

# **Code of Student Conduct**

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**Tranisha Galloway**  
**Executive Director**



# **THE GACS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Alma Venisee, President  
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*Galloway Academy Charter Schools* is an equal opportunity institution for education and employment. It is the policy of the GACS Board of Directors that each student regardless of race, color, creed or religion, sex, marital status, national origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation has the right to an opportunity for an education.

## PARENT AND STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This CODE has been written so students and family members know what behavior is expected and prohibited at school or at school activities. It is helpful if parents are aware of school rules so they can help support them from home. Failure to return this acknowledgement will not relieve a student or the parent(s) from the responsibility for knowledge of the contents of the *Code of Student Conduct*.

I have read:

- the Code of Student Conduct Highlights (on pages vii, through x)
- Compulsory Attendance (page xi)
- the Annual Notice About Your Rights Concerning Student Records including releasing information to military recruiters and institutes of higher education (page xii)

I will review the *Code of Student Conduct* and discuss with my child my expectations with his/her compliance with the identified policies.

Additionally, it is acceptable to display my child's good work.

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Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

---

(PRINT) Parent/Guardian Name

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(PRINT) Student's Name and Grade

**PLEASE DETACH AND HAVE YOUR CHILD  
RETURN THIS PAGE TO SCHOOL  
AFTER SIGNING THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**



*Galloway Academy Charter Schools*  
**Code of Student Conduct Changes**

**Table of Contents**

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY .....	viii
NOTIFICATION OF RESPONSIBILITY.....	viii
PARENT COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS .....	ix
COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW.....	xii
ANNUAL NOTICE ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS CONCERNING STUDENT RECORDS .....	xiii
5500 INTRODUCTION .....	1
5501 PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES.....	2
5502 STUDENT RIGHTS .....	3
In General.....	3
5503 First Amendment Freedom of Expression .....	3
5504 Searches and Seizures .....	3
5505 INVESTIGATIONS AT SCHOOL .....	4
CRIMINAL.....	4
ADMINISTRATIVE .....	4
VICTIM OR WITNESS.....	4
REMOVAL OF STUDENT FROM SCHOOL PROPERTY.....	4
5506 STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES .....	5
DRESS CODE.....	5
STUDENT ATTENDANCE .....	6
5507 RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS TO ATTEND SCHOOL.....	9
5508 RESPONSIBILITY OF GACS REGARDING STUDENT ATTENDANCE .....	9
PATTERNS OF NON-ATTENDANCE.....	9
5509 DISCIPLINE.....	10
IN GENERAL .....	10
SPECIFIC ACTS.....	10
5510 MISCONDUCT THAT REQUIRES SPECIFIC CONSEQUENCES .....	11
In General.....	11
Tobacco and Nicotine .....	12
A. Illegal Use of Tobacco .....	12
B. Violation of Code of Student Conduct.....	12
ILLEGAL DRUGS, ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, HARMFUL, AND OTHER SUBSTANCES .....	12

A.	GACS Students .....	12
B.	Policy .....	13
C.	Purchase, Sale and Distribution .....	13
D.	Definition of Illegal Drugs .....	13
E.	Guilty of Unlawful Sale or Possession .....	13
F.	Fake Drugs .....	13
5511	WAIVER OF THE DISCIPLINE OR EXPULSION .....	13
5512	BOMBS AND BOMB THREATS .....	14
5513	CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL ATTACK OR THREATS .....	14
5514	GUNS, WEAPONS, AND DANGEROUS OBJECTS GUNS: .....	14
5515	VIOLENT ACTS RESULTING IN SERIOUS INJURY .....	15
5516	CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES .....	15
	IN GENERAL .....	15
	THINGS A STUDENT CANNOT BRING ON A BUS: .....	17
	RULES WHILE ON THE BUS .....	17
	DISCIPLINE IF A STUDENT DOES NOT FOLLOW THE RULES .....	17
5517	DISCIPLINARY ACTION .....	19
	DETENTION .....	19
	IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION .....	19
	REMOVAL FROM CLASS .....	19
	PARENT SHADOWS STUDENT .....	19
	OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION .....	19
	EXPULSION .....	20
5518	GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES (HOW CAN A STUDENT SOLVE PROBLEMS OTHER THAN SUSPENSIONS OR EXPULSIONS) .....	20
5519	POLICY AGAINST BULLYING AND HARASSMENT .....	20
	STATEMENT PROHIBITING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT .....	20
	DEFINITIONS .....	20
	A. Bullying .....	20
	B. Harassment .....	21
	C. Bullying" and "Harassment" also encompasses: .....	21
	D. Cyberbullying .....	21
	E. Cyberstalking .....	21
	DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE OF BEHAVIOR EXPECTED FROM EACH STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE .....	22
	CONSEQUENCES FOR A STUDENT OR EMPLOYEE WHO COMMITS AN ACT OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT .....	23
	CONSEQUENCES FOR A STUDENT OR EMPLOYEE WHO IS FOUND TO HAVE WRONGFULLY AND INTENTIONALLY ACCUSED ANOTHER OF AN ACT OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT .....	23

