

Shine

2021-22

Student/Parent Handbook
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Vision— Gwinnett County Public Schools will become a system of world-class schools where students acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and careers.

Mission— The mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

Defining World Class

In Gwinnett County Public Schools, “world-class” describes any product, service, or organization that is judged by qualitative and quantitative measures as one of the best in its class, and that is recognized accordingly by customers, stakeholders, professional peers, and competitors alike. In the context of this definition, schools that are considered to be “world-class” are characterized by the following:

- Rigorous academic standards and high expectations for all students;
- A comprehensive, challenging, and relevant curriculum;
- Effective, engaging instructional strategies;
- Reliable, appropriate, and meaningful assessments;
- High-performing and inspiring employees committed to professional development, training, and lifelong learning;
- A safe, secure, and positive learning environment;
- A culture of continuous improvement;
- Accountability for results at all levels of the organization;
- Productive and engaging partnerships with families and the community;
- Effective use of technological resources to advance teaching and learning;
- Innovative and productive approaches to management, operations, and use of resources;
- Behavioral standards that promote teaching and learning;
- An inclusive environment that acknowledges and values differences and encourages positive interactions between members of a diverse community;
- Students who are prepared for the next grade level and graduate ready for college and careers;
- Communication with internal and external audiences as a priority; and
- A shared vision for success.

Achieving the Mission

The Gwinnett County Board of Education adopted seven Strategic Goals for the school system that clearly connect to the vision and mission—the “world-class” status we intend to achieve.

Gwinnett County Public Schools will:

- Ensure a world-class education for all students by focusing on teaching and learning the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum.
- Ensure a safe, secure, and orderly environment for all.
- Optimize student achievement through responsible stewardship of its financial resources and the proactive pursuit of all resources necessary to meet current and future demands.
- Recruit, employ, develop, and retain a workforce that achieves the mission and goals of the organization.
- Support instructional and operational needs with technological systems and processes that support effective performance and desired results.
- Provide and manage the system’s facilities and operations in an exemplary manner as determined by programmatic needs and best management practices.
- Apply continuous quality improvement strategies and principles as the way the organization does business.

Core Beliefs and Commitments of the Gwinnett County Board of Education

Believing, as we do, that public education is an integral part of the seamless fabric of the American experience, we, the Gwinnett County Board of Education, derive our core beliefs and commitments for public education in Gwinnett County from the foundational principles of the United States of America, specifically those espoused in the Declaration of Independence. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness,” and “That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...”.

America’s public schools exist to undergird and advance these principles. They are the one place where all children and youth in our great, diverse country are provided a common, free education. They must educate every child for success in life and for the responsibilities of American citizenship.

Thus, we commit ourselves to a world-class education that meets the needs of individual students, to a sharp focus on the traditions and values at the heart of our constitutional democracy and the rule of law, and to the civic virtues that bind together communities of many cultures, faiths, viewpoints, interests, and histories into a unified nation. E pluribus unum. Out of many, one.

Therefore, the Gwinnett County Board of Education will:

- Ensure our core business of teaching and learning is built on a rigorous curriculum, effective instruction, and high-value assessments
- Educate every student to world-class standards and individual potential
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment
- Optimize the school effect to have a positive impact on every child
- Govern the district fairly and openly, seeking the engagement of the many stakeholders we serve.

It is the policy of Gwinnett County Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability in any employment practice, educational program, or any other program, activity, or service.

Table of Contents

Gwinnett County Board of Education	2	Gwinnett County Board of Education Student Conduct Behavior Code (abbreviated)	
Welcome to the 2021–22 school year!	3	Rule 1: Disruption/Interference with School	16
Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) Curriculum	4	Rule 2: Damage/Destruction/Misuse of School Property ...	16
Digital Learning Days	4	Rule 3: Damage/Destruction/Misuse of Private Property ...	16
Local School Plan for Improvement (LSPI)	4	Rule 4: Abuse/Threats/Intimidation/Assault on a School Employee	16
Grading	4	Rule 5: Abuse/Threats/Intimidation/Assault by Student on Student	16
Attendance Policies and Procedures	4	Rule 6: Weapons/Dangerous Instruments/Explosive/Implosive Devices ..	17
Title I, Family and Community Engagement Plan	6	Rule 7: Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco	17
School Nutrition Program Information	7	Rule 8: Disregard of Directions or Commands	18
Professional Qualifications of Teachers	7	Rule 9: Sexual Misconduct/Indecency	18
Family Changes	7	Rule 10: Unexcused Absences	18
Educational Equity Policy	7	Rule 11: Other Conduct Subversive to Good Order	18
Device Accessibility	7	Rule 12: Repeated Violations/Misbehavior/Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students	18
Harassment Statement	8	Rule 13: School Bus Infractions	18
Notice of Non-Discrimination	8	Student Misconduct: Range of Consequences	18
Student Complaints and Grievances Procedure	8	Student Disciplinary Hearings	19
Student Title IX Complaint Procedure	8	Selected Board Policy Information (Search and Seizure, Interrogations, and Drug-Free Workplace)	20
Preparing for Inclement Weather	9	Selections from Georgia Code of Laws and GCPS Processes.....	20
Parent Notification in Times of Emergency/SchoolMessenger	9	Online Learning Options	21
Impaired/Handicapped Access	9	School Bus Safety Guidelines and Safety Procedures.....	21
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	9	Parent Information Regarding Safe Schools	23
Georgia Special Needs Scholarship, Senate Bill 10	10	Responsible Use of Technology and Electronic Media for Students	24
Child Find	10	Welcome to Our Tobacco-Free School	25
Vehicular Traffic Plans	10	Confidential School Safety Tip Line	25
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)	10	SchoolMessenger	26
Release of Directory Information	10	Parent Portal/MYcCLASS/BYOD	inside back cover
Media Release	11		
Privacy: Parents and Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)	11	ITEMS TO READ, SIGN, AND RETURN	
Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness	12	Response Form.....	27
Foster Care	12	Attendance Protocol Form	27
Student Conduct Behavior Code	12	Extracurricular Activities	27
Student Dress Code	13		
Electronic Communications Devices	13		
Rights and Responsibilities	13		
Glossary of Discipline Terms	14		
Important Student Discipline Information	15		

Gwinnett County Board of Education



Everton Blair, Jr.,
2021 Chairman,
District IV



Karen Watkins,
2021 Vice Chairman,
District I



Steven B. Knudsen,
District II



Dr. Mary Kay Murphy,
District III



Dr. Tarece Johnson,
District V

The Gwinnett County Board of Education has authorized the publication of this handbook in accordance with School Board policies and procedures and Georgia laws. It contains important information for parents, students, school personnel, visitors, and citizens.

This handbook is a cross-divisional effort to better support schools and improve communication with students and families. Information was provided by:

CEO/Superintendent's Office
Division of School Improvement and Operations
Division of Curriculum and Instructional Support
Division of Data Governance
Division of Business and Finance
Division of Facilities and Operations
Division of Human Resources and Talent Management
Division of Information Management and Technology
Division of Information Security

Welcome to the 2021–22 school year!

Welcome to the new school year... a year in which Gwinnett County Public Schools' students are sure to shine! Everyone associated with Gwinnett County Public Schools— from your child's bus driver to the classroom teacher, from your school's principal to each member of the School Board— is committed to providing a successful school experience for students. A key to that is ensuring that our schools are safe and orderly, promote academic and behavioral excellence, encourage and maintain respectful, trusting, and caring relationships, and contribute to the success of all students.

As part of this commitment to our students and their families, the district provides this handbook. It is important that you and your student be aware of important school system policies and procedures, as well as academic and behavioral expectations. In reviewing this year's Student/Parent Handbook, you will learn more about Gwinnett's curriculum, attendance expectations, and the student behavior code. Please pay particular attention to the section on student discipline as well as details on responsible use of technology. You also will find additional helpful resources, including information on the school nutrition program and your rights and responsibilities as a parent regarding your child's education. (For specific information on your local school, review the local school handbook.)

The 2021–22 school year will be unusual as our community and the school system continue to recover from the pandemic and its effects on Gwinnett County. Although most students will attend school

in person, some students will be learning in a digital environment. **It is important to remember that the Student Code of Conduct applies to students in both environments.**

We are fortunate to have the caliber of students that we do in Gwinnett County Public Schools. The vast majority of our students are respectful, conscientious young people who do well academically and who never need to be disciplined beyond the classroom level. They care about their studies, teachers, and each other. They should not have to tolerate disruptions to their education from the few who choose to misbehave. The school system's enforcement of its policies and code of student behavior provides you assurance that we take your child's education and safety very seriously, whether he or she is learning in school or at home.

As part of our district's recovery from the pandemic, we remain committed to protecting the health and well-being of our students and staff. With that in mind, please be mindful that GCPS will continue to monitor guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), other health partners, and the state, using it to inform decision-making about mitigation strategies that might be needed during the 2021–22 school year. We encourage our families to routinely review safety and health measures that will help keep students healthy.

Working together, we can maintain a safe, secure, orderly, and positive learning environment while also cultivating respect, empathy, and kindness throughout the learning community.

Best wishes for a successful new year of teaching and learning in 2021–22!

Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) Curriculum

The mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards. Instructional goals and objectives will be accomplished through the implementation of the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum. The AKS represents the Board of Education's accepted content standards for excellence in academic knowledge and skills for all students. The AKS includes all of the state's curriculum objectives, including the state-adopted Georgia Standards of Excellence (K–12) in the areas of mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies. State and local assessments measure student learning of the curriculum. The AKS for each grade level and subject area is available on the school system's website (www.gcpsk12.org).

Digital Learning Days

GCPS periodically conducts Digital Learning Days (DLDs) when school buildings must be closed on a scheduled school day. Individual local schools also periodically schedule Digital Learning Days as part of specific school initiatives. On a called Digital Learning Day, teachers continue instruction via their online course pages and other digital resources, and students are expected to participate and complete instructional activities with these resources. Schools and teachers will communicate the specific expectations for completing and submitting activities and work. Any students who are unable to participate should work directly with their teachers on alternative activities and assignments.

In addition, the school district has six Digital Learning Days built into the 2021–22 school calendar—Sept. 14, Oct. 20, Nov. 9, Jan. 25, March 2, and March 22. On these six planned DLDs, all students will learn from home, completing assignments at their own pace.

Local School Plan for Improvement (LSPI)

Accountability and flexibility are hallmarks of Gwinnett County Public Schools' success. Under the Board's Theory of Action for Change to Improve Student Achievement, Gwinnett schools gain flexibility by meeting certain accountability measures outlined through the district's Results-Based Evaluation System (RBES). As a Strategic Waivers School System (SWSS), GCPS receives flexibility in the form of waivers of certain state laws, rules, and guidelines in exchange for greater accountability for increased student performance. Each school is responsible for the development of a local school plan for improvement (LSPI). Using data, schools determine areas needing improvement and write long-term goals that are focused on the identified areas. For each goal, a school will identify specific, measurable, annual objectives and then determine how to best achieve these goals, taking into account the flexibility granted and accountability expected under RBES and SWSS. The LSPI development process involves teachers, parents, and community members, so the entire school community has the opportunity to be involved in conversations about school improvement. For more about your school's LSPI, contact your local school principal.

Grading

The Kindergarten Progress Report is used by teachers in evaluating the ongoing growth and development of their students, as defined by the AKS.

The following scale is used to assess 1st graders on progress toward the AKS in the following academic areas, effort, conduct, art, music, health, physical education:

E	=	Surpasses Standards
N	=	Needs to Improve
S	=	Satisfactory
U	=	Unsatisfactory

For students in grades 2–5, student performance is graded using the following scale:

90% and above	A	excellent progress
80%-89%	B	above average progress
74%-79%	C	average progress
70%-73%	D	below average progress
Below 70%	U	unsatisfactory progress

Attendance Policies and Procedures

Statement of Policy

School attendance is important because it underscores the significance of learning and the importance of obtaining an education in our society in addition to helping students develop good work habits that will carry over in life. Good attendance also correlates strongly with improved grades. A minimum level of attendance is required for attainment of the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum. The responsibility of school attendance is that of both parents and students. The Superintendent has designated the minimum levels of attendance in procedure consistent with state standards.

Definitions

Truant— Any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than 10 days of unexcused absences.

Compulsory Attendance— Attendance in a public school, private school, or home school program is required for children between their 6th and 16th birthdays. Every parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state having control or charge of any child between their 6th and 16th birthdays shall be responsible for enrolling and sending such child to a public school, private school, or home school program. Attendance in a public school, private school, or a home school program is required regardless of the fact that a child has been suspended or expelled from school by the local board of education. Official Code of Georgia (O.C.G.A.) § 20-2-690.1

Tardy— Students are considered tardy to school or class if the student arrives at a designated location after a school bell, chime, or buzzer has sounded. (Local schools will include specific information relevant to their facility to identify the designated location for student arrival.)

Early Checkout— When a parent, guardian, or other person having charge or control of a student authorizes a student to leave the facility before the end of the school day. School day hours are published in local school handbooks.

Excused Absences— State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10 defines the following as excused absences:

1. Personal illness or attendance in school endangers a student's health or the health of others. (i) Local boards of education may request students to present appropriate medical documentation to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence
2. A serious illness or death in the student's immediate family necessitating absence from school. (i) In the event of a serious

illness in a student's immediate family, local boards of education may request students to present appropriate medical documentation regarding the family member upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence.

