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 acknowledged, accepted, admired, and emulated 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:

- High academic standards for all;
- A comprehensive, challenging, and relevant curriculum;
- Effective, engaging instructional strategies;
- Accurate and meaningful assessments;
- High-performing and inspiring employees committed to professional development, training, and lifelong learning;
- A safe and secure learning environment;
- A culture of continuous quality improvement;
- Accountability for results;
- Productive community and parental partnerships;
- Information technology systems that advance teaching and learning;
- Innovative approaches to scheduling, staffing, and use of resources;
- Behavioral standards for all that are conducive to teaching and learning; and
- Commitment to meeting the needs of its internal and external communities while capitalizing on their diverse ideas and strengths.

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.
- Meet the continuing and changing demand for essential information through 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

Our core business is teaching and learning. And we will give it priority over all other functions of the school system.

All children can learn at or above grade level. It is our job to see that every Gwinnett student does so.

All children should reach their learning potential. And through our best efforts, and theirs, Gwinnett’s students will.

The school effect is important and has a profound impact on every child’s life. Gwinnett County Public Schools will have a positive impact on every child’s life.

A quality instructional program requires a rigorous curriculum, effective teaching, and ongoing assessment. We will settle for nothing less in every Gwinnett school and classroom.

All children should be taught in a safe and secure learning environment. We pledge to provide that for every Gwinnett student.

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.
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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 Leadership and Operational Support
Division of Teaching and Learning Support
Division of Business and Finance
Division of Facilities and Operations
Division of Human Resources
Division of Information Management
Dear Gwinnett County Families:

Welcome to the 2012–13 school year! To help your student be successful in this new year, it is important that you and your student be aware of important school system policies and procedures, as well as academic and behavioral expectations.

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 dedicated to providing a safe, orderly, productive learning environment for students. After all, two of the system’s seven strategic goals are to:

- Ensure a world-class education for all students by focusing on teaching and learning the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum; and to
- Ensure a safe, secure, and orderly environment for all.

This year’s Student/Parent Handbook provides a wealth of school system information that will help you throughout the year. 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—calendars, 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.)

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 in our schools.

We encourage every student and parent to review the contents of this handbook and to work with school staff to achieve our academic and safety goals so that all students may enjoy a quality and effective education.

Best wishes for a successful new year of teaching and learning in 2012–13!

Sincerely,

J. Alvin Wilbanks, CEO/Superintendent
Louise Radloff, 2012 Chairman
Gwinnett County Board of Education
2012–13 Student Calendar

**FIND OUT MORE...**

- Watch GCPS TV on the following cable stations, go online to stream live programs, or watch video on-demand (www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us/gcpstv/):
  - AT&T Listed under Local Government Charter Channel 22
  - Comcast Channel 24 or 26
- Sign up online for eNews (GCPS’ monthly e-mail newsletter), and for BeThere@GCPS for parent resources.
- Attend School Board meetings on the third Thursday of each month.

**LEGEND**

1. Student Holiday
2. Snow Make-up Day or Student Holiday
3. Early Release Days (Grades K–8)
4. HS Final Exams (Grades 9–12)

**Early release days** are held twice a year in elementary and middle schools to allow for parent-teacher conferences. School is dismissed 2½ hours early.

The calendar includes three snow make-up days. If school is cancelled for bad weather, students will make up days as follows:
- First day missed — Make up on Feb. 15;
- Second day missed — Make up on Feb. 18;
- Third day missed — Make up on March 29.

Unused snow make-up days will be student holidays.

If bad weather causes school to be cancelled or dismissed early, public announcements will be made on GCPS TV, on the school system’s website (www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us), on Twitter and Facebook, and via metro-Atlanta radio and television stations. Full-day cancellations usually are announced by 6 a.m.

See reverse side for more information.

**FOLLOW US ONLINE**

Keep up with school system news and current events online. Look for these symbols on the home page at www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us.

- Find Gwinnett County Public Schools on Facebook.
- Follow us on Twitter at GwinnettSchools.
- Subscribe to GCPS’ RSS news feeds on the school system’s website.

