valid photo identification will be required of

all individuals picking-up students. If someone arrives at the school to seek the release of a student and the person's name is not on the emergency contact card or the person does not have a valid photo identification, the student will not be released.

To avoid having the school become involved in personal family conflicts, parents or guardians should submit to school administration a copy of any legal documents, which indicate who has legal access to the child and his/her records during school hours. In the absence of legal documentation, school officials will provide access only to those individuals whose names appear on the student's data card. Failure to provide the school legal documentation outlining visitation rights will result in any parent listed on the birth certificate to be permitted to pick up a child. Friends and strangers will be denied access to a student in the absence of verified parental consent.

Dismissal for kindergarten and 1st grade only is from 2:45-3:00 p.m. Second through 8th grade dismissal is from 3:15-3:40p.m. Students are required to report to their designated location upon commencement of dismissal. Students found wandering around campus will receive consequences according to our discipline procedures

K and grade 1 students that have siblings in 2<sup>nd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be sent to the sibling waiting area for the 3:15 p.m. dismissal.

***DISMISSAL TRAFFIC PATTERN:***

All cars using the drive-thru to pick up a student must first go through the sports complex and wait for directions from school personnel. Those parents, which have a need to park, must enter the parking lot and immediately park their vehicles. Any vehicle that enters the parking lot without going through the sports complex will be required to park their car immediately.

In order to expedite the dismissal process, we ask that all vehicles display their blue or yellow dismissal card on the dashboard everyday. Please write your child's name clearly and in large print on the card.

***Always follow the directions of drive-thru personnel.***

Students not picked up on time will be placed in ASC and be charged according to the Late Fee Schedule below:

<u>K and 1</u>		<u>3<sup>rd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup></u>	
3:00 - 3:15	\$5.00	3:40 - 3:55	\$ 5.00
3:16 - 3:30	\$10.00	3:56 - 4:10	\$10.00
3:31 - 3:45	\$15.00	4:11 - 4:25	\$15.00
3:46 - 4:00	\$20.00	4:26 - 4:40	\$20.00
4:01- 4:15	\$25.00	4:41 - 4:55	\$25.00
4:16 - 6:30	\$30.00	4:56 - 6:30	\$30.00

If making changes in your child's dismissal plan, please fax information with your signature to the school office at 305-230-1347 **before 2:00 p.m.** No phone calls

will be accepted.

All parents must remain **outside** the school perimeter at dismissal time. Teachers will bring the students to the designated area for pick-up or for bus transportation. Parents picking up students for the 2:45 p.m. dismissal may not form a line in the driveway until 2:40 p.m. so that the "Fire Lane" is free from obstruction. Parents picking up students for the 3:15 p.m. dismissal may not form a line in the driveway until 3:10 p.m. so that the "Fire Lane" is free from obstruction. **Do Not Arrive Early Or You Will Be Asked To Move From Drive Way Line.**

### **DRESS CODE:**

A higher standard of dress encourages greater respect for individuals, students and others, and results in a higher standard of behavior. Our dress code guidelines indicate appropriate school uniform during normal school days. KGCS reserves the right to interpret these guidelines and/or make changes during the school year. Students are expected to follow these guidelines. Every student in attendance shall wear the KGCS official school uniform from "LOGOS".

Hair: Hair must be neat and clean with no "unnatural" colors (florescent, green, pink, etc) Mohawks. No hats, bandanas or headbands may be worn. Hair must be neatly braided down and spiked hair is not allowed. Essentially, no headwear except hair bows, hair bands, etc for girls.

Makeup/Nail Polish: Elementary students may not wear makeup to school. Middle school students may not wear makeup that is dark colored or excessive. Students wearing make up that is deemed to be excessive or distracting to the learning environment will be asked to wash their face clean. Nail polish should be lightly colored. Black or dark colored nail polish is not allowed.

Shoes/Socks: Students must wear closed heel and closed toe shoes with rubber soles at all times. No sandals, flip-flops, heavy military type boots or shoes with metal tips may be worn. Shoes must be primarily white, brown, navy or neutral colors. Shoes that light-up, have wheels or have fluorescent colors are not allowed. Shoes must be fastened properly at all times.