3. A court order or an order by a government agency, including preinduction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school.
4. Observing religious holidays, necessitating absence from school.
5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety. (For Gwinnett County Public Schools, the closure of schools for hazardous conditions may only be made by the Superintendent for the purposes of excused absences.)
6. A period not to exceed one day is allowed at the discretion of the local unit of administration for registering to vote or voting in a public election.
7. Local boards of education shall count students present when they are serving as pages for the Georgia General Assembly.
8. Public school students visiting with a parent or legal guardian prior to or during leave from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting as a member of the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard are allowed five excused absences per school year.
9. Students who are in a foster home or otherwise in the foster care system under the Division of Family and Children Services of the Department of Human Services will be counted present for any day, portion of a day, or days missed from school when attending court proceedings related to that student's foster care.
10. A student who participates in the Student Teen Election Participant (STEP) program will be counted as present and given full credit for the school day during which he or she served in the STEP program.

Procedures

Parents or guardians are encouraged to contact the school on the day of the student absence to indicate the reason for the absence. Parents or guardians also must send a signed and dated written note when the student returns to school explaining the reason for the absence, the date(s) of the absence(s), and a daytime phone number. In order to ensure the opportunity of the student to complete make-up work and for local schools to record excused absences, it is best if a parent note or third party excuse be delivered to the school the day that the student returns after being absent.

If a parent note or third-party excuse is not delivered to the school, the absence will be regarded as unexcused. Local schools can employ proven best practices to improve student attendance for both excused and unexcused absences. This includes, but is not limited to, local schools requesting appropriate medical documentation from the parent/guardian of a student with excessive absences (excused or unexcused). Parents or guardians will receive written notice when a student has five (5), seven (7), and ten (10) unexcused absences. When such student has 10 or more unexcused absences, the school will make contact with parent, guardian or person having charge or control of the student to notify them of the additional unexcused absences along with possible consequences and interventions. This includes, but is not limited to, a referral to the combined Student Support Team (SST)/Student Attendance Review Committee (SARC) meeting.

Schools shall send written notice inviting the parent or guardian to the SST/SARC meeting.

To facilitate prompt, appropriate communication between the home and school, parents, guardians, or persons having charge or control of a student should notify the school immediately when there is a change in the student's address and/or phone number as listed in school records.

Possible consequences and/or interventions implemented to resolve unexcused absences, tardies, or excessive early checkouts may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Consult with Staff Personnel (School Social Worker, School Counselor, Parent Instructional Coordinator, etc.)
- Morning Detention
- Afternoon Detention
- Revocation of School Transfer
- Community Service
- Isolated Lunch
- Student/Parent Conferences
- Opportunity Room
- Out-of-School Suspension
- Referral to Social Service Agencies
- Referral to Juvenile Court (unexcused absences)

After the school system notifies the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child that such child has ten (10) days of unexcused absences, each additional unexcused absence may result in misdemeanor charges against the parent or guardian. Prior to any action to commence judicial proceedings to impose a penalty for violating this subsection on a parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child, the school system shall send a notice to such parent, guardian, or other person by Certified Mail, return receipt requested, or by First-Class Mail. Upon conviction, any parent, guardian or other person who has control or charge of a child shall be subject to a fine not less than \$25 and not greater than \$100, or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. A student subject to compulsory attendance laws who fails to attend school may be subject to a referral to Juvenile Court for disposition in accordance with Georgia law.

Student check-in and check-out procedures are determined at the local school level.

Absences and Grading

Absences shall not penalize student grades if the following conditions are met:

1. Absences are justified and validated for excused reasons.
2. Make-up work for all absences is completed satisfactorily.

(Although an absence may be considered "unexcused," make-up work for approved, prearranged absences will be permitted. Procedures for doing so may be acquired from the local school.)

When students are suspended short-term (1–10 days), work missed will not count for or against their final grade. Suspended students shall make up those tests and assignments that the teachers determine will have an impact on the student's final grade and mastery of course content. Assignments that the teacher does not require to be made up will not count toward a student's final grade. Students are responsible for making arrangements and completing make-up work within the timeline specified by the local school.

Students not subject to compulsory school attendance laws who are enrolled for the current school year and do not attend school for ten (10) consecutive days without notification of the absence reason by the parent/guardian are subject to withdrawal. These students shall be withdrawn following the school's attempt to notify the par-

ent/guardian. Students determined to no longer be a resident of the system may be withdrawn even if the student is subject to compulsory school attendance laws. The withdrawal shall be retroactive to the first day of the consecutive absences.

For currently enrolled students who are subject to compulsory school attendance laws, it is required that schools make a good-faith effort to obtain documented information that the student no longer resides in the school's attendance zone before the student is withdrawn.

Students who have emergencies necessitating their absence from school for a portion of the school day must have been present for the majority of the school day in order to be counted present. **Students must attend school for at least the equivalent of half the school day in order to be counted for the whole day.** This does not have to be continuous time.

When there is cause necessitating students to be released from school, they may only be released to their parent(s), to a person properly identified to school authorities, or upon request by letter or telephone call from the parents.

Title I, Family and Community Engagement Plan

The Board recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and family. To educate students effectively, the school and parents must work together as equal partners. We know families and communities play an integral role in the education of children, and we want to encourage and support active involvement in our schools. Our district receives Title I, Part A funds to help meet the needs of all students. The funds are used to hire additional teachers in our Title I schools, purchase technology and resources, and train school personnel to serve as ambassadors for families and the school community. All schools receiving funds from the Title I grant are required to have a Family and Community Engagement Plan that meets the guidelines established by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. In GCPS, our schools call this The Plan and The Promise. Our goals, as we partner with you, are to:

1. establish expectations for meaningful and effective family engagement, and
2. strengthen the academic achievement of all students by engaging and supporting our families in the education of their children.

Family engagement means parents, families, and school personnel will participate in two-way, meaningful communication for the common goal of supporting students. Parents and families of all students in our schools are invited to attend meetings to share ideas and suggestions about the district's and school's improvement plans. Below are several ways you can engage with us:

1. **Monthly Board Meetings**— School Board meetings are typically held on the third Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. All meetings are open to the public and may be viewed online on the district website (www.gcpsk12.org). The meeting schedule is found on the school district website. These meetings offer an opportunity for parents and community members to learn about districtwide news and initiatives. The agenda is prepared in advance of each meeting. Anyone wishing to speak before the Board must fill out the Request Form on the district website. The form to speak at the *next* month's meeting is available the Friday after each month's meeting. Citizens needing interpretation services should note that when completing the form.
2. **Local School Councils**— The primary goal of the local school council is to bring communities and schools closer together. The

council makes recommendations to improve academic achievement, provides support for teachers and administrators, and brings parents into the decision-making process for the school.

3. **Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)**— All parents are invited to participate in the PAC. PACs meet several times each year to:
 - a. establish how the district should use funds set aside for family engagement activities,
 - b. provide input on the District Improvement Plan, and
 - c. develop the GCPS Family and Community Engagement Plan.
4. **Local School Planning Meetings**— Before the beginning of each school year, Title I schools host meetings for families and community members to provide input on local school and district improvement goals and the Title I budget. These meetings are for families and other interested community members to jointly develop The Plan & The Promise. We encourage all families to participate in the planning meetings at the local school. We work to remove as many barriers as possible to maximize participation in our planning meetings. Whenever possible, we will provide childcare, interpreters, and translations of documents. We will communicate in a variety of languages and family-friendly formats and offer a variety of meeting times, dates, and locations.

Parents are invited to communicate with their child's teacher, visit their Title I school's Parent Center, or speak with the Parent Instructional Coordinator (PIC) or Parent Outreach Liaison (POL) to see how they may get involved in their child's school.

The Office of Federal Programs provides ongoing support, guidance, and monitoring to ensure that Title I schools are working in partnership with families. Our Title I schools collaborate with other federal programs to improve the academic achievement of all students. Based on input from our families and communities, we use 1% of Title I grant funding to ensure that all Title I schools have either a certified PIC or a POL to assist families. The PIC or the POL takes the lead in providing opportunities for families to learn academic strategies that can be used at home as well as training of school staff on effectively communicating and building positive working relationships with families. Several schools in the district implement Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT), which is an evidence-based model where families learn activities and strategies to reinforce skills at home and set student academic goals. GCPS has a core group of school leaders, the Family Engagement Leadership Team, who coordinate training for the entire staff of APTT schools to ensure this model is implemented with fidelity. All schools offer activities that align to the school goals, opportunities for shared decision-making, and assistance to families in the transition process from one school level to the next. In addition, each Title I school has a Parent Center containing resources for use at home.

To promote school readiness for our future students, GCPS offers Play 2 Learn in all of the district's Title I elementary schools. Parents in the program bring their child(ren), birth to age 5, to a weekly 90-minute session. During these sessions, activities are modeled and facilitated by a certified staff member using best practices for readiness skills. The program is focused on building the capacity of parents to be their child's first teacher and providing an opportunity for students to be in a high-quality school environment.

We encourage parents to attend district-level and school-level meetings to provide input on improvement strategies for schools that have been identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools and Targeted Support and Improvement Schools.

To determine the effectiveness of the Family and Community Engagement Plan and Title I programs, we ask parents and family members to complete a survey. This feedback helps us to better understand the needs of the school community and how we can improve our partnership with families. The results of the survey are posted on both the district and school websites. During the annual needs-assessment process, we review the data from the survey, along with other input from all stakeholders gathered throughout the year, to update and revise our Family and Community Engagement Plan.

This plan was reviewed and revised with the input of GCPS staff, families, and community members for the 2021–22 school year. The plan is available in Parent Centers of Title I schools as well as on school and district websites.

Complaint procedures for Federal Programs are located on the district website.

School Nutrition Program (SNP) Information

As a partner in education, the school system's School Nutrition Program contributes to a successful academic experience and encourages a lifetime of healthy eating by providing each student with the affordable opportunity to consume meals that are nutritious, appealing, and served by caring professionals in a pleasant environment.

For elementary students, a student breakfast costs \$1.50 and a student lunch is \$2.25. Free and reduced-price meals also are available. Qualifications and/or application procedures for free and reduced meals are available at the local school or on the school system's website (www.gcpsk12.org). You may pay for meals at the school, or you may place money in your child's account using check or credit card by going to www.mypaymentsplus.com.

GCPS uses the following procedure regarding school meal charges.

- Elementary school students will be allowed to charge up to \$11.25.
- Charges are not allowed for supplemental or a la carte items.
- Once the charge limit has been met, the student may receive a designated alternate meal at no charge as defined by the School Nutrition Program.
- A charge notice will be completed for each occurrence and notification will be sent home to the parent/guardian through the student.
- Additionally, once the charge limit has been met the parent/guardian will be notified by the local school via phone call and/or email.
- Charging for meals will not be allowed after April 30.
- The charge policy will be communicated to parents and students via the Student/Parent Handbook, SNP and local school websites, and letter.

Refunds from the School Nutrition Program may be processed at the local school level up to \$50. Any refund over \$50 shall be processed through the SNP Central Office by submitting a Refund Request Form.

Professional Qualifications of Teachers

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), parents are entitled to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. The following information may be requested:

- Whether the teacher met the state requirements from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission for certification for the grade level and subject area which they teach;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under temporary status through which Georgia qualifications or certification criteria have been waived;
- What undergraduate or graduate degree(s) the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration; and
- Whether your child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualification.

If you wish to request information concerning the qualifications of your child's teacher and/or paraprofessional, please contact the school principal.

Family Changes

If the status of a student's custody changes after the student is enrolled, the enrolling parent/guardian or agency shall notify the local school of new address and contact phone numbers. Parents/guardians may be required to facilitate and obtain appropriate guardianship or custody of their child to avoid referral to an outside agency or withdrawal. State law generally prohibits attempts to make a change of custody of a minor child by removing the child from the premises of the school without permission of the person who enrolled the student. This prohibition applies even if there is a court order granting custody of the child to the person seeking to make the change.

Educational Equity Policy

The Gwinnett County Board of Education is committed to educating all students and to providing the resources needed to support high-quality teaching and learning. The district's focus on increasing student achievement, access, and opportunities through the implementation of equitable and inclusive educational and workplace policies and practices reduces barriers and builds the district's capacity to deliver innovative, effective, and culturally relevant services.

The Board of Education authorizes the CEO/Superintendent and his or her designee to design or redesign systemic programs and initiatives to address and reduce educational inequity, providing students and staff with targeted supports and enrichment that increase opportunities to succeed.

Educational Equity: Providing access to ensure that all students have the knowledge and skills to succeed as contributing members of a global society, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, English proficiency, faith, socioeconomic status, or disability.

Device Accessibility

Student technology devices (such as laptops or Chromebooks) and/or high speed at-home Internet access hotspots for academic use may be available on loan to families, based on demonstrated need. Families may contact their schools to discuss options. If a GCPS technology resource is checked out to a student and taken home, it is the parent's responsibility to monitor the use of the device to ensure the student is following the Student Conduct Behavior Code and to ensure that the device is returned in the condition in which it was received.

Harassment Statement

It is the policy of the Gwinnett County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, color, disability, religious belief, or national origin in the educational programs and activities, or admissions to facilities operated by the Gwinnett County Board of Education, or in the employment practices of the school system. It is the express policy of the Gwinnett County School Board to comply with all laws and regulations relating to discrimination now in effect or hereafter enacted.

The Gwinnett County Board of Education does not and will not tolerate harassment of our students or employees. The term “harassment” includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual’s race, ethnic group, color, sex, religious belief, national origin, citizenship, age, or disability. “Harassment” also includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, unwelcome or offensive touching, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Violations of this policy will subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including employment termination. Students violating this policy may be disciplined up to and including exclusion from school.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

It is the policy of the Gwinnett County Board of Education (“Board”) not to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, color, disability, religious belief, or national origin in the educational programs and activities, or admissions to facilities operated by the Board. It is the express policy of the Board to comply with all laws and regulations relating to discrimination and harassment now in effect or hereafter enacted. Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) is expressly prohibited from subjecting any person to discrimination or harassment on the basis of his/her membership in a protected class by the following laws: Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Title I and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008.