437 Old Peachtree Rd., NW, Suwanee, GA 30024-2978
678-301-6000
www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us

June 2012
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 Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) in the areas of mathematics (K–9), language arts (K–12), and literacy standards in science, social studies, and technical education for middle and high school students. State and local assessments measure student learning of the curriculum. The AKS for each grade level and subject area are available on the school system’s website (www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us). A brochure summarizing grade-level AKS (grades K–5) also is provided to parents at the beginning of the school year.

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). In addition, schools must meet goals set through the district’s IE2 Partnership Contract with the Georgia Department of Education. Each school is responsible for the development of a local school plan for improvement (LSPI). Using data, schools determine areas needing improvement during a five-year period. For each goal, a school will identify specific, measurable, annual objectives. Schools then will determine how to best achieve these goals, taking into account the flexibility granted and accountability expected under RBES and IE2. 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 five days of unexcused absences.

Compulsory Attendance—Attendance in a public school, private school, or home school program is required for children between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays. Every parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state having control or charge of any child between their sixth and sixteenth 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 upon the return 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 whose parent or guardian is in military service and who is being sent overseas for active duty or returning from active duty are allowed five excused absences per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such deployment or during leave.

9. Students will be counted present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.

10. 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.

11. 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 notice 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). If a student has five (5) unexcused absences, the school will make contact with the parent, guardian, or person having charge or control of the student to notify them of these absences and possible consequences.

After two reasonable attempts to contact the parent or guardian of the student's five (5) unexcused absences without response, the school will send a written notice via Certified Mail with return receipt requested or First-Class Mail.

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 interventions for unexcused absences, tardies, or excessive early checkouts may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 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 time line specified by the local school.

Students not subject to compulsory school attendance laws who are enrolled for the current school year who do not attend school for ten (10) consecutive days and the local school is not notified of the absence by parent/guardian are considered withdrawn. These students may be dropped from the school's rolls after attempting to notify the parent or 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.

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.

This does not have to be
Title I, Parental Involvement Policy

The Board recognizes that a child’s education is a responsibility shared by the school and family. To effectively educate students, the schools and parents must work as knowledgeable partners. Parent and family involvement is an ongoing process that assists parents and families to meet their basic obligation as their child’s first teacher and promotes clear, two-way communication between the home and school.

The Board and all Gwinnett County public schools shall abide by and support all rules and regulations pertaining to Title I, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public Law 107-110, and Georgia’s ESEA Flexibility Waiver approved Feb. 9, 2012. A written plan for Title I parental involvement that establishes programs and practices to enhance parental involvement and reflects the needs of students and families will be jointly developed by parents and school staff. The plan will be unique to each school and will include a home/school compact. The plan will support the development, implementation, and regular evaluation of the parental involvement program.

The Superintendent or his designee shall supervise the development and annual review of the Gwinnett County Public Schools Title I Parental Involvement Policy to be incorporated into the plan developed pursuant to 20 U.S.C.A. § 6312. The Title I Parental Involvement Policy shall be developed jointly with, approved by, and distributed to parents. The Title I Parental Involvement policy shall establish Gwinnett County Public Schools expectations for parental involvement and shall describe how GCPS will:

1. Involve parents in development of the plan required under 20 U.S.C.A. § 6312 and the process of school review and improvement;
2. Provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance;
3. Build the schools’ and parents’ capacity for strong parental involvement;
4. Coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under Title I with parental involvement strategies under other instructional pre K–12 programs;
5. Annually evaluate, with the involvement of parents, the content and effectiveness of the Title I Parental Involvement Policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under this part, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background), and use the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the Title I Parental Involvement Policy; and
6. Involve parents in the activities of the schools served under this part.

School Nutrition Program 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 $1.25 and a student lunch is $2. Free and reduced-price meals 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.gwinnett.k12.ga.us). 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.

Professional Qualifications of Teachers (NCLB)

In compliance with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) statute, parents are entitled to request information about the professional qualifications of their child’s teacher. The following information may be requested:

1) Certification;
2) College major/graduate certification or degree held by the teacher; and
3) Qualifications of the paraprofessional, if paraprofessional services are provided.

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.