REPORTING AN ACT OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR ANONYMOUS REPORTING.....	23
INVESTIGATION OF WHETHER A REPORTED ACT OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT IS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF GACS SCHOOL SYSTEM AND, IF NOT, REFERRAL OF SUCH AN ACT TO THE APPROPRIATE JURISDICTION .....	24
PROMPT INVESTIGATION OF A REPORT OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT AND THE PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INVESTIGATION.....	24
DETERMINATION OF DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS OR CONSEQUENCES AND DUE PROCESSES FOR A PERSON WHO COMMITS AN ACT OF BULLYING UNDER THIS POLICY .....	25
REFERRAL OF VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT FOR COUNSELING .....	26
TRAINING .....	26
REGULARLY REPORTING TO A VICTIM’S PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS THE ACTIONS TAKEN TO PROTECT THE VICTIM .....	27
5520 CELLULAR TELEPHONES, ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES, AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.....	27
5521 COMMUNICATIONS WITH STUDENTS VIA ELECTRONIC MEDIA.....	27

# ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

State law requires that schools have a *zero tolerance* policy regarding substance abuse, guns, crime, and hazing.

Florida Statute 1006.13 mandates that "each school shall adopt a policy of **zero tolerance** for crime and substance abuse..." That law further requires that expulsion be recommended for any student at school or at a school function with a firearm or weapon, as defined in Chapter 790 or any student making a threat or false report as defined by state statute 790.162 and 790.163. In fulfilling this statutory requirement, GACS has incorporated the specified legal definitions into the language of the Code.

In complying with law, the GACS Board of Directors defines **zero tolerance** to mean that certain kinds of misconduct will always lead to a disciplinary consequence. For certain misconduct, administrators have discretion as to discipline and penalties and for others the GACS Board of Directors has mandatory penalties

Florida Statute 1006.13 mandates that each school adopt a policy which prohibits "hazing" which is defined as: any action or situation that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student at a school with any of grades 6 through 12 for purposes including, but not limited to, initiation or admission into or affiliation with any organization operating under the sanction of a school with any of grades 6 through 12. Under the statute, the definition of "hazing" includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Pressuring, coercing, or forcing a student into:
  - 1. Violating state or federal law;
  - 2. Consuming any food, liquor, drug, or other substance; or
  - 3. Participating in physical activity that could adversely affect the health or safety of the student.
  
- (b) Any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, or exposure to the elements.

Hazing does not include customary athletic events or other similar contests or competitions or any activity or conduct that furthers a legal and legitimate objective.

Hazing is the type of conduct described in GACS Board of Directors Policy which may result in discipline including suspension, reassignment or expulsion.

All of these policies have been enacted to ensure that your child is safe and has every opportunity to benefit from instruction.

## **NOTIFICATION OF RESPONSIBILITY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE TRANSPORTED AT PUBLIC EXPENSE**

Pursuant to Florida State Board of Education Rule, GACS is hereby notifying parents and guardians that they are responsible to:

- 1. Ensure the safe travel of their students during the portions of each trip to and from school and home when the students are not under the custody and control of GACS, including



during each trip to and from home and the assigned bus stop when GACS provides bus transportation;

2. Ensure that students ride only in their assigned school buses and get off only at assigned bus stops, except when GACS has approved alternative buses or arrangements;

3. Ensure students are aware of and follow GACS's adopted Code of Student Conduct while the students are at school bus stops and to provide necessary supervision during times when the bus is not present; and

4. Ensure that, when the physical disability of the student renders the student unable to get on and off the bus without assistance, the parent or guardian provides the necessary assistance to help the student get on and off at the bus stop, as required by GACS policy or the student's individual educational plan.