The Board does not and will not tolerate discrimination against or harassment of our students or employees. Violations of this policy will subject an offending student to disciplinary action up to and including permanent expulsion from Gwinnett County Public School (GCPS).

The Executive Director of Internal Resolutions and Compliance and District Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Michele Smith, is responsible for ensuring that applicable anti-discrimination laws, rules, and Board policies are applied equitably to all students across the GCPS community. Contact information for Dr. Smith is provided below.

Dr. Michele Smith
Executive Director of the Department of Internal Resolutions and Compliance, District Title IX Coordinator
Division of Human Resources and Talent Management
Gwinnett County Public Schools
437 Old Peachtree Road, NW
Suwanee, GA 30024-2978
Phone: 678-301-6811
Email: Michele.Smith@gcpsk12.org

Student Complaints and Grievances Procedure

The Gwinnett County Board of Education (“Board”) is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, or disability. If you believe you or your child is being treated unfairly based on any of these impermissible grounds, you have a complaint and a remedy. To file a complaint of discrimination or harassment, students and/or parents should utilize the Student Complaints and Grievances procedure, Procedure P/JCE, which is summarized on this page.

Step I: Contact the local school’s Title IX Coordinator to file a complaint and provide a factual basis for any allegation(s) of unfair treatment. The local Title IX Coordinator will conduct an investigation and issue a written letter of findings. If dissatisfied with the resolution of the matter, the student or parent may request a meeting with the school principal.

Step II: If, after meeting with the school principal, the student and/or parent is not satisfied with the local school’s decision, a written appeal may be submitted to the Department of Internal Resolutions and Compliance using the contact information provided on this page. Appeals must be submitted within ten (10) business days after notice of the local school’s final decision. The appeal must give specific reasons for reconsideration, state precisely the reasons for dissatisfaction with the decision, and be limited to the matter under review. The decision of the Department of Internal Resolutions and Compliance shall be final.

Student Title IX Complaint Procedure

Notice to Students and Parents/Legal Guardians:

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits the District from discriminating on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities. Information regarding filing a formal complaint of sexual harassment under Title IX, including the District’s related policies and procedures and the contact information for each school’s Title IX Coordinator, may be found online on the District’s website (www.gcpsk12.org) on the “Non-discrimination Policies” webpage. After receipt of a formal sexual harassment complaint, the local school’s Title IX Coordinator will investigate the allegations, providing all parties an equal opportunity to provide, inspect, and examine evidence. After the decision-maker reviews the evidence presented, he/she will issue a written determination. On the basis of the existence of a procedural irregularity, new evidence not reasonably available at the time of the investigation or dismissal, or the bias/conflict of interest of an investigator or decision-maker, any party may file an appeal with the Department of Internal Resolutions and Compliance. Appeals should be addressed to the District’s Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Michele Smith, and submitted by using the following contact information:

Dr. Michele Smith
Executive Director of the Department of Internal Resolutions and Compliance, District Title IX Coordinator
Division of Human Resources and Talent Management
Gwinnett County Public Schools
437 Old Peachtree Road, NW
Suwanee, GA 30024-2978
Phone: 678-301-6811
Email: Michele.Smith@gcpsk12.org

Dr. Michele Smith or her designee will promptly address all appeals received. The decision of the Department of Internal Resolutions and Compliance shall be final.

Retaliation on account of filing a complaint of discrimination or harassment or for participating in the investigation of any complaint at any level is strictly prohibited.

Preparing for Inclement Weather

During inclement weather, GCPS usually announces plans for a Digital Learning Day or full-day cancellation by 6 a.m. Once a decision is made, the district posts the announcement on the district website (www.gcpsk12.org); GCPS TV; via SchoolMessenger; on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram; and via metro-Atlanta radio and television stations. School closings are determined by the Superintendent, not by the local school.

In cases when bad weather moves in during the school day, district leaders determine the safest and most efficient way to get students home. Should GCPS schools release early or cancel afternoon or evening activities, notifications to families are made using the communication vehicles mentioned previously.

School is open or will remain open unless it is specifically announced otherwise. The school system does not issue announcements when school will be in session as scheduled.



Find Gwinnett County Public Schools on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter at GwinnettSchools



Follow us on Instagram at gwinnettschools

Parent Notification in Times of Emergency/SchoolMessenger

GCPS endeavors to notify parents in a timely manner relative to any schoolwide or districtwide emergencies or campus safety concerns. While letters may be sent home to parents affected by the occurrence, when circumstances require a more immediate notification, this information, as it becomes available, will be posted on the GCPS website (www.gcpsk12.org), Facebook page, and Twitter account (@GwinnettSchools). In addition, the district and local schools will communicate to families using phone numbers and email addresses provided by the parent/guardian. This contact information is used by GCPS to send emergency notifications such as school closings and safety alerts by phone, text, and/or email via SchoolMessenger. General/non-emergency notifications will be sent by email using SchoolMessenger.

Parents should verify the accuracy of their contact information at the beginning of each school year or they can update this information in the Parent Portal. **In addition, if changes to contact information occur during the school year, parents should contact the school office to let staff know of those changes, or update via the Portal.** This will improve communication throughout the year and ensure that your family will receive messages sent through SchoolMessenger.

In addition to verifying that your cell phone number is accurate in the system, you also will need to subscribe to the text message service if you wish to receive emergency texts from the school system. You can do so by texting the word "SUBSCRIBE" to the

number 67587. You will receive an immediate response by text. If you do not, please contact your wireless provider, as some providers do not accept texts that use short code (SMS) messages. (Note: If you subscribed to receive text messages last year, there is no need to resubscribe unless your number changed.)

SchoolMessenger messages from Gwinnett County Public Schools will come from the number 1-844-248-6644. Please add this phone number to your contacts so you can easily identify the call as coming from Gwinnett County Public Schools. If you miss a phone message, you can call this number back to retrieve and replay phone notifications.

Please note that an individual can opt out of receiving SchoolMessenger messages at any time. Press "5" on your phone while listening to a phone message broadcast through SchoolMessenger to initiate the opt-out process. Parents also can go to go.schoolmessenger.com, logging in with the email address they provided to the school, and select "Preferences" to make changes regarding the various types of messages that may be sent.

Impaired/Handicapped Access

Gwinnett County Public Schools wishes to meet the needs of all of its students and families. If any member of your family needs assistance or has any questions regarding mobility impaired issues or handicapped access, please contact the principal of your local school.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal non-discrimination statute that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Specifically, Section 504 states:

No qualified handicapped person shall, on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity which benefits from federal financial assistance.

Under Section 504 a person with a disability is anyone who has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as caring for oneself; performing manual tasks; walking; seeing; hearing; speaking; breathing; learning and working; eating; sleeping; standing; lifting; bending; reading; concentrating; thinking; communicating; and major bodily functions (i.e. immune systems, cell growth, digestive, bowel, or bladder functions). The term "substantially limits" means the person is unable to perform a major life activity or major bodily function that a non-disabled person can do, or the person is more restricted in the performance of a major life activity in comparison to a non-disabled person.

It is the policy of GCPS to comply with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in providing a free appropriate public education for students with disabilities who qualify under the definition of the law. No student or other qualified individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in any program or activity, on the basis of disability.

GCPS has specific responsibilities under Section 504, including the requirement to identify and evaluate students with disabilities.

Any student or other disabled individual who is qualified for services under Section 504 will receive appropriate accommodations providing equal access to educational programs, services, and facilities. If a parent, guardian, or adult student has a question about parental or student rights under Section 504, contact the district's designated Section 504 representative at 678-301-7110.

Georgia Special Needs Scholarship (GSNS), Senate Bill 10

If a student meets the eligibility criteria for the GSNS Program, a parent/guardian has the right to request a transfer from the student's current public school to:

- another public school within their district of residence; or
- another public school district outside their district of residence; or
- one of the three state schools for the blind or deaf; or
- a private school authorized to participate in the GSNS Program.

Funds received through the GSNS Program only can be used to pay for tuition and fees at a private school authorized by the State Board of Education to participate in the program.

Child Find

Gwinnett County Public Schools has an obligation under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to identify, locate, and evaluate all students with disabilities or students suspected of having a disability residing in the district who are in need of special education and related services from ages 3 through 21 years of age. This includes students attending public, private, or home schools in Gwinnett County. If you have a child, or know of a child, who has a disability or is suspected to have a disability, please contact the Executive Director of Special Education and Psychological Services at 678-301-7110.

Vehicular Traffic Plans

Every Gwinnett County public school has a vehicular traffic plan for its campus. We ask that you be familiar with your school's plan, following the suggested traffic patterns to help ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors to our schools. If you are not aware of your school's plan, ask your school administration for more information.

Please observe the fire lanes in front of each Gwinnett County school. We ask that you help us ensure the safety of our campus by keeping these areas clear at all times. Parked vehicles in the fire lanes may be ticketed or towed.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Parents have certain rights with respect to student educational records pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). These rights transfer to the student when the student becomes an "Eligible Student" upon reaching the age of 18 or attending a school beyond the high school level. The rights of Parents and/or Eligible Students are summarized as follows:

- The right to inspect and review student educational records maintained by the school. A parent or eligible student seeking to inspect and review educational records should submit a written request to the Principal of the school in which the student is enrolled or last attended.
- An opportunity to seek amendment of educational records alleged to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. In the event a parent/guardian wishes to challenge a student's educational record, he or she can review Policy JR on the school district's website. They also may request a hearing or a copy of the procedures for conducting the hearing by contacting the Executive Director for Administration and Policy at 678-301-6005.

- The right to notice of what information the school has designated as directory information and a reasonable time after such notice to inform the school that the designated information should not be released without prior consent. See the following section for information on the release of directory information.
- The right to consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in student educational records (other than directory information), except to the extent FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. Disclosures for which the consent of the parent or eligible student is not required include the following:
 - a. to School Officials with a legitimate educational interest. A school official is any school employee or any contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom school system services or functions that would otherwise be performed by school employees has been outsourced or assigned. A legitimate educational interest is a need that arises out of a school official's role in providing educational services, including instruction, evaluation, therapy, etc., to a student, or out of the performance of administrative, supervisory, clerical, or other responsibilities prescribed by the school system;
 - b. to other school systems in which the student seeks or intends to enroll as long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer;
 - c. to specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - d. in connection with the student's application for financial aid;
 - e. to state and local officials pursuant to State law;
 - f. to organizations conducting studies on behalf of the school;
 - g. to accrediting organizations;
 - h. to parents of a dependent student as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
 - i. to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons; and
 - j. in compliance with judicial order or pursuant to any lawfully issued subpoena when the educational agency makes reasonable effort to notify the parent or eligible student in advance of the compliance. In limited circumstances, an order or subpoena may require the District to disclose information without notifying the parent or eligible student.

A parent or eligible student who believes his or her rights under FERPA may have been violated may file a complaint by writing the Family Policy Compliance Office. Complaints must contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of FERPA occurred. Complaints should be addressed as follows:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

Release of Directory Information

FERPA permits the District to disclose information designated as Directory Information without the consent of the parent or eligible student. Directory Information is information, the disclosure of which is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Among the purposes that the Directory Information exception facilitates is the release of student information in athletic and extra-

curricular programs, yearbooks, honor roll and other recognition lists, graduation programs, etc.

Gwinnett County Public Schools has designated the following information as “Directory Information”: name, address, telephone number, date of birth, electronic mail (e-mail) address, photograph, audio recordings, video recordings, grade level, years of attendance, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, and honors and awards received. Unless the parent or eligible student opt-out of the disclosure of “Directory Information,” the information designated as Directory Information above may be disclosed in District publications or to appropriate legitimate agencies, entities, or individuals identified by the District, including, but not limited to, PTA, colleges, and military recruiters. The District will not regard agencies, entities, or individuals submitting Open Records Requests as appropriate legitimate agencies, entities, or individuals for the purpose of disclosure of Directory Information.

You have the right to refuse to allow “Directory Information” to be disclosed. In order to opt out of the disclosure of Directory Information, you must notify the principal of the school the student attends in writing within 10 days of receipt of this handbook. The written notice must: (1) include the name of the student; (2) include a statement that the parent/guardian or eligible student is opting out of the disclosure of Directory Information under FERPA; and (3) be signed and dated by the parent, guardian, or eligible student.*

**Please note that your written notice will be effective for the current year only and must be renewed on an annual basis should you wish to continue to opt out of the release of Directory Information.*

Media Release

Gwinnett County Public Schools uses and releases photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings taken or recorded at its facilities and events for educational, instructional, or promotional purposes as determined by Gwinnett County Public Schools for use in broadcast and media formats now existing or created in the future, including social media. These photographs and recordings often include depictions of students and/or parents engaged in instruction, school functions, and school activities. Any such photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings shall become the property of Gwinnett County Public Schools and may be used or disclosed by Gwinnett County Public Schools or others with the consent of Gwinnett County Public Schools and/or its representatives to students, parents, community members, or media outlets. By signing the Response Form acknowledging receipt of this Student/Parent Handbook, you consent to the foregoing. As the parent of a student, you may elect to withhold your consent for Gwinnett County Public Schools’ use of photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings of you and/or your child. In order to withhold your consent for the disclosure of your and/or your child’s photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings, you (the parent/guardian of the student) must notify the principal of the school the student attends in writing within 10 days of receipt of this handbook. The written notice must: (1) include the name of the student; (2) include a statement that the parent/guardian is opting out of the release of photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings depicting the student; and (3) be signed and dated by the parent or guardian. Please note that your written notice will be effective for the current school year only and must be renewed on an annual basis should you wish to continue to opt out of the release of photographs and recordings. Finally, please note that Gwinnett County Public Schools

will not be responsible for, and cannot control, photographs, audio recordings, or video recordings captured by individuals who are not employed by, affiliated with, or under contract with Gwinnett County Public Schools. Please contact your local school administration or technology team if you have further questions regarding this topic.