Shirts: Uniform shirts must be tucked in at all times. Polo shirts are purchased through the uniform vendor, *All Uniform Wear*. P.E. shirts for middle school are only to be worn during the P.E. class. P.E. shirts and shorts are not mandatory for elementary and may only be worn on P.E. days. All jackets and sweatshirts must be embroidered by our vendor. Undershirts may be worn underneath the uniform polo and may be a short or long sleeve. Only solid white undershirts are allowed.

Slacks/Shorts All uniform slack/shorts must be worn with a belt through the belt loops, fitted to the waist and be in good repair at all times. Belts should be solid brown or black and be free of any metal studs. All uniform bottoms must have the KGCS logo embroidered in the selected colors. NO: cargo pants, capri's, zip-off style pants or jeans of any color or style. Shorts or skorts that are too short will not be permitted. Shorts and skorts should reach the end of the fingertips when arms are down. Skorts may not be rolled up at any time.

Jackets: Only solid navy jackets or sweatshirts that have the school logo properly embroidered are allowed. Jackets/sweatshirts may not have hoods, must be appropriately sized and in good repair. Students wearing any other form of jacket or sweater that does not meet these guidelines will be asked to remove it. Chronic violation of these guidelines may result in the confiscation of the jacket/sweatshirt. Parents will be required to pick up their child's jacket/sweatshirt in the office.

Jewelry: Boys and girls may not wear body piercing other than one pair of stud style earrings in their ear lobes. For the safety of our students, hoop earrings are not permitted. Students may wear one chain, one bracelet and/or one watch. Chains must be tucked inside of the shirt.

Special Events: During special events, students are expected to dress modestly. The length of skirts and/or dresses should be in accordance with our dress code. Low cut dresses exposing cleavage and low cut open back dresses will not be allowed at any event. Please plan accordingly when purchasing special event attire

General/Jean Day: Please also read the section titled "Cold Weather" for additional information about uniform guidelines during cold winter days. No sports bands (wrist, head or ankle) may be worn at school. "Grills" or false mouthpieces are not allowed. At no time are students to wear anything offensive, immodest or deemed inappropriate by the faculty. Writing or drawing on the body is not permitted at any time.

Periodically students may participate in "jean day." On jean days, students may only wear jean pants with their uniform tops. Jean skirts or jean shorts or not allowed. At no time are students to wear anything offensive, immodest, or deemed inappropriate by the faculty

Uniform: The first time a student is out of uniform, a warning will be given to the parent and child. A warning will be written in the child's daily agenda. The second time a student is out of uniform a detention will be issued. After 3 detentions for uniform infractions, a suspension will be issued.

*All uniforms must be purchased through the uniform vendor and embroidered with proper school logos. Uniforms that are altered for length (other than pant legs), belt loops, etc. will be considered a uniform violation. The approved school vendor is **All Uniform Wear**. Parents will be required to bring the proper uniform for a child to be admitted to class when a student does not arrive to school in the proper uniform.*

### **EARLY DISMISSAL:**

Any student leaving school prior to dismissal will have an early dismissal logged to his/her absence record.

*Excused early dismissals are given for doctor's appointments with original notes from the doctor. To receive an excused early dismissal, a doctor's note must be submitted to the office the next day. Upon a student's return to school, a doctor's note will be not accepted after 48 hours.*

If you need to take your child out of school before the end of the school day, come to the school office and sign him/her out and a school employee will send for your child.

Early dismissal after a field trip is not permitted.

Students will not be dismissed from the classroom to a parent. Parents need to sign their child out on the sign-out log and wait for their child to come to the main office. Parents will not be allowed to pick up their child from the classroom.

Early dismissals will not be permitted after 2:00 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Students exceeding a combination of 20 unexcused absences, tardies or early dismissals will lose automatic re-enrollment privileges.

### **ENRICHMENTS:**

The enrichment program functions independently from the after school care program; therefore it is not a requisite to be enrolled in the after school care program to participate in enrichment activities. Students have several opportunities to participate in extra curricular activities for an additional fee. In the past we have offered cheerleading, art, Karate, tutoring etc., one to three times a week. An enrichment guide will be posted on our website which will include the activities offered, the days, time and cost.