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS**

*Galloway Academy Charter School (GACS), families and communities have a shared responsibility for every student's education. Through a collaborative approach, it is our expectation that effective and on-going communication will enhance family engagement, resulting in a direct impact on improving student achievement. We embrace family engagement by supporting parents and guardians who seek our help, welcoming parents who wish to help the school, and empowering the voice of parents who are potential transformers of our system.*

Critical attributes of effective, on-going, two-way communication include the following:

- Consistent focus of student achievement and well-being
- Courteous and respectful interactions between all stakeholders at all times
- Open minded exchange of ideas and information between student, family and staff related to achievement, organization, and/or behavior

Expectations for two-way communication

- Telephone and email communication will be used for extended discussion related to student performance and/or well-being.
  - All parents/guardians will provide the school with a current telephone contact number and/or email address.
  - GACS will provide parents/guardians with contact information for each teacher, counselor, and administrator, including their email address and telephone extension, if available.
  - School staff and parents/guardians will respond to phone messages and emails promptly.
- An effort will be made to conduct at least one conference annually for each student if warranted.
  - The preferred format is a student-led conference. When a parent is not able to attend the student-led conference, the parent will select an adult.
  - Other possible formats include a phone conference or the use of email.

Expectations for communication from the school

- Schools office staff will:
  - Greet visitors to the school in a positive and professional manner.

- Maintain a clean and tidy front office, demonstrating a focus on students and families
- Provide a high quality up-to-date website that includes:
  - School name, mascot, and logo
  - School mission statement
  - Office hours, bell schedule, dress code, attendance requirements
  - Telephone, fax, and email contact information ▪ Links for:
- Directions to the school
- School website address:
  - Counselor and administrator student assignments
  - Parent involvement opportunities (SAC, PTSA, PTO, Volunteering, etc.) and schedules for each
  - Calendar of events
- Teachers will:
  - Maintain up-to-date and accurate records of student grades and attendance.
  - Communicate with parents/guardians when their child is struggling, has shown improvement, or does something exceptional.

***GACS is committed to partnering with families to support student learning at home, school, and in the community. To that end, GACS has both expectations and opportunities for family engagement.***

- School staff will:
  - Foster positive relationships with parents to insure open communication when their child is struggling in school.
  - Make time for a parent when they want to come to the school for a conference.
  - Provide a calendar in August, to inform parents of School Advisory Council (SAC) meetings and PTO meetings for the year
- Parents/guardians will:
  - Create a home learning center, which is a dedicated space for their child to complete school work and read daily.
  - Insure their child reads for at least 30 minutes a day, even if it means that a family member or friend reads with them.
  - Ask their child open ended questions about the school day every day (suggestions below).
    - What did you learn about at school today?
    - What activities did you do at school today?
    - What did you read at school today and what about it interested you?
    - What did you do at school today that you enjoyed the most?
    - Was there anything at school today that you didn't enjoy, and if so, what was it and why?
  - Contact the GACS office if you need assistance related to your child.
  - Contact the teacher if your child is struggling in the classroom.
  - Monitor their child's completion of homework every night and monitor their child's grades and attendance by logging into Skyward at least weekly.
  - Limit their child's television and computer time to emphasize the importance of school work and health first.
- Students will:
  - Read for at least 30 minutes daily.

- Take pride in their work and give all school assignments and assessments their best effort.

## **COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW**

- A. All children who have attained the age of six years or who will have attained the age of six years by February 1 of any school year, or who are older than six years of age but who have not yet attained the age of 16 years, except as hereinafter provided, are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term. (F.S.§1003.21) (1) (a))
  
- B. Students under 16 years of age may not be withdrawn from school for any reason unless expelled through Board action or covered by an exemption allowed by Florida Statute (F.S. §1002.20 (2)(b))

# ANNUAL NOTICE ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS CONCERNING STUDENT RECORDS

Dear Parent and Student:

State and federal law gives parents (and students over 18 years of age) certain rights concerning the student's school records. These rights are listed below.

1. You have a right to look at your school records. To look at your records you should give the Head Master a written request listing the records that you want to see. The Head Master must allow you to see the records within 30 days from receiving your request.
2. You have a right to request changes in your school records if you believe the records are inaccurate, misleading, or that they violate your privacy rights. If you want to change your records you should tell the Head Master in writing what you want changed and why you think it ought to be changed. If the Head Master agrees with you, your records will be changed. If the Head Master disagrees with you, you may request a hearing.
3. Your consent is required before others may see your school records; however the law authorizes some people to see your records without your consent. One example is a school official with a legitimate educational interest in the record. A school official includes a person employed by the GACS Board of Directors as an administrator, attorney, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member; adult school volunteer; and a person or company with whom the GACS Board of Directors has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, school resource officer, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
4. You have a right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if you believe the school has violated any of your rights with respect to school records. If you have a complaint, send it in writing to:

Family Policy Compliance Office U.S.  
Department of Education 400 Maryland  
Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

Some of the information in your child's school records is not confidential and may be released without your consent. This information is known as "directory information."

If you do not want directory information released, you must tell the Head Master in writing what types of directory information you do not want released. That written notice to the Head Master must be received no later than September 15 of each year or within 30 days of receiving this annual notice. You may use the form on the next page to do this (Part 1).