Harassment Statement

It is the policy of the Gwinnett County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of gender, age, race, ethnic group, 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, gender, 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 immediate employment termination. Students violating this policy may be disciplined up to and including exclusion from school.
**Anti-Discrimination and Title IX Complaint Procedure**

Notice to Students, Parents, & Employees:

If you believe you or your child are being mistreated by a school employee on the basis of your race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, or disability, you have a complaint and a remedy. Please tell any school employee in whom you have confidence that you have a complaint about the manner in which you or your child are being treated and why. You also may contact the school system’s Equity Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator for assistance by writing or calling: Equity Compliance/Title IX Coordinator Division of Human Resources Gwinnett County Public Schools 437 Old Peachtree Road, NW Suwanee, GA 30024-2978 Phone: 678-301-6811

**Student Complaints and Grievances**

The Gwinnett County Board of Education is committed to providing an environment free of sexual harassment and all forms of harassment and discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, or disability. If a student believes he or she is being mistreated on account of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or disability, the student may utilize the three-step procedure outlined in Procedure PJCE which is summarized below.

**Step I:** If a student has a complaint of discrimination or unfair treatment, he or she should report concerns to the principal, the local school’s Title IX coordinator, teachers, counselors, or other school administrators. If a student is not satisfied that a complaint presented to a member of the school staff has been resolved satisfactorily, the student or his or her parent may request a meeting with the principal, following which, the principal will inform the parent in writing of his or her decision on the complaint.

**Step II:** If, after meeting with the school principal, the student is not satisfied with the principal’s decision, a written appeal may be submitted to the Area Leadership Team member for that school within 10 working days of the receipt of the principal’s decision. The appeal must give specific reasons for reconsideration, state precisely the reasons for dissatisfaction with the principal’s decision, and be limited to the matter under review.

**Step III:** For assistance with the student complaint or grievance process, you may contact the district Equity Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator, Division of Human Resources, Gwinnett County Public Schools, 437 Old Peachtree Road, NW, Suwanee, GA, 30024-2978, or you may call 678-301-6811.

*Retaliation on account of filing a complaint at any level is strictly prohibited.*

**Closings Due to Weather Conditions**

If bad weather causes school to be cancelled or dismissed early, public announcements will be made on GCPS TV, on the school system’s website (www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us), on Twitter and Facebook, and via metro-Atlanta radio and television stations. School closings are determined by the Superintendent, not by the local school. The basic premise is that school is open or will remain open unless it is specifically announced otherwise. Full-day cancellations usually are announced by 6 a.m.

Find Gwinnett County Public Schools on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter at GwinnettSchools

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**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.

**Persons Other Than Students Who Insult or Abuse School Personnel in the Presence of a Pupil May Be Ordered to Leave School Premises**

Any parent, guardian, or person other than a student at the public school in question who has been advised that minor children are present and who continues to upbraid, insult, or abuse any public school teacher, public school administrator, or public school bus driver in the presence and hearing of a pupil while on the premises of any public school or public school bus may be ordered by any of the above designated school personnel to leave the school premises or school bus, and upon failure to do so, such person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not to exceed $500 (O.C.G.A. 20-2-1182).

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a directive to any person, business or government agency that receives federal funds to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities. 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 (handicap) 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 678-301-7104.
Georgia Special Needs Scholarship
Senate Bill 10
Parents of a student who receives special education services may have the option to exercise public and private school choice. Under a state law passed by the Georgia State Legislature in 2007, parents of qualified students who receive special education services may request to transfer their child to another public or private school in Georgia. The Georgia State Legislature has established that children who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and have been enrolled for a full academic year in a Georgia public school and meet the other statutory requirements set out by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2114. The scholarship option does not apply to students who are currently in Pre-K or first-year kindergarten. The options available under the special needs scholarship include:
- private school,
- public school within the same school district, and
- public school in another school district.

A school district considering a request to transfer its school system from another school district has the authority to approve or deny a public school transfer request. A school district considering a transfer request can deny a request even if there is capacity and a program available that is aligned to the student’s IEP within its system. If a request is approved, the school district can charge parent(s)/guardian(s) for the costs of educating a student during the first school year of the transfer.

For more information regarding private school scholarships and application process, please visit the Georgia Department of Education website.

For additional information on public school transfers for special needs students, please contact GCPS’ Department of Special Education and Psychological Services at 678-301-7110 or 678-301-7107.