Privacy: Parents and Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment affords Parents and Eligible Students rights and protections regarding instructional materials used in educational programs, surveys administered to students, and the conduct of certain physical examinations. The rights and protections established by the PPRA include:

- **Instructional Materials.** The parent has the right to inspect any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for the student; and
- **Surveys.** The parent has the right to inspect any survey created by a third party, prior to the administration or distribution of the survey and the right to opt the student out of participation in any such survey. In addition, before a student may be required to submit to a survey revealing “Protected Information,” the written consent of the parent is required. Finally, a minor student may not volunteer to submit to a survey revealing “Protected Information” without providing the parent of the student with prior written notice of the administration of the survey and an opportunity to opt out of the survey. “Protected Information” is information in the following categories:
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
 2. Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student’s family;
 3. Sex behavior and attitudes;
 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior;
 5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
 7. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program); or
 8. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
- **Physical Examinations.** Parents have the right to notice of any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law.

A parent may contact the Executive Director for Administration and Policy at 678-301-6005 to obtain a copy of Gwinnett County Public Schools’ policies and procedures developed pursuant to the PPRA.

A parent who believes his or her rights under PPRA may have been violated may file a complaint by writing the Family Policy Compliance Office. Complaints must contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of PPRA occurred.

Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures certain educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. This law identifies any student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as homeless. It provides legal protections for children and youth in homeless situations to immediately enroll in, attend, and succeed in school and qualifying public preschool programs. The law further provides support for student records maintenance and transfer, school of origin transportation, and appropriate dispute resolution for children and youth experiencing homelessness. In accordance with this law, Gwinnett County Public Schools affords children and youth experiencing homelessness equal access to the same free, appropriate public education— including comparable services, such as Title I support, special education, gifted, English Learners (EL), vocational/ technical, and public preschool education— as provided to other non- homeless students. Children and youth experiencing homelessness will have access to needed services to support their academic achievement as they work to meet the same challenging standards to which all students are held. Please contact the district Homeless Liaison in the Office of Health and Social Services at 678-301-6882 for further information.

Foster Care

Gwinnett County Public Schools' foster care program supports all students placed in out-of-home care who are enrolled in GCPS. When a foster child enters GCPS, the case manager or the foster parent completes the Foster Care Questionnaire (FCQ) form at the local school. The local school submits the form to the GCPS foster care liaison within the Office of Health and Social Services. The school will notate the student is in foster care via the student management system. This process is repeated at the beginning of every school year and whenever a foster child's placement changes. Within five days of enrollment, a Case Management Consultation (CMC) is held to determine the best interests of the child and develop a plan to best serve the student. During this meeting, the foster parent, foster care liaison, school counselor, assistant principal, and DFCS worker are invited to discuss the student's strengths and areas of concern, current and previous supports, and, in accordance with House Bill 855, how trauma has affected the child's academic performance and behaviors.

Student Conduct Behavior Code

Discipline Policy Statement

Gwinnett County Public Schools ("GCPS" or "District") is committed to creating a safe, positive environment for all of our students, staff, parents, stakeholders, and community partners. GCPS will work to assure that all students and staff are well-motivated, fully aware of their potential, and dedicated to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior. GCPS believes that all children can thrive in a safe learning environment. The District utilizes a range of activities to recognize, celebrate, and reward positive behavior at the classroom, school, and district levels.

In addition to this Student Conduct Behavior Code ("Code"), GCPS has various policies that govern conduct in the District. A copy of those policies can be obtained at www.gcpsk12.org. (Our district website will be redesigned this school year. Please do a search for Student Conduct Behavior Code.) Families also may call the Office of the Executive Director for Administration and Policy at 678-301-6005.

Purpose of the Code

GCPS has adopted this Code to support the creation of a safe learning environment for all members of the school community. The purpose of this Code is to state clearly our standards for acceptable conduct of students. The Code also explains the consequences for not meeting these standards of conduct. This Code establishes a strict policy for conduct that endangers the safety of the schools and/or disrupts the educational experience for other students. GCPS does not permit corporal punishment.

The Code also sets forth the discipline procedures for the students who have committed violations of the Code. This Code is not meant to be a contract between the District and the students, and may be amended at any time. It is a place for GCPS to explain certain policies applicable to students.

Scope of the Code

Everyone is entitled to a safe, secure, and orderly environment in which to learn and work. The rules and regulations in this Code are designed toward that end and are effective during the following times and places:

- a. On school grounds at any time;
- b. Off school grounds at a school bus stop, on a school bus, or other GCPS provided transportation vehicle;
- c. Off school grounds when the misconduct constitutes an act of physical violence against a teacher, school bus driver, or other school official or employee. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.6);
- d. Off school grounds when the behavior of a student (1) could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony or which could result in a felony criminal charge if committed by an adult; and which (2) makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to person or property at school or which disrupts the educational process. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.5(c));
- e. Off school grounds at a school-related function. School-related functions include any activity sponsored by or associated with an individual GCPS school or the GCPS system. School-related functions include, but are not limited to, virtual meetings, virtual classes, athletic and extracurricular events, athletic and extracurricular practices, athletic and extracurricular meetings, athletic and extracurricular conferences, field trips, camps, foreign language trips, booster club meetings and events, parent-teacher organization meetings and events, and any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum;
- f. Off school grounds when the misconduct constitutes bullying by use of data or software that is accessed through Gwinnett County Public Schools computer(s), computer system(s), computer network(s), or electronic technology. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4);
- g. Off school grounds when the misconduct constitutes cyberbullying. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.6); and
- h. Off school grounds and during school hours when a student leaves without permission (AWOL) of a school official or any time Rule 10 would apply.

The rules of this Code do not apply to:

- i. Student speech that occurs off campus if the speech is at a non-school-sponsored event and does not cause or is not likely to cause a material and substantial disruption to the school environment or a school activity.

Equal Opportunity Statement

The District complies with all federal, state, and local laws, and provides an equal opportunity for all students. GCPS prohibits discrimination in admission, grading, discipline and any other activity based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), sex, handicap, nationality, or citizenship. All decisions of GCPS will be administered without regard to any of the categories listed above.

Statement of Student Misconduct

The rules in this Code are designed to notify students (grades K–12) as to the types of behaviors that are not acceptable; nevertheless, every specific variation of the prohibited conduct may not have been included. Consequently, students should expect to be disciplined for misconduct that is obviously inappropriate. A specific rule need not be written for every conceivable variation of behavior that directly affects the orderly mission of the school.

References to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated

References to Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) included in the Student Conduct Behavior Code do not require that the elements of the specific criminal code section referenced be proved beyond a reasonable doubt before schools may punish misconduct. Further, these code references do not impose any additional intent requirements upon schools pursuing discipline against students for the violation of this Code.

When a school rule is violated that may also be a violation of the law, the schools may notify the School Resource Officer (SRO) who will review the incident for possible criminal charges or notification of the District Attorney. Rules that require SRO notification are marked with an asterisk (*).

Student Dress Code

Students are required to dress appropriately for school. Each local school will establish and publish a dress code applicable to that school. In addition to the requirements established by the local school, prohibited dress shall include any attire that depicts, promotes, or advertises gang affiliation, illegal activity, illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco, sexual references, offensive words or designs, and other clothing which is disruptive to the learning environment.

Electronic Communications Devices

The Gwinnett County Board of Education (BOE) permits students to possess communication devices on a limited basis and provides local school principals with the authority to set forth rules pertaining to student possession and use of such devices at local schools.

Rights and Responsibilities

Rights of Students

Students shall have the right to:

1. Pursue a successful education in a learning environment that is emotionally and physically safe without disruption;
2. Receive fair and equitable treatment without discrimination in all aspects of the educational system;
3. Be treated respectfully; and

4. Be informed of their rights, responsibilities, discipline policies, and this Code of Conduct.

Responsibilities of Students

All students share with the administration and faculty responsibility to develop a safe learning environment within the school. Students shall have the responsibility to:

1. Attend school regularly, arrive on time, and bring materials;
2. Respect the personal, civil and property rights of others;
3. Put forth conscientious effort in classroom work and homework;
4. Groom and dress appropriately;
5. Have knowledge of and conform to school rules and regulations;
6. Not use indecent, obscene, or foul language; and
7. Report incidents or activities that may threaten or disrupt the school environment.

Rights of Parents/Guardians

Parents shall have the right to:

1. Receive regular official reports on their child's academic progress;
2. Receive an explanation for the basis of any grade given by the teacher;
3. Request a conference with the teacher and/or principal;
4. Receive a prompt report of their child's attendance to class or school;
5. Bring, or have the District provide, an interpreter during disciplinary conferences or hearings, when a parent or student has limited English proficiency and the parent or student requests an interpreter or the school observes that a parent or student's limited English proficiency would deny them an opportunity to meaningfully participate in the conference or hearing; and
6. Appeal disciplinary actions of suspensions of 10 days or more.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians shall have the responsibility to:

1. Ensure that their children between the ages of 6 and 16 enroll in schools regularly, on time, and for the whole school day in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia;
2. Enroll their child in a non-GCPS school or homeschool setting if he or she is expelled from GCPS;
3. Speak, behave, and/or present to school officials any concern in a calm, respectful, and reasoned manner;
4. Work with the school on academic, attendance, disciplinary, or other matters pertaining to their child;
5. Plan the time and place for homework assignments and provide necessary supervision;
6. Talk with their child about school activities and expected behavior;
7. Know the rules set forth in this Code and review them with their child; and
8. Ensure that their child receives the periodic student health examinations that are required by law.

Rights of Victims in School-Related Offenses

Any person victimized by a GCPS student's violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Code may be called to testify to the facts of the incident as it relates to him or her if a student discipline hearing is held. Furthermore, any victim of a crime committed by a member

of the GCPS community has the right to pursue criminal charges through the proper authorities.

Glossary of Discipline Terms

AWOL: Refers to a student's unauthorized absence and/or leave from class, school, activity or event.

Behavioral Correction Plan: Refers to a set of behavioral intervention strategies devised for students who have been identified as chronic disciplinary problem students. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-765)

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): A set of strategies to support special education students with inappropriate classroom behaviors.

Bullying: 1) any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; 2) any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or 3) any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that: a) causes substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm; b) substantially interferes with a student's education; c) is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating/threatening educational environment; or d) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of school. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4) Retaliation for reports of bullying will not be tolerated and will be subject to independent disciplinary action. The prohibition against bullying includes off-campus cyberbullying that is (1) directed specifically at students or school personnel; (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school; and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

Bus Suspension: The student is suspended from the bus for a specified period of time by the local school administrator. The student is expected to attend school, but the parents are responsible for providing transportation to and from school.

Detention: Keeping a student before or after school for a reasonable time or during school hours, such as lunch time.

Disability: A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of an individual.

District: Gwinnett County Public Schools

Due Process: A student is afforded oral or written notice of charges against him/her and is given an opportunity for a review, hearing, or other procedural rights in accordance with state and federal laws.

Felony Drug Charge: It shall be unlawful for any person to manufacture, distribute, dispense, or possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance or marijuana in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any real property owned by or leased to any public or private elementary school, middle school, secondary school, or school board used for elementary, middle, or secondary education. (O.C.G.A. § 16-13-32.4)

Hearing Officer: A system administrator, with no prior knowledge of the event, who conducts the proceedings for disciplinary hearings and makes the determination of rule violations and appropriate consequences.

IEP: An Individualized Education Program (IEP) supports a student with disabilities who requires specially designed instruction and related services.

Interim Alternative Program: Any educational setting that is designed to accommodate the delivery of a special education student's IEP during a period of suspension from school.

Long-Term Suspension: The removal of a student from school for more than 10 days because the student has violated this Code.

Manifestation Determination: A review of a special education/504 student's program and disability to determine if misconduct is caused by, or has a direct and substantial relationship to, the disability, or whether the conduct was the direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP.

Opportunity Room (OR): A disciplinary measure that permits the student to attend school, but prohibits him or her from attending regular classes. Students assigned to OR are not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities on the date of their OR assignment.

Permanent Expulsion: A student is removed from all GCPS property, activities, and events for an indefinite period of time. This action may be taken only by the Board of Education. School work may not be made up or credit earned.

School Grounds: Any property owned or utilized by the District.

Self-Defense/Justification: The Gwinnett County Board of Education recognizes that students have a right to defend themselves or others by threatening or using force against another when and to the extent that the student reasonably believes that such threat or force is necessary to defend the student or a third person against another's imminent use of unlawful force. Despite the foregoing, students may be disciplined when the student's threat or use of force was not necessary, the level of force or the extent of the threat exceeded what was necessary, the other person's threat or use of force was not imminent, the student's action initially provoked the altercation, the student was a participant in a mutual physical altercation, or the student was the aggressor. When a student claims their actions were justified, the student carries the burden of proof in establishing that the actions were justified.

Sexting: The sending or knowingly receiving of lewd or pornographic text messages.

Short-Term Suspension: The involuntary removal of a student from class attendance or school attendance for 10 days or less. Suspended students shall make up those assignments that the teachers determine will have an impact on the student's final grade and mastery of the course content. Assignments that the teacher does not require to be made up will not count toward a student's final grade. Students are responsible for making arrangements and completing makeup work within the timeline specified by the local school.

Student Disciplinary Hearing: A hearing in which a hearing officer(s) or panel hears the evidence presented, determines if the student has violated any rules of the student behavior code, and, if so, issues appropriate consequences.