Military recruiters and institutions of higher education are entitled under federal law to a list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of high school students unless you object to such release. If you notify your Head Master in writing at any time that you do not wish your child's name, address, and telephone number released without your written consent, we will honor that request.

Both parents have a right to see the school records of their child unless there is a certified copy of a court order on file at the school that specifically denies the right to access to school records.

Copies of school records are available for a minimal copying charge. If you have any questions about these rights, please contact the GACS office.



# CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

## 5500 INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of GACS is to ensure that each student achieves at the highest possible level. Education is to be provided in a manner that does not discriminate or cause harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, or social and family background. In order for this to be accomplished every school staff member will strive to create a positive, safe environment that encourages and supports student success. Underlying causes for misbehavior will be explored, and when possible, positive redirection will occur and acceptable alternative behaviors will be taught. Such redirection may involve a collaborative effort of parents, school, and community.

It is the objective and policy of the GACS Board of Directors to recognize, preserve, and protect the individual rights of all students; and, at the same time, to encourage and enforce the exercise of these rights within the framework of an orderly and efficient school program. Within this framework, it is the duty of the Board, the administrative staff, and the faculty of GACS to prevent and to prohibit student conduct that becomes dangerous, disruptive, or destructive, and therefore endangers the proper maintenance and function of the school program. It is expected that all disciplinary measures will be conducted in a manner that is respectful to the student and preserves that student's dignity wherever possible. Staff members model core value behaviors (Commitment to Children, Families, and the Community, Respectful and Caring Relationships, Cultural Competence, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, and Connectedness) that set an example for students who are expected to learn and practice those behaviors. It is the expectation that each student will behave in a manner that does not threaten, interfere with, or deprive other students of their right to an education and will accept responsibility for their behavior. An effective school environment must be safe and free from disruption.

In order to assist with the maintenance of such philosophy and to eliminate disparate rates of discipline, GACS will implement a School-Wide Behavior Plan (SWBP) that provides interventions matched to student need and describes consequences to be applied in an appropriate and consistent manner. The schools will monitor progress frequently and make data-driven decisions about the effectiveness of general and remedial interventions and early identification/intervention with behavioral problems. Changes will be made as necessary or appropriate. GACS will continue to provide relevant professional development consistent with these expectations.

The Board further recognizes that students are protected and have certain rights extended to citizens under the United States Constitution and its amendments; and that these rights cannot be abridged except in accordance with the due process of law. Therefore, in order to clarify the guidelines of student behavior at GACS and establish procedures to be followed, the Code of Student Conduct has been adopted by the Board. The Code shall be mandatory and applied in a manner that is consistent with this philosophy of discipline. GACS may adopt additional regulations governing actions not covered by the Code, but such additional regulations may neither substitute for nor negate any Code provisions unless approved through the Board waiver process. It is essential that all students, their parents, teachers, and administrators understand and abide by the Code of Student Conduct.

"Parent" or "Parents" is either or both parents of a student, any guardian of the student, any person in a parental relationship to a student, or any person exercising supervisory authority over a student in place of the parent.

## 5501 PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

School staff and parents must work together in order to maximize a student's success at school. GACS commits to working with and supporting families and GACS needs parents to work with and support GACS. Responsibilities of parents:

- A. Get to know the staff at GACS by going to teacher conferences and school activities like PTA meetings and the School Advisory Council (SAC) meetings.
- B. Promptly notify GACS of any change in your telephone numbers, including home phone, cell phone, work phone, emergency contact number, or home address.
- C. Understand and support the rules of this Code of Student Conduct and talk to their child about them.
- D. Teach their child to dress neatly and appropriately for school since it is a place to work and learn.
- E. Make sure their child arrives at school or at their designated bus stop on time every day.
- F. Will not leave their child at school more than thirty (30) minutes before the start of the school day or pick their child up more than thirty (30) minutes after the school day unless the parent has made special arrangements with a teacher, administrator, or a before/after school care program. Supervision will not be provided beyond that time. This also includes school activities outside the regular school day such as clubs, dances, carnivals, practices, and games.
- G. Contact the school within forty-eight (48) hours of their child's absence to provide a reason for the absence.
- H. Tell the school Head Master if there is a change in residence or custody of the student. The parent must tell the Head Master within five days of the change.
- I. Work with school staff members to solve any discipline or problems. The parent should let the school know if something has happened at home that could affect how their child does in school.
- J. Present a photo ID and sign in at the office before entering on campus while school is in.
- K. Identification must be shown to the office staff when someone takes an elementary or middle school student from school during the day. When parents are divorced or separated, both parents have full rights to participate in the child's school activities and know what is happening at school unless there is a court order limiting that access. If such an order exists then the Head Master must have a certified copy.