Enrichment fees are due monthly to the front office prior to attending classes. If fees have not been paid, the student will not be allowed to attend enrichment and will be sent to ASC (fees will apply).

### **EMERGENCIES:**

**Illness:** The importance of regular attendance cannot be over-emphasized, but **students should not be sent to school when they are ill.** Students will be sent home if they have a temperature of 99 degrees or above. **In order for a child to return to school, he/she must be fever and vomit free for 24 hours.** If a student becomes ill during the school day and it appears that they would be best cared for at home, the parent will be contacted. There are very limited facilities in the school, making it impossible to keep sick students for long periods of time. School personnel must be notified of any student's chronic illness (i.e. asthma, diabetes, heart conditions or seizures). This heightens awareness in case of an emergency.

Students will not be permitted to take calls from parents to see how they are feeling. If the school has not contacted you, your child is feeling fine.

### **EMERGENCY EVACUATION:**

Your child's safety is one of our major concerns. We need to be prepared for the unexpected. We hold quarterly fire drills, lockdowns, and extreme weather procedure to prepare us for extreme circumstances. Should we need to

evacuate the building, there are comprehensive evacuation plans for bomb threats, nuclear release and other situations. Under no circumstance will parents be allowed to pick up their child at school during an evacuation period. Our goal is to evacuate the entire building safely. In the event an evacuation takes place, you may contact CSUSA @ 954-202-3500 or listen to local news stations for information. Please patiently wait for a phone call from our office staff or new media coverage telling you the location and procedure for picking up your child. The media is always helpful with disseminating information regarding evacuations and procedures. Our emergency evacuation procedures are available for review in the main office.

*Students will only be released to the people identified on the emergency contact form. Please bring proper identification (a picture ID) when picking up your child.*

*Keeping this in mind, please notify the office immediately when there is a change in home phone numbers and cell phone.*

### **FAMILY RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT:**

The revised Family Rights and Privacy Act became a Federal law in November, 1974. The intent of this law is to protect the accuracy and privacy of student educational records. Without your prior consent, only you and authorized individuals having legitimate educational interests will have access to your child's educational records. In special instances, you may waive this right of access to allow other agencies working with your child to have access to those records.

### **FIELD TRIPS:**

As a learning experience, teachers may plan field trips. Parents may be asked to assist the teacher as chaperones. Parents serving in this capacity may not have other children accompany them. Parents who are officially selected to be chaperones may count their hours on the field trip as volunteer hours (3 official chaperones per class). The official chaperones will be rotated and selected through a lottery of paid chaperones. The Guidelines for Chaperones form must be signed prior to any parent chaperoning a field trip. Parent chaperones are required to adhere to these guidelines.

Participation in field trips is a **privilege**. Students serve as representatives of the school; therefore, they may be excluded from participation in any trip for reasons relating to academics, behavior/conduct and/or attendance.

Students with fees owed to the school for Before Care Program/After Care Program, lost books, etc. will not be permitted to attend field trips until these fees are paid.

Parent permission must be given for students to participate in field trips. The teacher will send permission slips and information about each field trip 2-4 weeks prior to the field trip date. Money and permission slips must be turned in according to the teacher's instructions, prior to the field trip or the student will not be permitted to take part in the field trip. Students not paying by the designated deadline will not be permitted to attend the field trip. Students not wearing the KGCS T-Shirt will be required to remain at school.

- All field trip money will be collected by the classroom teacher.
- Field trips must be paid in cash only.
- Money will not be accepted at the front office.
- Early dismissal after a field trip will be considered an unexcused early release.
- Parents that chaperone a daytime field trip will earn 6 service hours and parents that chaperone an overnight field trip will earn 10 service hours.

According to the new law titled the Jessica Lundsford Act, any parent wishing to chaperone on a field trip must be fingerprinted. The fingerprint check must include an FBI background check. Information on how to obtain this will be provided the first week of school. Any parent not fingerprinted will not be permitted to chaperone on a field trip or walk around with the school group.