Student Self-Reporting: A self-report occurs when a student or his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) promptly and voluntarily discloses to school personnel that the student has violated Rule 6 or 7. The student and/or parent(s) admit the mistake, and acknowledge that consequences will follow. There is no indication that the confession occurred because the student's violation was about to be discovered.

Student Support Team (SST): A school-based team usually consisting of a teacher, an administrator, a counselor, psychologist and/or social worker, and parents/guardians, that convenes to discuss issues (and make recommendations) related to a student.

Theft: Includes theft by taking, theft by receiving stolen property, and theft of lost or mislaid property.

Trespass: Entrance onto school grounds when prohibited.

Waiver of Right to Attend Student Disciplinary Hearing: Parents may sign a waiver if they cannot attend or do not elect to attend the hearing. In the event a parent or student does not attend the hearing, it will proceed as scheduled.

Weapon: Any of the following but not limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchuku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, scissors and any other tool, instrument or object used to or intended to be used to inflict serious bodily injury to another member of the school community. This definition includes, but is not limited to, the use or intended use of pepper spray, mace or laser pointer to inflict serious bodily injury on another member of the school community.

Important Student Discipline Information

The following is general information regarding discipline:

1. A principal, or other personnel designated to perform the duties normally performed by the principal, may suspend a student for violation of school rules or for any other act of misconduct or insubordination for a period not exceeding ten (10) school days.
Oral notice and an opportunity to discuss the matter with the principal or an assistant principal must be given to the student as soon as is practicable, and written notice (disciplinary referral) stating the reason for suspension shall be given to parents or guardians within a reasonable time, not to exceed one school day.
2. Students under short-term suspension (1–10 days), long-term suspension (10 or more days), or expulsion are not allowed on any Gwinnett County school campus or to attend any school activity, function, or event. Students assigned to in-school suspension are not allowed to participate in extracurricular activities on the date of their ISS assignment.
3. All dangerous weapons, instruments, or controlled substances confiscated by school authorities are to be turned in to Safety and Security.
4. A student is considered to be in possession of an illegal and/or banned item(s) or substance(s) when such item(s) or substance(s) is found on the person of the student, in his/her possession, in his/her locker, in a student's vehicle on school property, or in any vehicle a student brought on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, or any school event held away from the school.
5. Students are prohibited from engaging in gang/hate group or hazing related activities in school.
6. School administrators and/or their designated representatives possess the authority to conduct a reasonable search of students, including, but not limited to, their possessions, lockers, and vehicles when on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, or at any school event held away from the school if it is established there is reasonable suspicion that the search will reveal a violation of the law, the Student Conduct Behavior Code, or local school rules.
7. A student may be considered a party to a violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Code and disciplined for the underlying offense where the student: (1) Directly violates the Student Conduct Behavior Code; (2) Intentionally causes some other person to commit a violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Code; (3) Intentionally aids or abets another in a violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Code; or (4) Intentionally advises, encourages, hires, counsels, or procures another to commit a violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Code. A student may be considered a party to a violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Code even where the underlying actors are not students subject to the Code.
8. Certain violations of the Student Conduct Behavior Code may also be violations of state law and juvenile authorities or other law enforcement agencies may address the student's misconduct in accordance with state laws, in addition to the school system's administrative procedures and regulations.
9. Students are to notify an administrator or staff member when suspected illegal items, dangerous items, or other items banned from school are found in the school building, on the school campus, or on the school bus. Students are advised not to pick up or handle illegal, dangerous, banned, or unidentified items.
10. Students who are under suspension or expulsion through spring semester will not be allowed to participate in any school-sponsored activities.
11. Students should recognize their responsibility to know the contents of this student handbook and to ask the local school administration or staff for any clarification. All students, regardless of age, are subject to the rules and regulations of the Gwinnett County Public Schools. Each local school will review the contents of this handbook with its students.
12. State law requires that certain criminal offenses committed by a student while on school property or at a school-sponsored activity, function, or event be reported to the principal, school superintendent, appropriate law enforcement authority, and the District Attorney. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1184).
13. Georgia law makes it unlawful for any person to manufacture, distribute, disperse, or possess with the intent to distribute a controlled substance or marijuana in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any real property owned by or leased to any public or private elementary school, secondary school, or school board used for elementary or secondary education. Any person who violates or conspires to violate this code section shall be guilty of a felony. (O.C.G.A. § 16-13-32.4)
14. After a disciplinary hearing has been held, textbooks, materials, or equipment belonging to the local school must be returned to a school administrator at their local school.
15. The Unsafe School Choice Option provides students at schools classified as "persistently dangerous" with the option of transferring to another school. Major offenses, including, but not limited to, drug and weapon offenses, can lead to a school being named "persistently dangerous" or unsafe pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-4-8-.16.

Note: *The Student Conduct Behavior Code published here has been abbreviated for an elementary school audience. See your local principal or go online (www.gcpsk12.org) to view the full version of the Student Conduct Behavior Code.*

Rule 1— Disruption and Interference with School

No student shall cause or attempt to cause directly or indirectly disruption or interference with school.

Mandatory Reporting of Repeated and Substantial Class Interference

Teachers in Gwinnett County Public Schools are required to report any student's violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Code which repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in his or her class or with the ability of the students in his or her class to learn. Teachers shall report any such incidents to the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the most recent occurrence of such behavior. Such report shall not exceed one page and shall describe the behavior. The principal or the principal's designee shall, within one day of receiving such report, send to the student's parents or guardians a copy of the report, and information regarding how the principal or the principal's designee may be contacted. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-737.

Student Removal from Class

A teacher may remove or refer to the principal or designee a student from class if the student has exhibited behavior that repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to teach students in his or her class or the ability of other students to learn in the class. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-738 (a-h).

Where a teacher has previously filed a report of a student's repeated or substantial interference with the classroom or where the behavior of a student poses an immediate threat to the safety of student's classmates or the teacher, the teacher shall have the authority to remove the student from the classroom pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-738.

Each school will have a placement review committee. The placement review committee shall be responsible for determining the appropriate placement of a student when the principal recommends that the student be returned to the classroom and the teacher withholds consent for the student's return. The placement review committee shall consist of three members, including two teachers and one alternate teacher chosen by the faculty and a member of the professional staff chosen by the principal. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-738(d).

Rule 2— Damage, Destruction, or Misuse of School Property or Equipment

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to school property or alter/misuse school technology or any other equipment, including accessing unauthorized areas on the computer. A student shall not steal or attempt to steal school property. A student shall not possess, sell, use, buy, or transmit stolen school property or attempt to possess, sell, use, buy, or transmit stolen school property.

Rule 3— Damage, Destruction, or Misuse of Private Property

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to private property or steal or attempt to steal private property. A student shall not possess, sell, use, buy, or transmit stolen private property on school grounds. Further, off school grounds, a student shall not cause or attempt to cause damage to private property belonging to a school employee where such theft or damage is on account of that school employee's performance of his/her official duties. A student shall not sell or buy or attempt to sell or buy personal property on school grounds.

Rule 4— Abuse, Threats, Intimidation, Assault or Battery on a School Employee

Section A

Regardless of intent, a student shall not make oral or written communication, create a document, or make a symbolic gesture or contact of a threatening, undermining, or provoking nature to or about a school employee or in the presence of a school employee. This includes, but is not limited to, disrespectful conduct, insult, use of profanity, ethnic, racial, sexual, disability, or religious slur, or harassment and includes the development of a "hit list," "people to kill," "people to shoot," or a statement about bringing a weapon to school and injuring people.

Section B

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury or behave in such a way that could reasonably cause physical injury or make physical contact of a threatening or provoking nature to a school employee.

Rules 4BA–4BZ also apply off school grounds when the misconduct by the alleged perpetrator is because of the school employee's performance of his or her official duties.

Intentional Physical Contact with a Teacher, Bus Driver, or Other School Employee

Any student who intentionally makes physical contact of a threatening or provoking nature with a teacher, bus driver, school official, or other school employee shall be suspended and brought before a disciplinary hearing.

The minimum penalty for a student found in violation of Rule 4BC shall be suspension from public school until the end of the school year. Any hearing finding a student in violation of Rule 4BC may impose a more severe penalty at its discretion. This minimum penalty shall not be applied in conflict with federal law.

Any student found in violation of Rule 4BI shall be expelled from the public school system for the remainder of his or her eligibility to attend public school. The following exceptions apply:

- (1) The Board of Education, at its discretion, may allow a student found in violation of Rule 4BI to attend the alternative school;
- (2) The Board of Education, in its discretion and upon the recommendation of the disciplinary hearing, may allow a student in grades 6–8 to return to the public school system for grades 9–12;
- (3) The Board of Education, at its discretion, may allow a student in grades K–5 to return to the public school system;
- (4) Permanent expulsion will not be imposed where this penalty would infringe any right created under federal law; and
- (5) Permanent expulsion will not be imposed where the student acts in defense as provided in O.C.G.A. § 16-3-21 (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.6; § 20-2-751.4).

Rule 5— Abuse, Threats, Intimidation, Assault, or Battery by a Student on Another Student or to Any Other Person Not Employed by the School

Section A

Regardless of intent, a student shall not make oral or written communication, create a document, or make a symbolic gesture or contact of a threatening, distracting, or provoking nature to or

about a person/student or in the presence of a person/student. This includes, but is not limited to, bullying, disrespectful conduct, insult, use of profanity; ethnic, racial, sexual, disability, or religious slur; or harassment and includes the development of a “hit list,” “people to kill,” “people to shoot,” or a statement about bringing a weapon to school and injuring people.

State law defines “Bullying” as: 1) any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; 2) any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or 3) any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate that: a) causes substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm; b) substantially interferes with a student’s education; c) is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating/threatening educational environment; or d) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of school. Upon finding that a student in grades 6-12 has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall be assigned to an alternative school. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4) Retaliation for reports of bullying will not be tolerated and will be subject to independent disciplinary action. The prohibition against bullying includes off-campus cyberbullying that is (1) directed specifically at students or school personnel; (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school; and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students’ or school personnel’s person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

Section B

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury or behave in such a way as could reasonably cause bodily injury to any student/person. A student shall not engage in any behavior that threatens the safety or well-being of another person or has the likelihood of provoking a fight.

Gwinnett County Public Schools Are No Bullying Zones

The Board of Education believes that all students can learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students will not be tolerated.

Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, of a student by another student is strictly prohibited. Such prohibition and the penalties shall be included in the Student Conduct Behavior Code for all schools within the school system. See Policy JCD and the Student Conduct Behavior Code.

Rule 6— Weapons, Dangerous Instruments, and Explosive or Implosive Devices

A student shall not solicit to buy or sell, or buy or sell or possess, handle, transmit, threaten with or discharge/use, any object that can reasonably be considered or converted to and/or used as a weapon such as, but not limited to knives; guns; pellet guns; brass knuckles; fireworks; lighters, tear gas, mace, explosives, pepper spray; bats, clubs, sticks (other than for athletics), or other instruments of a bludgeoning type; Chinese stars; razors; projectiles and the like.

Possession of a Firearm, Dangerous Weapon, or Hazardous Object on School Property or at School Functions

Students are prohibited from possessing firearms (including a handgun, rifle, shotgun, or other weapon which will or can be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or electrical charge), dangerous weapons (as defined by O.C.G.A. § 16-11-121), or hazardous objects (as defined by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751), while on school property or at school functions. A student shall be excluded from school for one calendar year for possessing on school grounds or at a school function a firearm or a dangerous weapon (as defined by O.C.G.A. § 16-11-121), provided that all hearing officers, tribunals, panels, administrators, the Superintendent, and the Gwinnett County Board of Education shall have the discretion to impose a lesser or more harsh, appropriate consequence on a case-by-case basis for any such offense. Any student possessing a hazardous object (as defined by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751), while on school property or at school functions, shall receive disciplinary consequences in the discretion of the hearing officer, tribunal, panel, administrator, the Superintendent, or the Gwinnett County Board of Education, and consistent with the Gwinnett County Board of Education’s policies and procedures. See O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751; § 20-2-751.1.

Rule 7— Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Vaping

Section A

A student shall not be involved in any substance, drug, alcohol, tobacco, or vaping transaction, including, without limitation to buy, possess, sell, use, transmit, solicit; attempt to buy, possess, sell, use, or transmit; or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, depressant, or stimulant drug including without limitation caffeine pills, hallucinogenic drug, anabolic steroid, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, inhalant, alcoholic beverage, vaping product, or intoxicant of any kind. A student shall not possess, sell, buy, or transmit, or attempt to sell, buy, or transmit any substance under the pretense that it is, in fact, a prohibited substance as described in this rule. The misuse or unauthorized possession of a prescription drug or nonprescription drug shall be considered a violation of this rule; however, this rule shall not apply to proper possession and/or use of a drug as authorized by a medical prescription from a registered physician.

Self-administration of asthma medication and prescription auto-injectable epinephrine is permitted with written parental approval and required documentation to the principal or his or her designee. See administrator for completion of proper county form/procedures.

Section B

A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, buy or solicit any drug-related paraphernalia, any tobacco-related paraphernalia, or any vaping-related paraphernalia, which includes, but is not limited to, pipes, water pipes, clips, rolling papers, electronic smoking devices, or any other items related to drug use, tobacco use, vaping, or depicting drugs, drug use, tobacco use, vaping, or tobacco use except where such items are related to approved curriculum.

Section C

A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, buy, or solicit tobacco or nicotine products.

Rule 8— Disregard of Directions or Commands

A student shall not fail to comply with reasonable directions or commands of teachers, student teachers, substitute teachers, teacher aides, administrators, school bus drivers, or other authorized school personnel.