Absent prior permission from the parent, no student shall be permitted to leave school prior to dismissal at the request of or in the company of anyone other than an authorized school employee; a law enforcement officer; child protective investigator, or other official acting in the exercise of his/her lawful authority; or the parents of the student. Prior parental permission must be evidenced on the Student Release Form or on a separate written instrument signed by the parent.

In the event that the school receives conflicting direction from divorced or separated parents (including parents who were never married) concerning a student, the school may rely on the direction of the parent identified by the following criteria, which are listed in order of priority:

- the parent who is designated in a parenting plan or other Florida court order as having either educational decision-making authority or sole parental responsibility over the student;
  - if both parents are designated as educational decision-makers with shared parental responsibility, the parent who resides at the address specified in the parenting plan or other Florida court order as the address to be used for school assignment purposes;
  - if no such parenting plan or order exists or no such address is specified, the parent who resides
  - if the address on file with GACS is not valid or otherwise relevant, the school may rely upon the direction of the parent who enrolled the student.
- L. Give the school written permission if they want a stepparent who is not the legal guardian of the child to have information about the child or sign forms related to the child.



- M. Be prepared to pay for any damage done to GACS property by their child. If payment is not made and the amount is substantial, the Head Master will send the matter to the Executive Director.
- N. Pay for lost or damaged books or other teaching materials. Failure to pay may mean that no other books or materials will be given to their child or their child could be excluded from extra-curricular activities. The Head Master will make those decisions.
- O. Adhere to school developed, on-site traffic plans for vehicles when bringing students to school or picking them up after school.
- P. Due to the age of GACS students, parents should not expect nor give their child permission to walk home from school without adult supervision.

## **5502 STUDENT RIGHTS**

### **In General**

To GACS students, a student has a right to an education, regardless of his/her race, color, creed, religion, sex, marital status, heritage, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Some of a student's basic rights include the right to:

- A. learn
- B. disagree
- C. petition
- D. freedom of expression
- E. publish
- F. assembly
- G. privacy

A student's exercise of these rights must conform to the Code of Student Conduct. Things a student cannot do include:

- A. violate the rights of others;
- B. disrupt the classroom;
- C. disrupt the operation of the school;
- D. bring drugs, weapons, or contraband to school.

## **5503 First Amendment Freedom of Expression**

The United States Supreme Court ruled in 1969 that public school students do not leave their constitutional right to freedom of expression at the schoolhouse gate. A student has a right to freedom of expression; however, when a student exercises that right, the student must do so in a responsible manner that does not cause a disruption of the school or a school activity. The Head Master may impose reasonable time, place and manner restrictions on your exercise of First Amendment freedom of expression when there is evidence of imminent disruption of the school.

## **5504 Searches and Seizures**

A student's locker, purse, backpack, and other personal possessions can be searched if there is a reasonable suspicion that any of them contain drugs, weapons, contraband or other items not permitted on campus. Trained sniff-screening dogs are allowed in the schools to prevent drugs and weapons at school. The routine checks by the dogs are not considered a search by law. They are safety preventions to give students a safe and healthy school in which to learn.

## **5505 INVESTIGATIONS AT SCHOOL**

### **CRIMINAL**

Law enforcement may have the lawful authority to question and arrest students on school property. If a student is a suspect in a criminal investigation by the police that may result in a student's arrest or criminal charges, an administrator will make an effort to contact the student's parent before the police begin questioning the student unless law enforcement confirms that prior notification of a parent would jeopardize public safety. If a parent cannot be located, the police may go ahead with questioning. If the student's parent is contacted, the police may allow the student's parent to be present during the student's questioning.

A school representative will ordinarily, when reasonably available, be present, in the absence of a parent, during suspect interrogation of students on campus by outside law enforcement concerning a non-school related offense. The law enforcement officer, parent, or student may direct that the school representative not be present. The school representative shall not be expected or required to advocate on behalf of the student, and neither the representative nor the GACS Board of Directors is responsible for the manner or outcome of the interrogation. The parties recognize that police interrogation is a law enforcement function. Chapter 39, F.S., prescribes different procedures in the case of child protective investigations, which shall be followed whenever applicable.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE**

If a student is suspected of violating the Code of Student Conduct, school officials can question the student without first contacting the student's parent. The student does not have a right to have his/her parent present or a right to an attorney when the student is questioned.

### **VICTIM OR WITNESS**

If a student is a victim or a witness, the police or administrative investigators are allowed to question the student without first contacting his/her parent. If the investigation involves child abuse, the official conducting the investigation will decide who can be present during the student's interview.