Child Find
Gwinnett County Schools has the responsibility to attempt to locate all children suspected of having disabilities, including children birth through age 3 (served by Babies Can’t Wait); preschool children ages 3–5 who are not already being served; children with disabilities who are enrolled in a private school in Gwinnett County; or who are being homeschooled; children enrolled in Gwinnett County Public Schools who are in need of services; homeless or migrant children with disabilities; and any other child believed by parents/guardians to have disabilities who resides in Gwinnett County. Upon locating such children, the county will evaluate, at no cost to the parent, a child suspected of having a disability and convene a meeting to include the parent to determine the child's eligibility for educational services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act and the Georgia Rules for Special Education. If you have a child, or know of a child, who is believed to have a disability and may be eligible for educational services under one of the Acts mentioned above, please contact the office of 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 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 is not required include the following:
  (A) to School Officials with a legitimate educational interest;
  (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 in advance of the compliance. In limited circumstances, an order or subpoena may require the District to disclose information without notifying the Parent.
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 extracurricular 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 to appropriate legitimate agencies identified by the District, including, but not limited to, PTA, colleges, and military recruiters. 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 school 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. These photographs and recordings often include depictions of students and/or parents engaged in school functions and activities. Any such photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings shall become the property of Gwinnett County Public Schools and may be used by Gwinnett County Public Schools or others with the consent of Gwinnett County Public Schools and/or its representatives. 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 you and/or your child’s photographs, audio recordings, and/or video recordings, the parent 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.

**Homeless Children and Youth**

The McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act ensures the educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. This law identified any student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night time 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. It further provides provisions for student records maintenance and transfer, school of origin transportation, and appropriate dispute resolutions for homeless students. In accordance with this law, Gwinnett County Public Schools affords homeless children and youth equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including comparable services, such as Title I support, special education, gifted, English Language Learners (ELL), vocational/technical, and public preschool education, as provided to other non-homeless students. Homeless children and youth 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 Office of Health and Social Services at 678-301-7270 for further information.

**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.gwinnett.k12.ga.us (click on the quick link for Board of Education) or 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 bus stop, on a school bus, at a school activity, function, or event;

c. When either the alleged perpetrator or the alleged victim is en route to and/or from school, or to or from a school activity, function or event;

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 while the student is participating in or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities such as field trips, conferences or athletic events, or is otherwise subject to the jurisdiction of school authorities;

f. Off school grounds when the misconduct is directed at a school student or employee and is related to the victim’s school affiliation, or when the off-campus conduct directly affects the safety and welfare of the school community or the orderly mission and function of the school; and

g. Off school grounds and when a student leaves without permission (AWOL) of a school official, or anytime Rule 10 would apply.

The rules of this Code do not apply to:

h. 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), gender, handicap, nationality, or citizenship. All decisions of GCPS will be administered without regard to any of the categories listed on this page.

**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 their individual schools.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

**Rights of Students**

Students shall have the right to:
1. Pursue a successful education in a safe environment without disruption;
2. Receive fair and equitable treatment without discrimination in every aspect of the educational system;
3. Be treated respectfully and as an individual; and
4. Be informed of their rights, responsibilities, and discipline policies.

**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 or 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 private school if he is expelled from GCPS;
3. Present to school officials any concern in a calm, reasoned manner;
4. Work with the school on academic, disciplinary, or other related 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/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; 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) disrupts the orderly operation of school. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4)

**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.

**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. Code § 16-13-32.4)
**Important Student Discipline Information**

The following is general information regarding discipline:

1. 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.

2. All dangerous weapons, instruments, or controlled substances confiscated by school authorities are to be turned in to Safety and Security.

3. 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 at any school event held away from the school.

4. Students are prohibited from engaging in gang/hate group or hazing related activities in school (Safe Schools Policy).

5. School administrators and/or their designated representatives possess the authority to conduct a reasonable search of students, their possessions, their lockers, and their 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. Students who are under suspension or expulsion through spring semester will not be allowed to participate in any school-sponsored activities.
10. 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.

11. 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).

12. 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)

13. 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.

14. 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.gwinnett.k12.ga.us) 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 withdraws 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 schools 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.

Rule 4B also applies 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, at 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; 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) 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.