Rule 9— Sexual Misconduct/Indecency

A student shall not engage in any act of sexual harassment of a physical nature or verbal nature. A student shall not perform any act of indecent exposure, lewd exposure, gesture or lewd caress or indecent fondling/touching of the student's own body or the body of another person, or any act of sexual intercourse. A student shall not use any inappropriate gestures that mimic or imply sexual acts or engage in any acts of "streaking" or "mooning" as those terms are commonly understood. Such acts will not be regarded lightly or considered pranks.

A student shall not possess, view, copy, sell, buy, or transmit printed or non-printed pornographic materials including any non-curricular sexually explicit printed or non-printed materials; or a student shall not possess, view, copy, sell, buy, or transmit printed or non-printed pornographic materials including but not limited to non-curricular materials depicting the human male or female genitals or buttocks with less than a fully opaque covering or any portion of the female breast with less than a fully opaque covering.

Rule 10— Unexcused Absences

A student shall not be absent from school or from any class or other required school function during required school hours except for illness or other providential cause, except with written permission of the teacher, principal, or other duly authorized school official. A student may not leave school grounds prior to the end of the school day, after his or her initial arrival on campus, without the permission of a duly authorized school official.

Rule 11— Other Conduct Which is Subversive to Good Order

A student shall not perform any other act which is subversive to good order and discipline in the schools. This includes, but is not limited to, violation of local school rules, violation of state and federal law, involvement in criminal gang-related behavior and/or criminal gang conduct as defined and prohibited by O.C.G.A. § 16-15-3 and §16- 15-4, providing false information to school personnel, unauthorized possession or inappropriate use of laser pointers, and electronic communications devices (including CD Players, MP3 players, video games, and televisions), loitering or trespassing, providing false information to or about school personnel, or community misconduct that would be so serious as to pose a threat to the school community.

The Gwinnett County Board of Education permits students to possess electronic pagers or communication devices on a limited basis and provides local school principals with the authority to set forth rules pertaining to student possession and use of such devices at their individual schools.

Rule 12— Repeated Violations/Misbehavior/Chronic Disciplinary Problem Students

Students who chronically disrupt or repeatedly violate other school rules may be charged with repeated violations of school rules or misbehavior. This rule applies after remediation attempts, including the development and implementation of a student disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

The student and parent must be notified in advance that once the student has been placed on a Rule 12, all subsequent violations will lead to an escalation in consequences and may lead to an independent Rule 12 charge and a disciplinary hearing.

Rule 13— School Bus Infractions

No student shall cause or attempt to cause (either directly or indirectly) a disruption or interference with a school bus by any means. **Note:** All other GCPS rules still apply while on the bus or at the bus stop.

Safety is the first priority while transporting students to and from school. While on a bus, the bus driver/manager is the school official who has supervisory responsibility of students. Drivers must be able to concentrate on their driving at all times. A momentary distraction from their concentration can lead to a serious accident resulting in injury or death. The safety and well-being of each student depend on everyone following the standards of conduct outlined in this Code. That safety is why certain infractions have a different level of consequence or are singled out as a school bus infraction.

If a student is found to have engaged in bullying or other acts of physical violence such as physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus, a meeting with the student's parents or guardian and appropriate school officials will be required in order to develop a school bus behavior contract for the student. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.5)

Note: Any student who receives an assignment to the opportunity room for a bus infraction may forfeit his or her bus-riding privileges on the day(s) of suspension.

Student Misconduct: Range of Consequences

The decision to charge a student for violation of this Student Conduct Behavior Code shall be made by the administration of the local school. The range of consequences for misconduct that can be assigned by a local school administrator and staff may include the following:

Level I Discipline (Minor Consequences)

Level I discipline is used for minor acts of misconduct which interfere with the good order of school. Following appropriate teacher intervention, students may be referred to an administrator. Consequences range from an administrative conference to three (3) days of out-of-school suspension.

Level II Discipline (Major Consequences)

Level II discipline is used for intermediate acts of misconduct which interfere with the good order of school. Students should be referred to an administrator. Consequences will involve any combination of opportunity room assignment or out-of-school suspensions ranging from four (4) to nine (9) days.

Level III Discipline (Severe Consequences)

Level III discipline is used for serious acts of misconduct. Stu-

dents should be referred to an administrator. The consequence for these acts of misconduct is up to a 10-day, out-of-school suspension pending a disciplinary hearing for long-term suspension, placement in an alternative program, or permanent expulsion.

Alternative Disciplinary Consequences

A student subject to a long-term suspension may be provided with the opportunity to reduce the period of suspension by completing alternative disciplinary consequences. The decision to allow a student the opportunity to reduce the period of suspension shall be at the discretion of the hearing officer determining the consequence imposed as a result of the student's misconduct. The student shall have the option to complete the alternative disciplinary consequences or to serve the full term of his or her suspension. The following alternative disciplinary consequences are authorized: (1) perform community service; (2) pay restitution; or (3) successfully complete GIVE's Early Return Agreement/Contract.

Note: See your local school principal or go online (www.gcpsk12.org) for a detailed version of the Student Conduct Behavior Code as well as more on levels of consequences for rule violations.

Student Disciplinary Hearings

A student disciplinary hearing heard by a disciplinary hearing officer(s) has been established by the Gwinnett County Board of Education (BOE) to handle all acts of misconduct of students enrolled in the school system that may warrant long-term suspension or expulsion. Disciplinary hearing procedures are governed by the State of Georgia Public School Disciplinary Tribunal Act. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-750)

Composition of Hearings

- A hearing officer will listen to disciplinary hearings involving two or fewer students. For hearings involving more than two students, the hearing officer may hear the case with one or more assisting hearing officers. The Director of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions, or designee, shall determine whether to appoint an assisting hearing officer to any disciplinary hearing.
- Hearing officers are county administrators trained in conducting disciplinary hearings.
- Hearing officers hear evidence concerning charges of misconduct that have been brought against students which, if proven, may require greater than ten (10) school days and up to one (1) calendar year suspension with a recommendation of permanent expulsion.
- When two or more students are charged with violating school rules arising from a single incident or essentially the same set of facts, a single hearing may be conducted to address the rule violations for all the students involved so long as a single hearing is not likely to result in confusion for the hearing officer(s) or substantially prejudice one student.

Hearing Proceedings

All hearings are recorded electronically. Hearings before a student disciplinary hearing officer(s) are confidential and are not open to the public. Staff and student witnesses to a particular case may be requested and/or subpoenaed by the school system to testify on its behalf at the hearing. Subpoenas for witnesses are obtained from the Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions. It is the responsibility of the student or parent/guardian to deliver subpoenas to the witnesses and arrange for their transportation to the hearing.

The evidence presented at a disciplinary hearing may be physical (drugs, weapons, discipline record, written statements, etc.), as well as testimony from witnesses. At the hearing, the student or parent/guardian has the right to be represented by an attorney, obtained at his/her own expense. If an attorney is going to represent the student, the Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions must receive notice at least one school day prior to the hearing to arrange for an attorney for the school system to be present. If parents require the services of an interpreter, they should request these services from the local school at least two full days prior to the discipline hearing.

How Decisions Are Made

The disciplinary hearing officer(s) will determine whether the student was or was not in violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Code and will determine the appropriate consequences. The hearing officer(s) may consider only the evidence the officer(s) regards to be relevant to the charges in question in making a determination of whether a rule has been violated. The hearing officer(s) are allowed to give the presented evidence whatever weight the hearing officer thinks is warranted.

The disciplinary hearing officer(s) will review the student's school records if he or she is found in violation of the Code. Both parties are given the opportunity to make a closing or summary statement. The hearing officer(s) convenes privately to decide the appropriate consequences. The hearing is concluded when the hearing officer(s) reads his or her decision. A letter and other information regarding the decision will be sent to the student or parent/guardian within five (5) working days after the hearing is held.

Appeals

The Board of Education may voluntarily review any decision of a student disciplinary hearing; however, reasonable notice of an intent to review shall be given to the pertinent student and parent or guardian. Additionally, the Board of Education for Gwinnett County shall consider appeals from student disciplinary hearing decisions. Pendency of appeal to the Board will not ordinarily prevent the commencement of the period of suspension or expulsion prescribed by the student disciplinary hearing officer(s).

The Superintendent, or designee, (along with the Executive Director of Academic Support) may review any student disciplinary hearing that is subject to review by the Board of Education pursuant to an appeal or a recommendation of permanent expulsion. In reviewing any student disciplinary hearing, the Superintendent's designee may recommend an amendment or reversal of a hearing officer's finding. This recommendation will be submitted to the Superintendent for consideration and/or action.

In addition, the Superintendent may, in his discretion, permit a student to return to school pending the outcome of an appeal; this would occur only where the Superintendent believes that there is a substantial likelihood that the student will ultimately prevail on his appeal.

No new evidence and no oral argument may be presented to the Board on appeal and all consideration on appeal will be based on the record of the proceedings at the hearing of the student disciplinary hearing and the written appellate arguments filed by the parties. Notice of appeal shall be in writing and filed in the Superintendent's Office in care of the Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions. Notice of appeal or legal arguments of the appellant must be received in the Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions no later than 20 calendar days from the date the decision is rendered. The Board may take any action it determines appropriate, and any decision of the Board shall be final.

Selected Board Policy Information

Search and Seizure (Policy JCAB)

- To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student lockers, or student automobiles under the circumstances outlined below and may seize any illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials discovered in the search.
- As used in this policy, the term “unauthorized” means any item dangerous to the health or safety of students or school personnel, or disruptive of any lawful function, mission, or process of the school, or any item described as unauthorized in school rules available beforehand to the student.
- A student’s failure to permit searches and seizures as provided in this policy will be considered grounds for disciplinary actions.
- All searches by school employees shall be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the student’s age and gender and the nature of the infraction.
- In the event the search of a student’s person, his/her personal possessions, vehicle, or locker reveals a violation of federal, state or local law, law enforcement authorities may be notified so that they may take appropriate action.

Interrogations

The principal of each school in Gwinnett County Public Schools, or his/her authorized representative, possesses the authority to conduct reasonable interrogations of students in order to investigate properly and impose appropriate administrative action for student misconduct.

Drug-Free Workplace (Policy GAMA)

The Board of Education provides a drug-free workplace and professes that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of tobacco and alcohol are wrong and harmful. Employees are prohibited from using or displaying drug, alcohol, and tobacco products in front of students while the employee is on duty during the normal school day or while on duty at any school- or system-sponsored function.

Selections from Georgia Code of Laws and GCPS Processes

Georgia Gun and Weapons Laws

O.C.G.A. § 16-11-127.1 provides that it is generally unlawful for any person to carry to or to possess or have under such person’s control while at a school safety zone, school function, or school bus or other transportation furnished by the school any weapon or explosive compound, other than fireworks the possession of which is regulated by Chapter 10 of Title 25. Any person who is not a licensed weapons holder who violates this subsection shall, upon conviction thereof, be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000, by imprisonment for not less than two nor more than 10 years, or both. Any licensed weapons holder who violates this subsection shall, upon conviction thereof, be guilty of a misdemeanor.

For the purposes of this Georgia Code section, the term “weapon” means and includes any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any dirk, Bowie knife,

switchblade knife, ballistic knife, and any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blades, spring stick, metal knucks, blackjack, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind and any stun gun or taser.

As noted on page 17 under Rule 6 of our district’s Student Conduct Behavior Code:

A student shall be excluded from school for one calendar year for possessing on school grounds or at a school function a firearm or a dangerous weapon (as defined by O.C.G.A. § 16-11-121), provided that all hearing officers, tribunals, panels, administrators, the superintendent, and the Gwinnett County Board of Education shall have the discretion to impose a lesser or more harsh, appropriate consequence on a case-by-case basis for any such offense. See O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751; § 20-2-751.1

Acts of Violence Against School Personnel

Any person who commits the offense of battery against a teacher or other school personnel, while engaged in the performance of official duties or while on school property shall, upon conviction thereof, be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years or a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both (O.C.G.A. § 16-5-23.1).

Chronic Discipline Problems

The law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-764 and § 20-2-765) allows teachers and principals to identify students as chronic disciplinary problem students. A chronic disciplinary problem student is a student who exhibits a pattern of behavioral characteristics which interfere with the learning process of students around him or her and which are likely to recur. Any time a teacher or principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the principal shall notify—by telephone call and by either Certified Mail or statutory overnight delivery with return receipt requested or First-Class Mail—the student’s parent or guardian of the disciplinary problem; invite such parent or guardian to observe the student in the classroom situation; and request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference with the principal or the teacher or both to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. A parent or guardian of a student found to have engaged in bullying or physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus must meet with local school officials for the purpose of forming a school bus behavioral correction plan. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-764; § 20-2-765 and § 20-2-751.5)

Definition of a Disciplinary Referral

For the purposes of determining standing for chronic discipline behaviors, a disciplinary referral shall mean any referral of a student that results in in-school suspension (ISS), assignment to the opportunity room (OR), or out-of-school suspension (OSS). ***Note:** For the purposes of Chronic Behavior/Rule 12, tardy referrals shall not count as a referral, regardless of consequence.

Definition of Chronic Misbehavior

The law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-764 and § 20-2-765) allows teachers and principals to identify students as chronic disciplinary problem students. A chronic disciplinary problem student is a student who

exhibits a pattern of behavioral characteristics which interfere with the learning process of students around him or her and which are likely to recur.

Summary of the 7-Step Plan

For any given school year, the following steps will be taken to address each disciplinary referral a student receives that involves (results in) a suspension (In-School Suspension, Opportunity Room, or Out-of-School Suspension):

- Referral #1: Parent is given written notification of violation and consequence.
- Referral #2: Parent is given written notification of violation and consequence.
- Referral #3: Parent is given written notification of violation and consequence; notified of consequences for next (4th) referral.
- Referral #4: Invite parent to help develop a Behavioral Correction Plan.
- Referral #5: Possible Rule 12 Notification Charge (principal's discretion).
- Referral #6: Possible Rule 12 Notification Charge (principal's discretion).
- Referral #7: Student *must* be placed on a Rule 12.