### **GRADING SCALE:**

#### **Grades K and 1**

**E (90 – 100) - Excellent**  
**S (75-89) - Satisfactory**  
**N (65-74) - Needs Improvement**  
**U (0-64) - Unsatisfactory**

#### **Grades 2-8**

**90 - 100 % A- Outstanding**  
**80 - 89 % B- Above Average Progress**  
**70 - 79 % C- Average Progress**  
**60 - 69 % D- Lowest Acceptable**  
**0 - 59% F- Failure**

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:**

If a student or his/her parents feel they have a grievance or complaint, they should do the following:

1. Carefully analyze the problem and be sure you have ALL the FACTS.
2. Ascertain that you have a rational attitude about the problem.
3. Seek to resolve the problem with the teacher, if applicable.
4. If you believe the problem is not resolved, meet with school administration.
5. If left unresolved, you should contact CSUSA at 954-202-3500.
6. If still unresolved, you should contact the Homestead Charter Foundation.

### **HOMELEARNING POLICY:**

The purpose of homelearning is to develop study habits in children early on in their academic lives. It is also used to reinforce concepts that have been taught or to work on projects that have been assigned. If a child does not understand his/her assignment after trying to do it at home, please send a note to the teacher indicating the problem.

Teachers use the following time schedule as a guide when assigning homework:

Home learning	Reading and Log
Grade K - 10 minutes	10 minutes
Grade 1 - 20 minutes	10 minutes
Grade 2 - 20 minutes	20 minutes

Grade 3	-30 minutes	30 minutes
Grade 4	-45 minutes	30 minutes
Grade 5	-45 minutes	30 minutes
Grade 6-8	-60 minutes	30 minutes

These times are a guide and are based on the average child's ability and on concentrated, undistracted time for doing home learning. Some days' home learning assignment may take less time and may take slightly more time on another day. A child who does not complete class work in class may have to complete class work in addition to home learning. Reading Log requirements will be sent home by the Language Arts teacher.

Assignments must be completed on time and properly written. The only acceptable excuse for not completing home learning is student illness or a written note stating an emergency, which prevented home learning from being completed.

If a student fails to bring in home learning, he/she should complete it for the following day. Teachers keep daily records of home learning assignments which are used in determining quarterly grades.

*Incomplete Work/Late Work Policy: Students will receive a zero for graded academic assignments not turned in. Make-up work for incomplete or late assignments will be accepted no later than one school day after the due date.*

All students will be required to write their assignments in their school agenda. Parents are required to **sign the agenda each night** to improve communication.

*Parents may help their child in the following ways:*

- Show an interest in your child's work.
- Provide a place and time for quiet study.
- Assist in practicing with spelling words and number combinations.
- Encourage home reading and listen to your child read.
- Review the homework for neatness and completeness.
- Refrain from doing the work for your child.
- Discuss problems related to home study with your child's teacher.

It is important to note that home learning is the responsibility of the student. *Students will not be permitted to return to a classroom after dismissal to get home learning assignments and projects. This also includes the students participating in the after care program. Assignments will not be accepted at the office from parents.* The parent's responsibility is to provide a quiet environment and assistance when needed.

### **HONOR ROLL AND AWARDS REQUIREMENTS:**

Quarterly Awards:

**Kindergarten - Eighth Grades**

**High Honor Roll** - All 90's in academic subjects.

Honor Roll - All 80's and 90's in academic subjects.

End of Year Awards:

A variety of awards will be given covering numerous academic and nonacademic areas at the end of the school year.

### **INDEPENDENCE DAY:**

During the first few days of school, parents may feel the need to walk their children to class. For safety reasons we may only allow this for a short period of time. To aid in the transition, we have established a special day/activity called "Independence Day." After Independence Day occurs, parents will no longer be allowed to enter the building during arrival unless they have an appointment with a staff member.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL BOOKS, EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES:**

All textbooks needed by students for school and homework assignments are furnished by the school from tax dollars. The school is also able to provide the materials and equipment requested by teachers for classroom instruction.

Students need to realize that books and materials are expensive and that they should be cared for properly. Students are required to cover all books that are issued to them. A brown grocery bag makes an excellent book cover. At the beginning of the school year, some businesses offer free book covers to the students. Students should print their names and room number on the front of each book cover. Books must not be written in or on. Charges will be made for damaged or lost books and/or materials. Students must learn to be responsible for the care of personal and school materials.