**Section B**

A student shall not cause or attempt to cause physical injury or behavior 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; fire works; 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 Weapon on School Property or at School Functions**

A student shall be excluded from school for one year (exceptions limited on case-by-case basis) for possessing on school grounds or at a school function a firearm, including a starter gun, any weapon which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of such a weapon; any firearm muffler or silence; or any destructive device. See O.C.G.A. 20-2-750; 20-2-751.1

**Rule 7— Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco**

**Section A**

A student shall not be involved in any substance, drug, alcohol, or tobacco 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, or intoxicant of any kind. A student shall not possess, sell, buy, 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 which includes, but is not limited to pipes, water pipes, clips, rolling papers, or any other items related to drug use...
or depicting drugs or drug use except where such items are related to approved curriculum.

**Section C**

A student shall not possess, sell, use, transmit, buy or solicit tobacco products, or tobacco paraphernalia such as, but not limited to matches, lighters, pipes, rolling papers and the like.

**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 care 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 that day(s).

**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. **Note:** See your local principal or go online (www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us) for a detailed version of the Student Conduct Behavior Code as well as more on levels of consequences for rule violations.

**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. Students 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 short-term suspension or to 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 administrator, hearing officer, or panel 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; or (2) pay restitution.

Long-Term Suspension Re-entry Requirements

At the end of a student’s term of suspension, the student who fails to attend an alternative school program or is not given the option to attend an alternative school program or is terminated because of misconduct, will have a readmission review at the local school before the student may be enrolled.

The student must provide evidence of at least three (3) of the following and this information should be faxed to the Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions (770-513-6840).

- Completion of a course of study through correspondence or some other accredited educational program or home school;
- Thirty hours of volunteer service to a community or religious organization during the suspension period;
- Part-time employment during the term of suspension;
- An essay (minimum 300 words) written by the student reviewing the incident that brought the student before a disciplinary hearing, discussing what lessons have been learned, and explaining why he or she wants to return to school;
- Letters of references from at least three sources, other than a relative, attesting to the student’s good behavior and fitness to return to school;
- Documentation that the student has sought assistance from a community or private health organization concerning the student’s fitness to return to school; and/or
- Any other documentary evidence to indicate that the student has been in pursuit of learning, has not engaged in any criminal misconduct, has contributed to the good of the community in some way, or any other evidence that established that the student desires to complete his or her education and will obey the disciplinary rules of the Board of Education.

The Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions will inform local school officials when the student has satisfied the requirements and a readmission review can be held at the local school.

Student Disciplinary Hearings

A student disciplinary hearing heard by a disciplinary hearing officer or panel 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.
- 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 school 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 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 two full school days notice 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 it regards to be relevant to the charges in question in making its determination of whether a rule that warrants long-term suspension or expulsion procedures has been violated and any consequence imposed. The hearing officer(s) are allowed to give the presented evidence whatever weight they think 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 Gwinnett County Board of Education 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 panels. The Superintendent may, however, 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 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 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 at 723 Hi-Hope Rd., Lawrenceville, GA 30043. Notice of appeal or legal arguments of the appellant must be received in the Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions no later than twenty (20) calendar days following the decision of the student disciplinary hearing. The Board may take any action it determines appropriate, and any decision of the Board shall be final, subject to an appeal to the State Board of Education.

**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**

It shall be unlawful for any person to carry to or to possess or have under such person’s control while at a school building, school function, or school property or on a 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 violates this subsection shall, upon conviction thereof, be punished by a fine of not more than $5,000, by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years, or both.

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 knuckes, 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 chakka, 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.

As noted on page 15 under Rule 6 of our district’s Student Conduct Behavior code:

> A student shall be excluded from school for one year (exceptions limited on case-by-case basis) for possessing on school grounds or at a school function a firearm, including a starter gun, any weapon which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of such a weapon; any firearm muffler or silence; or any destructive device. See O.C.G.A. 20-2-750; 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 (Georgia Code § 16-5-23.1).

**Chronic Discipline Problems**

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 threatening, bullying, or any other inappropriate conduct on a school bus must meet with local school officials for the purpose of forming a school bus behavior contract. (Legal Reference: 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 school districts to identify students who have chronic behavior problems. In GCPS, a student with a chronic behavior problem is defined as one who receives four (4) or more disciplinary referrals during any school year.