Additional information on the 7-step plan:

- The 7-step plan is a guideline and it can be modified in individual cases at the discretion of the Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions.
- Modifications to the 7-step plan may be used with students entering the district with lengthy discipline/criminal records. Schools may consult the Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions about an appropriate sequence of steps for these students.

Behavioral Correction Plan

After a student receives his or her fourth (4th) disciplinary referral during a given school year, the following steps should be taken:

- Notify the parents/guardians that the student has been identified as having a chronic behavior problem.
- With input from the parent, develop a Behavioral Correction Plan.
- Implement the interventions to provide support to the student.
- Monitor the plan and evaluate (formally or informally) the interventions. (Consider assigning a staff member to monitor/mentor the student and his or her progress with the plan.)

School Clubs and Organizations

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-705, information regarding the names of clubs/organizations, mission/purpose of the clubs/organizations, names of faculty advisors, and descriptions of planned activities may be found on the school website. This information also may be obtained, if requested, from the local school. Parents and guardians should review this information and inform the school if he or she declines permission for his or her student to participate in a club or organization, using the form available in the back of this handbook.

Online Learning Options

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-319.1 through § 20-2-319.4, parents should be aware of the following items relative to online learning:

- Districts will allow students to take an online course even if the course is offered in the local district.
- Online courses can be accessed through the Georgia Virtual School, local virtual schools, or vendor online schools.
- If the online course is taken in lieu of any of the regular six periods, then the school will pay for the course. If an online course is chosen in addition to the regular school day, the student will be subject to the cost of tuition.
- O.C.G.A. § 20-2-319.3 mandates the creation of an online clearinghouse of online courses and their providers to give parents and students the ability to search the clearinghouse for availability of online courses and providers. Guidelines for what constitutes high-quality online courses also are included.

Accessing Georgia's Online Clearinghouse

The Georgia Online Clearinghouse provides students and parents with information and access to high-quality academic and career-oriented courses, aligned to state and national standards, through a variety of online providers. To access the information found in the clearinghouse, go to: http://www.gadoe.org/_layouts/GA-DOEPublic.SPApp/Clearinghouse.aspx

Step 1: Type in the course you need (for example, Elementary Art).

Step 2: Type in your zip code. You will then see a list of the online providers in Georgia who have the course you selected. The names of program providers have been linked for users to access their site for registration information.

Step 3: Utilize the provider's site to register the student in the selected online course.

Step 4: Once you have selected an option for your course, contact your local GCPS school counselor for assistance.

School Bus Safety Guidelines and Procedures

Student Behavior Management Plan

GCPS provides bus safety education for students on how to keep themselves safe in and around the school bus. The Student Behavior Management Plan is a three-part program that helps the bus driver achieve appropriate student behavior on the school bus. The following information outlines the plan's three components— prevention, intervention, and consequences.

Prevention

Prevention steps are used by the bus driver to educate the student about safe and appropriate riding behaviors, to clarify the bus driver's expectations for the students, and to assist students in successfully demonstrating safe riding habits every day. The bus driver will communicate and reinforce those expectations which are based on the School Bus Safety Guidelines. These guidelines are posted on all school buses.

Assigned seating provides structure and a consistent routine while aiding in student behavior. All students are assigned seats at the beginning of the school year.

Age-appropriate school bus safety education programs are included in the Health and Physical Education curriculum at the elementary and middle school levels. GCPS school bus drivers conduct simulated emergency evacuation drills with all grade levels on a monthly basis. Students in grades K–5 perform an actual emergency evacuation drill annually.

Intervention

Intervention steps are used by the bus driver to correct unsafe or inappropriate behaviors. The level of intervention will depend on the severity of the misconduct.

- Verbal reminder— The bus driver will remind the student of the rule(s) not being followed.
- Talk individually to the student— The bus driver will discuss the unsafe/inappropriate behavior with the student.
- Reassign bus seat— The student’s seat will be reassigned to allow the driver to better monitor the student.
- Communication with parent/guardian:
 - Courtesy call to parent/guardian— A phone call to the parent is made by the bus driver, making him or her aware of the unsafe or inappropriate conduct, or
 - Parent Notification Form— The bus driver sends written notification of the student’s inappropriate or unsafe behavior to the parent/guardian for signature.
- Bus Discipline Form— The bus driver completes and forwards to the school administrator a bus discipline form for any major offense.

Consequences

When prevention and intervention steps are unsuccessful in improving the student’s behavior, a bus discipline form is submitted by the bus driver to the school administrator. The administrator is then responsible for issuing appropriate consequences for the student. Serious offenses may lead to suspension from the bus or from school.

Safety Procedures

The following School Bus Safety Procedures are posted on all GCPS school buses:

- Students will follow directions of the bus driver.
- Students should be at the bus stop five minutes before the scheduled bus arrival time, waiting in a safe place, clear of traffic, and 12 feet from where the bus stops.
- Students will wait in an orderly line and avoid playing.
- Students will cross the roadway in front of the bus after the bus has stopped, they have looked at the bus driver for a hand signal, and they have looked in both directions for traffic— left, right, left.
- Students will signal the bus driver with a waving motion if something is dropped and wait for the bus driver to give a signal before picking up object.
- Students will go directly to assigned seat when entering the bus and keep the aisles and exits clear.
- Students will remain properly seated, back against the back of the seat, bottom against the bottom of the seat, and keep hands to themselves.
- Students will not eat, drink, chew gum, or bring tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or any controlled substances on the bus.
- Students will not carry animals, glass objects, nuisance items,

hazardous materials, or weapons onto the bus. Students may carry only objects that can be held in their laps.

- Students will refrain from using loud voices, profanity, and/or obscene gestures, and respect the rights and safety of others.
- Students will not extend head, arms, or objects out of the bus windows.
- Students will be totally silent at railroad crossings.
- Students will stay seated until time to get off the bus. The open door is the signal to get up from the bus seat.
- Students are expected to ride the bus to which they have been assigned and to get off at their assigned bus stop. Only in the event of an emergency, as determined by the principal or his/her representative, will a student be allowed to ride a different bus. Notification of this emergency must be sent to the school in a written note signed by the parent/guardian. The school administrator may provide a Bus Pass granting permission.
- Students will keep their bus clean and in good, safe condition.
- Students are allowed to “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD), but shall be prohibited from using such device during the operation of a school bus in a manner that interferes with the communication equipment or the bus driver’s operation of the school bus. The bus driver may allow wearing of headphones with an audio system on a case-by-case basis as long as it is in accordance with local school rules.
- Students shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver’s operation of the school bus.

Student Transportation Bus Tags

In order to improve student safety, the use of a Transportation Bus Tag is vital for all elementary students. Transportation Tags are to be visibly attached to student book bags where they should remain throughout the school year. Transportation Tags are utilized by the driver to verify that a student is riding the correct school bus and exiting at the correct stop. Students should be informed that the Transportation Tags are school property and should not be removed or destroyed.

Student Bus Stop Assignment

- Students are automatically assigned to the bus stop closest to their home address.
- Parents are responsible for their student’s safety while walking to and from the bus stop and while waiting at the bus stop.
- Bus stops are set in Gwinnett County to be used by elementary, middle, and high school students. A student’s bus stop may be changed for safety reasons that may include, but are not limited to, a sex offender moving into the area, construction, police/gang activity, etc.
- The locations of bus stops are determined by the Transportation Supervisor and the Routing Department. The safety of all students is the first consideration when determining bus stop locations.
- The school bus will travel streets or street segments that are at least 3/10 of a mile long and which provide a safe turnaround area for the bus. Doorside pick-ups and drop-offs will be provided to students who reside on high speed roadways (40+

mph) without sidewalks or a safe walking path. Students are not permitted to cross multi-lane roads.

- Schools will need to require verification of address from parents when a driver, team leader, and/or Transportation Supervisor suspects that a student has moved. For the student's safety, Transportation may return students to school when it is obvious that they no longer live at the address of record.
- Students are to be standing at the bus stop five minutes prior to the bus arrival time. Students are not to be waiting in the house or car. Running to the bus stop is a very dangerous practice and could result in injury.
- Requesting a change to the bus stop for personal preferences is not allowed.
- A Bus Pass may be issued by the school for emergency situations only.
- Drivers are expected to deliver students to their assigned bus stop unless they have an official Bus Pass stating otherwise.
- Alternate Address Forms are available for students who attend daycare five days a week. These forms can be found on the GCPS website on the "Transportation" page under "Forms and Information."

Parent Information Regarding Safe Schools

The school district is committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff, and visitors. It works closely with national, state, and local safety personnel— police, fire, emergency medical services, emergency management agencies, and public health— to ensure our schools are well prepared for an emergency.

School Resource Officers, or SROs, are police officers employed by the school system. These officers are housed at all Gwinnett high schools and middle schools and also at some elementary schools.

In addition to policing school campuses, these officers focus on educating students and staff on safety issues and working with school administrators on school safety plans.

Emergency Preparation in GCPS

As a parent, you can feel confident that when you send your children off to school that you are sending them to a safe, orderly place. Our schools are safe because our school communities work hard to ensure safety.

- Each year, school administrators review and make any necessary modifications to their school's Emergency Management Plans.
- Each school has key staff members with assigned roles and responsibilities to perform during an emergency.
- The school system's emergency response plan is modeled on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) that has been developed by the Department of Homeland Security.
- Every school conducts emergency drills throughout the school year so that students and staff are aware of the most effective and safe emergency responses.
- Parents are involved and visible on school campuses.
- Students take an active role by following rules and reporting those who do not.

The Board considers the appropriate, sensitive, and timely response by school staff to crisis situations to be of utmost importance. Emergencies may occur at schools at any time. It is the

objective of school personnel to respond in a way that will minimize the impact of the situation upon students and staff.

Safe Schools Plans/Required Drills Policy

Each local school is charged with implementing the Safe Schools Plans developed by the district and conducting training for staff to familiarize them with the school emergency plans. Each school has a Safe School Team which provides leadership in carrying out the plans. The team shall be composed of appropriate school personnel, such as principal, assistant principals, counselors, grade level chairs, department heads, coaches, and selected teachers.

Each local school shall develop, periodically update, and implement specific plans for that particular campus. The District Safe Schools Plan shall include, but is not limited to, guidelines for actions to deal with the following specific hazards: injuries and illnesses, fires, thunderstorms, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, winter storms, hazardous materials, earthquakes, utility failures, bomb threats, civil disturbances, terroristic acts, and nuclear emergencies. The plans also require drills, as appropriate, for emergencies arising from these hazards. It also shall include provisions for communicating information on emergency preparedness procedures to staff and students appropriate for their grade level.

Everyone has a Role

Ensuring school safety is everyone's responsibility— staff, students, parents, and the entire community. Please report any safety concerns you may have to your school principal. In addition, ask your local school about its safety plan.

One important role you can play in keeping schools safe is to tell someone about illegal behavior or concerns you may have. Gwinnett County Public Schools operates a School Safety Tip Line. Call or text 770-822-6513 to make a report. You do not have to give your name when providing information via this confidential tip line.

Frequently Asked Questions on Safety

As a parent, how can you prepare for a school emergency?

The number-one step that you can take to prepare for a school emergency is to provide accurate emergency contact information to your child's school and notify the school if your information changes.

What should I do during a school emergency?

During a crisis, your first response might be to pick up the phone to call the school. However, a high volume of calls may bog down the phone system. When a school emergency occurs, a parent can get important information and directions by doing one or all of the following:

- 1) Visit www.gcpsk12.org or your local school website.
- 2) If your school is affected, the district's notification system, **SchoolMessenger**, will send out a notice. Check your messages.
- 3) Monitor local television and radio for news alerts.
- 4) Tune into the school system's cable TV station.

During an emergency, you will want to get important information and directions from school officials before going to the school. You can be confident that accurate and timely information will be released to parents, the public, and the news media during any emergency incident.

What is a lockdown?

During a **hard lockdown** all school interior doors are locked and students are confined to their classrooms and no entry or exit of the school is allowed. This takes place if there is a threat or possible threat inside the school.

During a **soft lockdown** all exterior doors are locked. This takes place if the threat is outside of the school. In some cases, parents could be admitted into the school with proper identification.

How will I know if a school is in a hard lockdown?

The main entrance will be locked.

If the school is in a soft lockdown, what type of identification will I need to enter the school and/or pick up my child?

If it is deemed safe to allow others to enter the building, you or your designated emergency contact will need to show a proper form of identification, such as a driver's license or valid photo identification.

What does shelter-in-place mean?

Shelter-in-place means taking refuge in a small, interior room in the school, remaining there until it is safe to release students. This is a precaution to keep our students safe from hazardous materials that may have been released into the atmosphere. (This is not the same thing as going to a shelter in case of a storm.) This procedure is implemented if it is determined that evacuation or dismissal could possibly place students at risk.

Who determines whether or not a school should be evacuated?

In the event of an emergency at or near the school, school leaders follow the direction of law enforcement and emergency response agencies in determining whether or not to evacuate the facility.

If the school is evacuated, how will I be able to locate my child?

Each school has a procedure for helping parents to reunite with their child during a school emergency. Parents will be directed to a specific location where they will be required to show proper identification. Remember, a student can generally only be released to an adult who is documented as an emergency contact. If you are a noncustodial parent, you must be listed on your child's emergency contact information as a guardian and you will be required to show proper identification.

In regard to school emergencies, what should my child know?

