

**South Carolina Governor's School for Science & Mathematics
Hartsville, SC**

Division of Student Development

"Making the out-of-class experience as educationally purposeful as the in-class experience"

**The Guide to Parenting a Govie:
Tips and Strategies for Assisting GSSM Students**



What You Should Expect When Your Child Enrolls at GSSM

Pride in Accomplishments

As parents and/or members of the extended family, you can be proud of your son or daughter's accomplishments. All of the students at GSSM are wonderful and gifted. The attention you have given to the task of parenting has brought you to this moment. Let him/her know that you are proud and that you feel they are ready for this transition.

Knowing When to Help

Along with your feelings of pride, you may have some feelings of anxiety, anticipation, and hope. After you have seen you son or daughter begin his/her GSSM journey and you return home, it is often difficult to know when you should become more involved. When should you encourage them to handle matters on their own? When should you really be worried? Your child may change. Anticipate some fluctuation in mood, expectations, and needs. He or she might seem quite dependent at times and very independent at others. Your student may seek your advice and guidance or not include you in making some decisions. When you witness this behavior, remember that it is all a part of their maturing. Your family has entered a stage of development called "launching."

Launching involves providing a steady, supportive home base to which your child can return, while letting him/her attempt to find some independence. Because your child is entering this stage two years early, we at GSSM are committed to partnering with you to ensure

appropriate and regular communication and updates.

Building Confidence in His/Her Decisions

It is essential that you allow your son or daughter to accept responsibility for some decisions. It is important that he/she demonstrate a commitment to the academic rigor at GSSM and that he/she makes choices that reflect their values, dreams, and abilities. Some choices may diverge from your personal vision for them. It may be difficult to step back and allow this type of discovery. Take heart! We have found that often, when parents expect a student to be responsible, he/she will rise to the challenge. If you shield them from responsibility, they may not learn as quickly. Surprisingly, we have found that when given the opportunity to assert some independence, they turn to parents for guidance and use them as models for their adult life.

It is important that you remain involved while they are enrolled. Be sure to communicate confidence, though you may feel some anxiety and find yourself worrying. Please call us when you are concerned and know that we will call you. Being an active listener is one of the most helpful ways to assist your Govie in thinking through the various decisions he/she will make. Guide from home with empathy and consistent support. Encourage, but be careful not to apply too much pressure. Remember that we are partners in our students' education.

Constructing a Support Network

Each GSSM student is unique. He/She brings to the Governor's School his/her strengths and vulnerabilities. To that end, each student needs to construct an individualized support network, and as parents, please recommend this and acknowledge your role in it.

Academic Advising. All students are assigned an advisor. These faculty and staff members work closely with their advisees to ensure they are receiving appropriate guidance with their courses. Your students work closely with the faculty members who are teaching them to provide support.

GSSM Faculty. The faculty at the Governor's School is committed to the academic success of all students. They are available to work with students outside of the designated class time and they invite students to come by their offices if they are having trouble with course material. They also welcome hearing from parents. Email is generally the best vehicle for communication.

Residence Life Staff. Whenever school is in session on the Hartsville campus, a Residence Life Coordinator (RLC) is physically present on the campus. These professionals live in the residence hall with your students and are available to you and your children 24 hours a day unless it's a long weekend or other break. These individuals will often have the best perspective on how your son or daughter is adjusting to life at GSSM. There are also resident assistants who work with the RLCs. Every day, someone from the Residence Life Team will lay eyes on your son or daughter. Please encourage your child to allow these colleagues to assist them in their adjustment to GSSM.

Counseling Services. Rigorous academic programming for high

school students brings many opportunities, but not without challenges and stress. GSSM provides on-site counseling services. Students are able to access the resources of a licensed mental health professional in a setting that is convenient and comfortable, but completely confidential.

GSSM Technology. The Governor's School provides a variety of IT services to meet the instructional technology needs of the school. This unit works with faculty and students to enhance teaching and learning through the infusion of technology across the curriculum.

Planning for College

Parents should encourage their son or daughter to investigate various college options. While you both may have a "dream college" in mind, considering different types of institutions is always beneficial.

The guidance counselor meets with seniors very early in the fall to assist them in preparing their college lists. All college applications are to be completed by December 1 of the senior year. This ensures completion before final exams and gives students the chance to relax over the holiday break. Juniors begin meeting with the college counselor the second semester of their junior year.

Processing slips are required for every application or anytime a transcript or recommendation is needed. Deadlines for processing slips are September 20, October 15, and November 15.

GSSM uses a program called Naviance to assist students with college planning. Parents also receive a code and are asked to complete an online questionnaire. Codes for junior parents are provided in October.