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: Notify parent 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.
• Students who were on a Rule 12 Notification for the 2011–12 school year may be placed on a Behavioral Correction Plan at the beginning of the 2012–13 school year and may be placed on a Rule 12 Notification after two (2) referrals.

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 OCGA 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 may also 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.

School Bus Safety Guidelines and Safety 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 manager achieve appropriate student behavior on the school bus. The following information outlines the plan’s three components—prevention, intervention, and consequences. (Please note that bus drivers are referenced as bus “managers” since they are performing duties of managing students.)

Prevention
Prevention steps are used by the bus manager 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 also are posted on all school buses.

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/manager to correct unsafe or inappropriate behaviors.
• 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 minor 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 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 10 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 driver for a hand signal, and they have looked in both directions for traffic—left, right, left.
- Students will signal the driver with a waving motion if something is dropped and wait for the 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 to include musical instruments.
- 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 must provide a written note, signed by a parent/guardian and a local school official who will provide a bus pass giving permission to ride a different bus or to get on or off at a different bus stop location. A bus pass will be issued only in the event of an emergency, as determined by a local school official.
- Students will keep their bus clean and in good, safe condition.
- Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus, including, but not limited to, cell phones; pagers; radios; tape, CD, or MP3 players; or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver’s operation of the school bus. The bus driver may allow the 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.

**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 some middle 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.

In addition, GCPS works with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) to update its district and school emergency operations plans. These plans, which are approved by GEMA, are the guides to help staff and our public-safety partners respond swiftly should a crisis occur in our schools.

**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 it.

- 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 responsibility 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 Drug/Alcohol/Violence Tip Line. Call 770-822-6513 to make a report. You do not have to give your name when calling 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.gwinnett.k12.ga.us or your local school website.
2) If your school has an e-mail service and you have subscribed, check your e-mail.
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 and a sign will be posted on the front door indicating that the school is in a lockdown.

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 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 being 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.

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.

Thank you for your cooperation!
Responsible Use of 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 e-mail, 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 GCPS technology or network access is a violation of the Student Conduct Behavior Code.

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 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 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 the Official Code of Georgia, O.C.G.A., Codes 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.

DRUGS, WEAPONS, ALCOHOL, & VIOLENCE Confidential TIP LINE
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 the tip line.

Other Important Telephone Numbers for Reporting:

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

Student Discipline—
First, call Local School Principal, then call Student Discipline and Behavioral Intervention at 770-513-6607

Racial Discrimination/Sexual Harassment—
First, call Local School Principal, then call Title IX Director at 678-301-6050
Response Form

I have received a copy of Gwinnett County Public Schools’ 2012–13 Student/Parent Handbook. The contents of the handbook (including information on attendance, discipline, extracurricular activities, responsible use of technology, and rights under FERPA) have been reviewed with me by school officials. I understand my rights and responsibilities as a student enrolled in Gwinnett County Public Schools.

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. In addition, I have reviewed on the school’s web site (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 five (5) unexcused absences is considered truant.

Signature of Student 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
GCPS’ Parent Portal: The go-to source for Gwinnett parents

In today’s information age, a wide variety of information is available at your fingertips. GCPS’ go2 Parent Portal serves as a valuable resource for information about your child and his or her academic career, all on a secure connection. Imagine being able to access key school information, safely and securely, anytime from anyplace... all you need is a computer with Internet access and a user ID and password.

What information can you access about your student through the go2 Portal?

Access an overview of your child’s grades, attendance, and program information on the Student Profile page.
Get current grades for all the classes in your child’s schedule, all on one page.
Find achievement (as scores, percentages, and letter grade) on projects, tests, homework, and quizzes for each course, including missing work.
Review your child’s results for all standardized tests administered by GCPS, along with links for more information about the tests.
You also can check your student’s lunch account, find out about books checked out to your student, and e-mail your child’s teacher.

As a part of the eCLASS initiative, GCPS students will be able to log on to a new student portal to access a selection of digital textbooks and resources, the online research library, a media catalog, databases of general reference materials, ebooks, and much more. For most resources, students will experience a single sign-on, meaning once they enter MYeCLASS they can access materials without entering multiple passwords. Look for additional information from your school... as we connect your class to MYeCLASS.

Find the MYeCLASS link on the GCPS home page at www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us.