Important rules for students during a school emergency are:

- 1) Follow the directions given by the teacher or principal.
- 2) Before using a cell phone, make sure it is safe to do so.
- 3) Do not leave the school campus unless instructed to do so. In an evacuation situation or if school is dismissed early, follow the directions provided by the principal.

Responsible Use of Technology and Electronic Media for Students

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) recognizes that the use of technology is prevalent in society. Students and staff have access to the Internet, cell phones, games, and a variety of personal technology devices. Students and staff utilize social media websites and applications as well as a variety of other digital resources that allow them to interact, share, create and innovate. Staff members utilize these same resources as a means to effectively engage students, motivate student learning, and collaborate with colleagues.

When using GCPS technology or network access, students are expected to follow the Student Conduct Behavior Code, including respecting others' privacy. Online student accounts to be used for legitimate educational purposes will be subject to monitoring and review, including review of text and attachments that are related to that student or students. At NO TIME should a student consider GCPS email, networked applications, or account or technology access private or confidential in any way.

While the school district does maintain Internet filters, there may be times when a student may accidentally or purposefully discover inappropriate materials online. Gwinnett County Public Schools DOES NOT CONDONE the use of such materials. Inappropriate use of any GCPS technology resource or network access is a violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Code. If a GCPS technology resource has been checked out to a student and taken home, it is the parent's responsibility to monitor the use of the device to ensure the student is following the Student Conduct Behavior Code and to ensure that the device is returned in the condition it was received.

Access is a privilege, not a right, and all students are expected to treat this learning tool with respect. GCPS technology, network access, and electronic resources must not be used to:

- Harm other people.
- Interfere with other people's work.
- Steal property.
- Gain unauthorized access to other people's files or programs.
- Gain unauthorized access to online resources, including obtaining or using someone else's password.
- Make changes to the hardware or software configuration of any machine, including installing or deleting any software.
- Improperly use the network, including introducing software viruses and/or bypassing local school or office security policies.
- Steal, alter, or damage data and/or computers and network equipment.
- Access, upload, download, and/or distribute pornographic, hate-oriented, profane, obscene, or sexually explicit material.

Failure to follow these guidelines can violate O.C.G.A. § 16-9-90, § 16-9-91, § 16-9-93, and § 16-9-93.1 as well as Title XVII of United States Public Law 106-554, known as the Children's Internet Protection Act. Such use can also lead to disciplinary actions, up to and including loss of access to GCPS technology resources and further disciplinary actions as defined by existing GCPS policies. Such disciplinary actions may include confiscation of technology being used inappropriately if an incident occurs.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

Gwinnett County Public Schools is a "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) district. This program is designed to support teaching and learning through safe, efficient, and monitored wireless access. If your child's school or class is participating in BYOD, then students are allowed to bring mobile devices with the expectation they will be used as a supplemental instructional resource. The BYOD access may be limited to certain schools, areas, and zones, based on the school's identification of instructional need.

To participate in the use of BYOD resources, all users must agree to use the school network when available, and not personal mobile data service providers, on their devices. Using the school network ensures a filtered, appropriate solution that is optimized for BYOD use. GCPS is not responsible for any damages, fees, lost functionality, support, or costs that may be the result of students or staff members participating in BYOD. This is a voluntary program, and students will not be penalized if they do not participate. Whether the device is owned by a parent, student, staff member, or school, the user of the device is responsible for protecting the device at school, on the bus, or at school functions.

Due to the requirement that students must change their passwords each school year, students must go into settings on their device and "forget" the GCPS wireless network at the end of each school year in order to successfully access the network the following school year.

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

COPPA applies to operators of commercial websites and online services and limits their ability to collect personal information from children under the age of 13. COPPA allows the school to act as the parent's agent and consent to the collection of a student's information on the parent's behalf within the educational context— where an operator collects personal information from students for the use and benefit of the school, and for no other commercial purpose. By signing the response form, parents grant consent for Gwinnett County Public Schools, and Gwinnett County Public Schools' employees, to act as the parent's agent in providing consent for the collection of student information within the educational context.

Supplemental Technology and Student Email

GCPS provides access to Google G Suite for Education and Microsoft Office 365 as supplemental resources to the district's adopted Learning Management System for local schools to use if they wish.

GCPS will allow the use and issue student email (Google Gmail and Microsoft Outlook) accounts to students for use internal to GCPS only. Students can access the email from any device via the Student Portal. However, for security purposes, students will only be able to send and receive emails to and from other Gwinnett County Public Schools users.

Partnership with Gwinnett County Public Library

Gwinnett County Public Schools provides the Gwinnett County Public Library with student information for the purpose of establishing a public library account for the student. This account provides access to resources and provided by the Gwinnett County Public Library System, including, but not limited to,

digital books and magazines, research databases, print materials, and homework help. The information provided is: Student first and last name, student ID number, address, date of birth, phone number, and parent email address. This information is shared solely for the purpose of establishing the library account which may be cancelled at any time by contacting any public library branch. By signing the Response Form acknowledging receipt of this Student/Parent Handbook, you consent to the foregoing. As the parent of a student, you may elect to withhold your consent for creation of a public library account.

Welcome To Our Tobacco-Free School

School district policy prohibits the use of tobacco products at all GCPS facilities/ campuses, by all students, staff, and visitors, 24 hours per day, seven days per week. This policy is inclusive of e-cigarettes and vaping.

Thank you for your cooperation!



School Safety

CONFIDENTIAL TIP LINE

Call or Text

770-822-6513

(You do not have to give your name.)

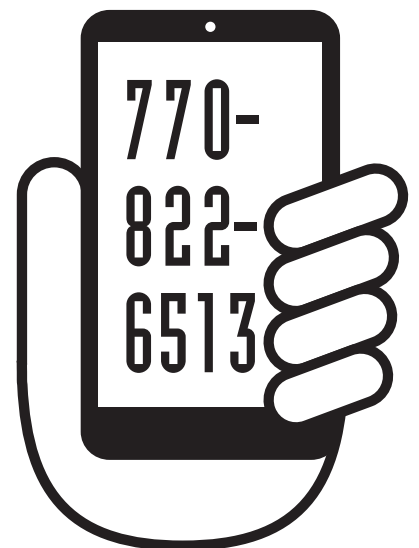
Help keep your school safe! If you think that someone is carrying a weapon, drugs, or alcohol on school property, or if you believe that you have been the target of violence or threat of violence, or have witnessed violent or threatening conduct by another person, please call or text the tip line.

Other Important Telephone Numbers for Reporting:

Violence/Threats/Crime— First, call Local School Principal, then call Safety and Security at 770-513-6715

Student Discipline— First, call Local School Principal, then call the Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions at 770-513-6607

Racial Discrimination/Sexual Harassment— First, call Local School Principal, then call Title IX Coordinator at 678-301-6811



Gwinnett County Public Schools + SchoolMessenger put you “in the know” wherever you go



SchoolMessenger is a rapid notification system used to contact families in Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) via telephone messages, text messages, and email messages. The district uses the system to communicate information related to districtwide events, including safety alerts and school closings due to inclement weather. Schools also may use the system to communicate general/non-emergency information related to school events and attendance messages via email.

1-844-248-6644

Emergency messages from Gwinnett County Public Schools and local schools will come from this number. **Please add this phone number to your contacts so you can easily identify the call as coming from Gwinnett County Public Schools.** If you miss a message, just call this toll-free number to retrieve and replay phone notifications.

Manage Your Messages

Parents and guardians have the ability to customize messaging preferences. They can do this by accessing SchoolMessenger through the Parent Portal or using the SchoolMessenger website or app.

Managing the communication you receive from your school and the district via SchoolMessenger is simple and convenient.

1. Go to go.schoolmessenger.com.
2. Log in to your account using the email address you provided to your child’s school. If it is your first visit, you will have to set up your account.
3. Click on the user name in the top right-hand corner of the page and select the “Preferences” option to set up or change notification preferences. The preferences on this page affect SchoolMessenger broadcasts that may be sent to you from the school and district. “Message Preferences” show all the types of messages that the school and district may send via SchoolMessenger. You can select how you wish to be contacted for each message type.

Want to receive emergency text notifications?

Good news! If you opted in to receive text notifications last year, there is no need for you to do anything this year... you are still in the system! If you are new to GCPS or have not subscribed to the text service yet, it is easy to do. Text the word “SUBSCRIBE” to the number 67587. You will receive a response by text. If you do not, please contact your wireless provider, as some providers do not accept texts that use short code (SMS) messages. NOTE: In order to opt in to receive emergency text messages from GCPS and the local school, the phone number must be associated with your student in our student information system.



Remember... you can opt out of these messages at any time by simply replying “Stop” to one of our messages.

If your contact information changes during the year, contact the school, or update your information via the Parent Portal.

Add 1-844-248-6644 to your Contacts list as Gwinnett County Public Schools.

Go to go.schoolmessenger.com to manage your messaging preferences.

If you have not already subscribed to get texts via SchoolMessenger, it’s easy to do.

If you do not want to receive messages from Gwinnett County Public Schools via SchoolMessenger, please manage your messaging preferences using the SchoolMessenger app or by accessing SchoolMessenger through the Parent Portal. In addition, at any time while listening to a message broadcast, you can press “5” on your phone to initiate the opt-out process.



Response Form

I have received a copy of Gwinnett County Public Schools' 2021–22 Student/Parent Handbook. The contents of the handbook (including information on attendance, discipline, extracurricular activities, responsible use of technology, and all Annual Notices to parents, including Parent Right to Know, FERPA, PPRA, and COPPA, as well as the district's use of SchoolMessenger to contact parents) have been reviewed with me by school officials. I understand my rights and responsibilities as a student enrolled in Gwinnett County Public Schools and consent to the terms of the Student/Parent Handbook.

Student Name

Name of School

Date

I acknowledge receipt of the Student/Parent Handbook for my student. I have reviewed the contents of the handbook with my student and consent to the terms of the Student/Parent Handbook (including information on attendance, discipline, extracurricular activities, responsible use of technology, and all Annual Notices to parents, including Parent Right to Know, FERPA, PPRA, and COPPA, as well as the district's use of SchoolMessenger to contact parents). In addition, I have reviewed on the school's website (or obtained and read a copy from a school) the listing of extracurricular activities available to my child.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Attendance Protocol Form

By September 1 of each school year or within 30 days of a student's enrollment in the school, the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of each student shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences and penalties. In addition, students age 10 or older by September 1 shall sign a statement indicating receipt of such written statement of possible consequences for non-compliance to the school system's policy. After two reasonable attempts by the school to secure such signature or signatures, the school shall be considered to be in compliance if it sends a copy of the statement via Certified Mail-return receipt requested or First-Class Mail to the parent, guardian, or other person who has charge or control of a child or children.

I understand the Compulsory Education Law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1) states that every parent, guardian, or other person who has control of any child between the ages of 6 and 16 must enroll and send their child to school. Failure to do so is punishable by a fine, community service, or a combination of the penalties.

I also understand that Gwinnett County Public Schools has an attendance protocol in place and that schools will inform parents and students of attendance expectations and the consequences for excessive unexcused absences, including notice to parents of their student's excessive absences. A pattern of absences could put a student at risk of not achieving grade level/course AKS. Under state law, a student with more than ten (10) unexcused absences is considered truant.

Student Signature

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Extracurricular Activities

I have reviewed the school's website and I am aware of the extracurricular activities available to my child. (If internet access is not available, parents should ask for a copy of this list from the school.) Of the activities/clubs listed on the website, I do not want my child to participate in the following:

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

This page was left blank intentionally.

Stay in touch with the GCPS Parent Portal!

Be in-the-know while you are on-the-go with the school district's Parent Portal!



We know that families want easy access and one go-to location for need-to-know information about their student's education— from records to resources. Just as important, you want an easy way to stay in touch with the school. The Parent Portal gives parents access to grades, assignments, and communication with teachers. With the Parent Portal, families have a direct line to the classroom, with 24/7 real-time information, anytime/anywhere access, and in-portal translation in multiple languages.

MYeCLASS for Students...



GCPS' Student Portal is MYeCLASS. The Student Portal is an online environment that gives students access to their online course pages; a selection of digital textbooks that correspond to the individual student's class schedule; additional resources, such as links to websites that support what students are learning; the online research library; a media catalog; databases of general reference materials; eBooks; and their grades.

Students log into MYeCLASS using their GCPS student number and the password they create at the beginning of the school year. MYeCLASS is available around the clock, from any device with an Internet connection. Find a link from the GCPS home page at www.gcpsk12.org.

Bring it



MYeCLASS
smartphone • tablet • laptop

Bring Your Own Device...

But what device should students bring? In GCPS, more and more instructional activities can be enhanced when students bring their own personal devices (cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) to class. As you consider the value of this experience and the opportunity for your child to use a personal device at school, here are some features to consider:

Features	Laptop	Chromebook	Tablet
Recommended for...	Any level, but preferred for middle or high school	Any level, but preferred for upper elementary, middle, or high	Best for elementary, especially lower grades
Screen Size	9" or higher	9" or higher	7" or higher
Memory/RAM	8GB or higher	4GB or higher	N/A
Storage	128GB minimum	16GB minimum (32GB optimal)	16GB minimum (32GB optimal)
Battery Life	7 hours or better	7 hours or better	7 hours or better
*Wireless	802.11 A/B/G/N or AC	802.11 A/B/G/N or AC	802.11 A/B/G/N or AC
Operating System	Windows 10 or higher Mac OS - BIG SUR or higher	Chrome OS 88 or higher	iOS 14 or higher Android 10.0 or higher

*Wireless: N or AC is preferred

STOCK #90815



Gwinnett County Public Schools

437 Old Peachtree Rd., NW

Suwanee, GA 30024-2978

(678) 301-6000

www.gcpsk12.org

July 2021