Students will be expected to provide all basic supplies such as paper, pencils, crayons, rulers, scissors, markers, glue, etc. Any additional supply needs will be requested in writing by the classroom teacher. Please help your child come prepared for school by packing his/her homework and supplies in the evening to avoid the last minute morning rush. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to check and be sure that everything needed for the next day has been packed.

### **LABELS:**

Please have your child's name on all personal property such as: lunch boxes, sweaters, jackets, raincoats, etc.

### **LOST AND FOUND:**

Throughout the school year, items which have been lost are turned into the multipurpose room. Many of our problems would be solved if clothing and personal belongings were labeled with the student's name. Anytime a student loses an item, he/she may go to the "Lost and Found" in the cafeteria to claim it. There are many items lost and never claimed each year. These items are donated monthly to various charitable institutions. Therefore, please label your child's personal belongings.

## **MEDICATION:**

The administering or dispensing of any medicines (including non-prescription medication) to students by employees of Keys Gate Charter School without specific written authorization by the parents of the student is forbidden. If it is absolutely necessary that the child take any medication while he/she is in school, the parent must sign an authorization form. Please obtain this form in the school office. The medication will be kept in the office and will be administered by office personnel. *Students are not allowed to have any medication in their possession. Parents must pick up and drop off medicine in the office.*

## **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO):**

A great portion of each child's day is spent at school; therefore, his/her growth and development becomes a joint responsibility between the home and school. Everyone is urged to become active in helping further the goals and growth of the PTO.

The faculty, staff and administration hope that all of the parents will become active members supporting the school and organization. Officers will be elected yearly according to the PTO's bylaws.

The PTO will sponsor fundraisers throughout the school year. Monies generated by fundraising events will be used to purchase items voted on by the PTO members. According to the parent contract, you must participate in one school activity.

PTO board meetings are held regularly and are open to anyone who wishes to attend. All members are eligible to vote on issues brought before them for consideration during the general PTO meetings.

## **PARENT SERVICE HOURS:**

Parents have many opportunities to volunteer their time both at school and at home. Volunteer sign-up sheets will be available at Open House before school starts and during Back to School Night. Other opportunities are announced throughout the school year.

Parents are required to volunteer 20 hours per family or prorated to two hours a month if their children are accepted after school has begun.

Ten hours of volunteer service should be completed by **December 15th**. Students whose parents have not completed the 20 hours by **May 15<sup>th</sup>** will be placed on the waiting list.

*Parents must log their hours on the SIS system. Please be sure to log in your own volunteer hours in a timely manner so the hours can be accounted for each quarter. Teachers will check and approve the volunteer log monthly. The system will automatically link siblings.*

To volunteer in classrooms, please make prior arrangement with the teacher so that instructional time is not lost.

It is suggested that a minimum of 2 hours of volunteer service be spent working on school fundraisers and special activities.

Families may not donate their extra volunteer hours to other families without the direct approval of administration. All unauthorized donation of volunteer hours will be denied.

Parents will receive volunteer time for attending workshops and general parent meetings conducted in the school.

Ways You Can Earn Service Hours:

- Assist in the cafeteria
- Assist teachers with bulletin boards, cutting & craft activities
- Attend PTSO meetings, day and evening events
- Volunteer for field day and/or field trips (6hours for day time field trip & 10 hours for an overnight field trip)
- Purchase items for the classroom or school (aside from general school supplies)

### **PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE):**

Students will be checked periodically for head lice. Students will be sent home immediately if school personnel suspect lice in his/her hair.

The students MAY NOT return to school until treatment has been administered and all nits have been removed from the hair. Upon returning to school, the student will be checked to determine if any nits are still present before admission to class. To prevent an outbreak of head lice, parents are asked to examine the hair of their children weekly, and shampoo frequently.

### **RETURNED CHECKS:**

Returned checks to Keys Gate Charter School are charged a \$20.00 returned check fee. Payment for the returned check and the \$20.00 fee must be made within 7 days of notification from the school. After two returned checks to the school, a family may not pay by check for anything at school. Students whose families that do not submit payment in a timely manner for returned checks will lose privileges to field trips and special events.