### **REMOVAL OF STUDENT FROM SCHOOL PROPERTY**

If a student is a witness, the police cannot remove the student from school property without a subpoena or first obtaining the consent of the student's parent. If the student is subject to arrest, with or without a warrant, the officer can remove the student without his/her parents' consent or the consent of school officials. The administrator will try to notify the student's parent as soon as possible unless law enforcement confirms parent notification would jeopardize public safety.

If a student needs to be taken into protective custody, the police can remove the student. Anytime a student is taken from school by a police officer, the police officer must sign a Release Order, giving the original to the school, a copy to be filed with the Executive Director's office, and a

copy for the parents unless law enforcement confirms parent notification would jeopardize the student's safety.

## **5506 STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

To be successful and to help maintain an orderly learning environment, the student should:

- A. attend school each day;
- B. arrive on time;
- C. be prepared with proper materials and supplies;
- D. complete all assignments including homework to the best of his/her ability and on time;
- E. dress appropriately;
- F. be tolerant of and respectful to self and others;
- G. see teachers about makeup work and complete it in a timely manner;
- H. contact the Head Master or teacher regarding conflicts or concerns;
- I. set goals for success;
- J. get enough sleep;

A student must participate in school crisis plan activities and practices such as lock-down and fire drill. (Failure to meet these requirements may lead to disciplinary action.)

### **DRESS CODE**

The dress and grooming of GACS students shall be neat and clean, promoting a positive educational environment. Apparel that disrupts educational activities and processes of the school will result in the removal of the student from the regular school environment until acceptable apparel can be secured for the student. The administration will be the final judge about whether a student's clothing is appropriate for school or whether it will create an environmental climate that is distracting to learning. The Head Master, faculty, and staff members will enforce the dress code. Failure to comply with the dress code will be handled similarly to other disciplinary infractions. Non-compliance may result in consequences including but not limited to detention, in-school suspension and loss of eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

**GACS has implemented a school uniform policy. The colors are navy blue bottoms and navy blue or red tops.** All students are expected to follow the guidelines and wear uniforms as specified. The tops should include the school logo. GCAS has designated Wednesdays as "Student Dress-up Day". On this day the boys are required to wear navy blue pants, white shirt and red tie. The girls are required to wear a plaid skirt or jumper, white blouse and a red crossover tie. Items requiring the school logo may be purchased from the GACS approved vendor.

GACS may have additional dress and grooming requirements, if recommended by administrators, faculty, and staff, and if approved by a majority of School Advisory Council (SAC) members. Notice of amended requirements must be provided to all parents in a timely manner through at least one (1) written or verbal communication and published in a document, such as the school handbook.

Requirements for student dress are listed below:

1. **Slacks/Shorts for Boys:** All uniform slacks/shorts must be navy blue or khaki. Uniform shorts may not be shorter than a three inches above the knee.
2. **Shorts, Skirts, Jumpers, and Skorts for Girls:** All shorts, skirts, jumpers, and skorts must be navy blue, khaki or plaid and no shorter than three inches above the knee.
3. **Shirts:** All shirts must be tucked in and must have the GACS logo.
4. **Shoes:** It is recommended that students wear athletic/tennis shoes daily (with the exception of Wednesday). Shoes should be simple in color as to not draw attention to the feet. Color accents on the shoes are permitted; however they may not be neon/fluorescent. No shoes may contain characters, lights, wheels, or sounds. *Special Note: It is highly recommended that if your child does not know how to tie lace up shoes that you provide him/her with shoes that either have Velcro or buckles. No sandals or flip flops are allowed.*
5. **Hair:** Hair must be neat and clean with no unnatural colors. Students may not have hair hanging in their face that obstructs their eyes. Hairstyles disruptive to the learning environment will not be permitted. Ribbons or bows worn in the hair must be navy blue, red or white to match the school uniform, or a natural hair color. Hats and bandanas are not permitted unless there is a medical reason (please submit a physician's note to the school leadership office).
6. **Belts:** All uniforms slacks/shorts should be worn with a black belt. Kindergarten students are the only grade level that is not required to wear a belt.
7. **Socks:** All students must wear socks at all times. Girls are permitted to wear tights or leggings. Socks, tights or leggings should be black, navy blue, white or red to coordinate with the school uniform.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS AND PURPOSE:

The classroom experience is of unique value and cannot be duplicated by make-up work. The purpose of this attendance policy is to foster responsibility and reliability on the part of GACS students to attend school. Students will acknowledge greater emphasis on attendance at school because grades in their classes will be contingent upon their presence.