Learning to Care for Self



Health Services

The Department of Health Services, managed by our School Nurse, is provided by GSSM and available and convenient to its student body. The Services include the evaluation and treatment of minor illnesses and diseases. At this point in your student's life, it is important that he/she learn to take responsibility for his/her health and learn the habits of good health maintenance. Education on preventative and wellness strategies for healthy lifestyles are among the services offered. Referrals to local medical providers are made in concert with parents when appropriate. Encourage your son or daughter to familiarize himself/herself with the services and insurance information (**before** he/she needs it), and to keep the insurance card within easy access. It is also important that students have access to some money for co-payments and prescriptions in case they become ill. It is also important to note that you will be contacted if your child becomes ill and because we are residential, in some cases, it may be necessary that students return home to recuperate.

At the Governor's School, seeking counseling is considered a sign of strength, not weakness. Services include individual and group counseling.

An array of programs are given throughout the year, including substance abuse prevention, anxiety and depression prevention, relationship safety issues, self-esteem and assertiveness. Students may be referred to our psychologist by faculty and/or staff. Students may also self-refer and/or encourage friends to enter counseling. A person wishing to resolve a longstanding problem or wishing to enhance their personal growth may choose to enter counseling. A student who has been in counseling in the past may continue his/her counseling with our psychologist or a local provider. Students may also be referred to outside professionals as deemed necessary for their emotional and mental well-being.



Counseling Services

In addition to the support services provided through our psychologist/counselor, it is the philosophy of GSSM to encourage healthy, positive, emotional and psychological growth in all students.

Character and Self-Discipline

Standards of Conduct for Govies

Your son or daughter will become familiar with the patterns of conduct that are indicative of good character. Students will be able to observe and begin to practice and improve on their abilities to discipline themselves. All GSSM students and their families should be very acquainted with *GSSM Student Handbook*. You and your child must also become familiar with the community standards of the school for academic honesty and integrity.

While we understand that our students come from different backgrounds and experiences, we expect Govies and their families to respect and embrace our behavioral standards. Civility and decorum are a part of a GSSM education, and we are committed to doing all we can to ensure that Govies learn responsibility and accountability.

All Work and No Play

Although academic excellence and success are the GSSM student's first priorities, we know that he/she will not fully develop if the experience is not somewhat balanced. Therefore, a holistic experience, which includes social, cultural, and physical development, must be given some consideration. **Residence life** experiences and participating in **student activities** are a very important part of the GSSM experience.

The co-curricular provides educational experiences that are invaluable and critical to a holistic education. Students are expected to improve their abilities to handle various relationships as they interact with people from different backgrounds. They will also continue to development their leadership, problem solving, and decision making abilities. These skills are developed through their participation in activities, athletics, and GSSM's Community Engagement Program. All Govies are required to complete 83 hours of service during their junior and senior year for a total of 166 hours during their matriculation. This is a graduation requirement.

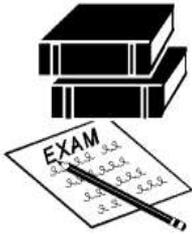
GSSM also has an active and competitive athletic program with over 80% of our students participating in sports. We have a Physical Activity Requirement (PAR) and many students fulfill this requirement by being involved on sports teams. Like the service requirement, students must complete 83 hours each year.



Success at GSSM

Understanding the Difference

As a member of a community of phenomenal individuals, Govies will face new and exciting challenges at GSSM. Some will discover that even though they had a history of receiving excellent grades at their former high school, top grades are more difficult to earn in GSSM. At first, this may affect his/her confidence. Other students who understand that they definitely need support may not be comfortable seeking it. Encourage your child to use the resources that are available, which include the entire GSSM family. Have other family members call him/her and have discussions with him/her about strategies for handling challenges. Some of our students have never had to seek help before and are embarrassed when they find out that they must, if they are to succeed. Reinforce that there is no shame in asking for help. Support and encourage any efforts on his/her part to access resources available to her.



Privacy of Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Enacted in 1974, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), protects the privacy of students' records. Under FERPA (also known as the Buckley Amendment), parents transfer their rights to the student's educational records once the student attends a postsecondary institution. Because GSSM is a high school, you may access your son or daughter's educational records. Educational records include, but are not limited to the following: academic records, health records, financial records, placement records, counseling records and disciplinary records. GSSM, as an educational agency, will protect the student's right under FERPA. Please refer to the *GSSM Student Handbook* for more on FERPA.

You've done a fabulous job!

Go ahead, brag about your son or daughter. Relax. You have done a great job. You have loved him/her and taught values, morals, and life skills that allowed him/her to seize this opportunity. He/she will build on this foundation here, moving closer to achieving dreams and being the change our world needs. Celebrate them and the courage it took for them to pursue this opportunity.

Frequently Called Telephone Numbers (843) 383-3901



Academic Affairs; ext. 3903 or 3902

Admissions ; ext. 3944

Athletics; ext. 2109

Business Office; ext. 3946

Community Engagement; ext. 3905

Counseling Services; ext. 3960

Guidance and College Counseling; ext.3959

Health Services; ext. 3957

Registrar; ext. 3904

Residence Life; ext. 3920

RLC Cell Phone; (843) 858-1603

Security; (843) 992-0377

Student Activities; ext. 3930

Student Development; ext. 3942

Technology; ext . 3962 or 3951