### **SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (EESAC):**

This group meets each month to discuss school issues/concerns and create a School Improvement Plan by evaluating school data.

**SCHOOL HOURS:**

Before School Care 6:30 - 8:00 a.m.  
After School Care 2:45 - 6:30pm

Student Arrival K-8 7:50 - 8:25 a.m.  
Student Dismissal K and 1 2:45 pm  
2-8 3:15 pm  
Wednesday Dismissal K and 1 1:45 pm  
2-8 2:15 pm

**SCREENINGS:**

All Kindergarten students are screened for speech, hearing, and vision to rule out any difficulties in these areas.

**STUDENT PROGRESSION PLAN**

Keys Gate Charter School will follow the Dade County School’s Student Progression Plan requirements and procedures for K – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

**STUDENTS’ RIGHTS:**

Students have the right to feel safe from threats and bodily harm. Disruptive behaviors are never acceptable, and when they occur, they may result in time out, exclusion from participation in class activities, detention, suspension or expulsion or other disciplinary action.

*Parents who have a conflict with a student other than their own child and/or parent are requested to speak to the Administration. At no time may parents approach the student directly.*

All students and employees will be treated with respect. Slurs, innuendoes, hostile treatment, violence or other verbal or physical conduct against a student or employee will NOT be tolerated. Police will be called when necessary.

**SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION:**

The Principal may recommend to the Homestead Charter Foundation Board to expel a student for any of the following in accordance with the Miami Dade County School Code of Conduct:

1. Possession, use of or transmission of a weapon including, but not limited to, a gun, knife, razor, explosive, ice pick or club.
2. Possession, use of or transmission of a substance capable of modifying mood or behavior.
3. Using any article as a weapon or in a manner calculated to threaten any person.
4. Committing a serious breach of conduct including, but not limited to, a threat or an assault on school personnel or on another pupil, lewd or lascivious act, arson, vandalism or any other such act, which disrupts or tends to disrupt the orderly conduct of the school activity.

5. Engaging in less serious but continuing misconduct including, but not limited to, the use of profane, obscene or abusive language, or other acts that are detrimental to the educational function of the school.
6. Any other conduct that warrants expulsion based on the Code of Conduct.

<http://www.dadeschools.net/ehandbook/Code/index.htm>

Suspendable offenses include but are not limited to the following:

1. *Fighting or other dangerous and/or disruptive behavior (hitting, kicking, pushing or biting).*
2. *Possession or use of drugs and tobacco.*
3. *Being under the influence or having alcoholic beverages on school grounds.*
4. *Defacing or vandalism of school property.*
5. *Igniting any flammable substance.*
6. *Defiance or disrespect of school personnel*
7. *Failure to meet academic responsibility*

### **TARDY POLICY:**

A child is tardy when he/she is not in the classroom at 8:30 a.m. A student that enters a classroom with a late pass is considered tardy. A student that enters the building before 8:30 but reports to the classroom after 8:30 without a pass will be marked tardy by the classroom teacher and will be logged by the school office personnel.

*Excused tardies are given for doctor's appointments with an original note from the doctor. A doctor's note must be presented at the time of arrival to receive an excused tardy. Late doctor's notes or photocopies will be accepted.*

*Parents of children with excessive tardies should expect a letter or phone call from administration to schedule a conference*

*Students exceeding a combination of 20 unexcused absences, tardies or early dismissals will lose automatic re-enrollment privileges.*

### **TELEPHONE:**

The school has a business telephone to help transact the business of the school and the lines must be kept open. Students may not make or receive calls at any time. This means students may not call home for lunch, field trip money or any other reason. Emergencies only.

*Cell phones should NOT be turned on at school. School phones are available for emergencies. Any student whose cell phone rings, vibrates during school hours or is found sending or receiving text messages, will have their cell phone collected by school personnel and stored in the office. This student will also lose the privilege of bringing a cell phone to school. Absolutely no cell phones may be used during school hours. If an emergency arises, school personnel will contact parents or guardian. KGCS is not responsible for any lost or stolen phones.*

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Students living in the approved bus zone from Miami-Dade County Public Schools are eligible for free bus transportation to and from school. Students must register for this service through A&S – the school’s bus provider. Materials are available in the school office for registration as well as a map of the approved area.