### DEFINITIONS

#### A. *Compulsory School Attendance*

1. All children who have attained the age of six years or who will have attained the age of six years by February 1 of any school year, or who are older than six years of age but who have not yet attained the age of 16 years, except as hereinafter provided, are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term. (F.S.§1003.21) (1) (a))
2. Students under 16 years of age may not be withdrawn from school for any reason unless expelled through Board action or covered by an exemption allowed by Florida Statute (F.S. §1002.20 (2)(b))

#### B. *Absences*

##### 1. ABSENCE DEFINED

To be counted present for the school day, a student must be in attendance for at least one half of the school day.

## 2. EXCUSED ABSENCES

Students must be in school unless the absence has been permitted or excused. (See Section E below)

## 3. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Any absence which does not meet the criteria of an excused absence is an unexcused absence. The following are examples of unexcused absences:

- a. out-of-school suspensions
- b. family vacations
- c. Students without a completed Certificate of Immunization indicating compliance with the current required schedule of immunizations will not be allowed to attend classes until this document is provided or a waiver is obtained. Absences due to non-compliance with immunization requirements shall be considered unexcused.

### C. *Tardies*

A student is tardy when the student is not in his or her assigned seat or station when the bell rings.

#### 1. EXCUSED TARDY

Tardy is excused only if the student is late for one of the reasons described in section E below.

#### 2. UNEXCUSED TARDY

Examples of unexcused tardies include:

- oversleeping
- missing the school bus
- shopping trips
- pleasure trips
- car problems (ex: flat tire, no gas, car won't start, student getting a parking decal)
- heavy traffic
- returned for forgotten items

Habitual tardiness is unacceptable and unfair to other students because instruction is interrupted every time a late student arrives. Every three (3) unexcused tardies within a grading period count as one unexcused absence

#### 3. EARLY SIGN OUT

Once students arrive on campus, they may not leave without permission from an administrator. Students who must leave school during school hours must have their parent request this release by phone or in person to the office in order to obtain pre-approval.

#### *D. Excused Early Sign-out*

The same criteria used to determine an excused absence and an excused tardy will be used to determine whether an early sign out is excused.

#### **AN UNEXCUSED EARLY SIGN OUT INCLUDES:**

The same criteria used to determine an unexcused absence and an unexcused tardy will be used to determine whether an early sign out is unexcused.

Numerous incidents of early release are unacceptable and unfair to the other students whose instruction is interrupted each time a student leaves early. Every three (3) unexcused early sign outs within a grading period will count as one unexcused absence.

#### *E. Reasons Why an Absence, a Tardy or an Early Sign-out Will be Excused*

An absence, a tardy or early sign out will be excused if caused by one of the following reasons:

1. The student is ill or injured.
2. There is a major illness in the student's immediate family (this means parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, or others living in the home).
3. There is a death in the immediate family.
4. The student attends religious instruction or there is a religious holiday in the student's own faith.
5. The student is required by summons, subpoena or court order to appear in court. A copy of the subpoena or court order must be given to the Head Master.
6. Special event. Examples of special events include important public functions, conferences, state/national competitions, as well as exceptional cases of family need. The student must get permission from the Head Master at least five days prior to the absence.
7. The student has a scheduled medical or dental appointment.
8. Students having, or suspected of having, a communicable disease or infestation which can be transmitted are to be excluded from school and are not allowed to return to school until they no longer present a health hazard (F.S. 1003.22). Examples of communicable diseases and infestations include, but are not limited to, fleas, head lice, ringworm, impetigo and scabies. Students are allowed a maximum of five excused days for each infestation of head lice. Students on field trips and students who attend alternative to suspension programs are not considered absent.

#### *F. Make-up Work*

1. **EXCUSED ABSENCES:** Make-up work for credit and grade is allowed for all excused absences. It is the student's responsibility to get the missed work. The number of days allowed to make up the work shall be the same as the number of days the student was absent.
2. **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES: (EXCEPT OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS):** Make-up work for credit and grade is allowed. It is the student's responsibility to get the missed work. The number of days allowed to make up the work shall be the same as the number of

days the student was absent. Work made up after an unexcused absence in elementary or middle school may be dropped a letter grade and must be dropped a letter grade in high school.

3. **SUSPENSIONS:** Make-up work for credit and grade is allowed. It is the student's responsibility to get the missed work. Work is due on the day of return from the suspension. Work made up after an unexcused absence in elementary or middle school may be dropped a letter grade and must be dropped a letter grade in high school.