Receiving transportation to and from school is a privilege and will be taken away for misbehavior on the bus. Any student not following the bus rules or adhering to the driver’s direction will be disciplined. Discipline may include suspension or loss of bus services.

## **SEVERE WEATHER INFORMATION:**

Keys Gate Charter School will follow the same instructions as Dade County Public Schools in case of severe weather emergencies. Parents should watch the local news for information about school closings.

## **VISITORS:**

Visitors, **including parents**, are **not** permitted to go to their child's class unannounced during school hours because this disrupts normal routine and instruction. For the safety and protection of all students, visitors (including parents) must sign in present a valid photo id when entering the building, state who they are visiting, state the purpose of the visit, and obtain a pass before proceeding to a classroom.

*We currently have the “Raptor” system in place for the safety of our children. This system will check any person entering the building against a current sexual predator list. At no time will any person be permitted access to the building without presenting a valid photo I.D. (driver’s license or state I.D. card). Cooperation will enable the school to provide a safe and orderly learning environment for all students.*



**Keys Gate Charter School Parent Contract**

**I (We)** the parent(s)/guardians of \_\_\_\_\_, grade \_\_\_\_\_ have read and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct and the Dress Code of the KEYS GATE CHARTER SCHOOL.

**WHEREAS**, in order to provide my (our) child with a unique educational opportunity;

**WHEREAS**, by choosing to enroll my (our) child at the Keys Gate Charter School is a decision of my (our) personal choice and not a privilege;

**WHEREAS**, my (our) desire to enroll my (our) child at the Keys Gate Charter School is premised upon my (our) desire to become an **active partner in the education** of my (our) child;

**NOW THEREFORE**; in consideration of the foregoing:

1. As a parent of a student at the Keys Gate Charter School, my (our) commitment is to abide by the following resolutions:
  - a. To recognize and embrace my role as the primary educator of my child.
  - b. To ensure that my child meets his/her academic responsibilities throughout the school year as indicated in the Keys Gate Charter School Parent Handbook.
  - c. To attend all conferences scheduled with any member of the Keys Gate Charter School staff.
  - d. To participate in the Parent Service Program, including 20 hours of service or more based on enrollment, at the rate that is sensitive to the needs of the school. Half of the hours must be completed by the last school day prior to winter recess, followed by the final hours due by May 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - e. To provide transportation to and from school for my child. I understand that if I am late picking up my child, Keys Gate Charter School is not responsible for my child’s safety. If my child is continually tardy, absent or dismissed early, I understand that for the benefit of my child’s education, he/she may be required to transfer to a school that is more accessible for my child.
  - f. To purchase uniforms for my child from the Keys Gate Charter School approved supplier.
  - g. To supply my child with a nutritious lunch, either brown bagged or purchased from the Keys Gate Charter School approved vendor, each school day for my child.
  - h. To be responsible for timely payment of any fees accrued to my account at the Keys Gate Charter School. To participate in at least one of the many parent groups (i.e. PTSO, School Improvement Committee, Booster Clubs, etc.).
  - i. To ensure that my child exhibits appropriate behavior while in school campus as indicated in the Keys Gate Charter School Handbook.
  - j. To read and use information sent home by the school or via Keys Gate Charter School website for the purpose of keeping parents informed of the academic topics to be introduced and studied in the classroom and/or important notices and information pertaining to the school.
  - k. To strongly consider obtaining PTSO membership, and attend a minimum of 2 PTSO meetings per school year.

**I (We)** understand that by not fulfilling my contractual obligations to the school and to my (our) child as indicated above and in the KGCS Parent Handbook, this may result in my (our) child requested to stay after school, be suspended, lose the opportunity to recommit for placement for the following school year or withdrawn and sent to a regular public school at the sole discretion of the Principal as approved by the Keys Gate Charter School Governing Board.

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Acknowledged by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
School Official



## **Handbook Acknowledgement**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Please complete the bottom portion of this page and return it to your child's homeroom teacher by Friday, August 29th.

Thank you,  
Mrs. Robin Sandler  
Principal

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Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that I have read the KGCS parent handbook. I agree to comply with the policies set forth in this handbook.

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Parent Signature

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Date