## **5507 RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS TO ATTEND SCHOOL**

**Parents and students must do the following in connection with school attendance:**

- A. Ensure the attendance of a child of compulsory school attendance age, as required by law. (F.S. 1003.24)
- B. Notify school personnel of their child's absence prior to the end of the school day of the absence, if possible and provide written notification within 48 hours of the child's return to school. Otherwise, the absence will be unexcused.
- C. If requested, provide documentation of illness from a physician or public health unit within 48 hours. The maximum number of days that a student may be absent without acceptable documentation justifying the absence is 5.
- D. Notify the school of any change of address, phone numbers and emergency contact numbers.
- E. Notify school personnel if the family is moving out of town or out of the school's attendance boundary.
- F. Be aware of GACS calendar and coordinate trips, vacations and personal business to support attendance on school days.
- G. Notify the school and request a copy of the Hospital/Homebound referral packet if a student is expected to miss at least 15 consecutive school days due to illness, medical condition, or social/emotional reasons, or may miss excessive days intermittently throughout the school year for the same reasons.

## **5508 RESPONSIBILITY OF GACS REGARDING STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

### **PATTERNS OF NON-ATTENDANCE**

Non-attendance for instructional activities is established by tardiness, early-release, or absences from school.

- A. The Head Master must make the necessary provisions to ensure that all school attendance reports are accurate and timely and must provide the necessary training opportunities for staff to accurately report attendance (F.S.1003.23 (1)). Head Masters are required to maintain an attendance record which shows the absence or attendance of each child enrolled for each school day of the year. (F.S.1003.23 (2))

- B. When a student accumulates five (5) absences during a grading period, other than out-of-school suspensions, whether excused or unexcused, school personnel shall make a good faith effort to contact the parent by telephone to discuss the reasons for the absences and shall document such contact.
- C. A letter shall be sent to the parent or guardian for a student who has had at least five unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month, or 10 unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90 calendar day period.
- D. If a child subject to compulsory school attendance will not comply with attempts to enforce school attendance, the Executive Director may file a truancy petition pursuant to the procedures set forth in Section §984.12, Florida Statutes.

## **5509 DISCIPLINE**

### **MISCONDUCT THAT MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINE (INCLUDING SUSPENSION, REASSIGNMENT OR EXPULSION):**

#### **IN GENERAL**

A student is expected to behave at school, school activities, and the school bus stop. A student may be disciplined if they do anything at school, a school activity, or the bus stop (or attempt to do anything) that violates a school rule or that may:

- 1. hurt, harass or threaten others;
- 2. damage property;
- 3. disrupt class or school;
- 4. violate a criminal law.

In all instances, school discipline should be reasonable, timely, fair, age-appropriate, and should match the severity of the student's misbehavior. Any disciplinary or prosecutorial action taken against a student who violates this policy must be based on particular circumstances of the student's misconduct.

In addition, students may be subject to discipline for violation of the Code even if that conduct occurs on property not owned or controlled by the Board but that is connected to activities or incidents that have occurred on property owned or controlled by the Board, or conduct that, regardless of where it occurs, is directed at a Board official or employee, or the property of such official or employee.

#### **SPECIFIC ACTS**

Listed below are some acts that fall within these four (4) types of misconduct. These acts are not the only acts that may result in discipline (including suspension, reassignment or expulsion). They are only examples. Other acts that are not listed below may result in discipline (including suspension, reassignment or expulsion) if a student should have known that the act might hurt, harass, or threaten others, damage property, disrupt class or school, or violate a criminal law. Some, but not all, of the acts that may result in discipline are:

- A. cheating (teacher shall also record a "zero" for each act of cheating);
- B. improper use of computers or electronic devices;
- C. threatening to hurt someone;
- D. hitting someone;
- E. using physical force against someone;



- F. stealing;
- G. fighting;
- H. extortion;
- I. blackmail;
- J. repeated misconduct;
- K. arson;
- L. vandalism;
- M. interference with school personnel;
- N. interference with the movement of another student;
- O. bullying;
- P. trespassing;
- Q. defiance;
- R. verbal abuse of another;
- S. profanity;
- T. failure to give correct name;
- U. participation in disruptive demonstration;
- V. leaving school grounds without permission;
- W. sexual activity at school, at a school activity, or on a school bus;
- X. sexual or other harassment;
- Y. making a false alarm (this includes pulling a fire alarm);
- Z. possession of common objects that could hurt someone (such as; pocketknives with a blade of four inches or shorter); -defense chemical spray,
- AA. possession of toy or replica gun or knife;
- BB. possession of drug paraphernalia;
- CC. possession of tobacco;
- FF. possession of hazardous material;
- GG. the use of cellular telephones, electronic communication devices and other electronic devices  
(See following section CELLULAR TELEPHONES, ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES, AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES);
- HH. violation of a school rule; (e.g. dress code violation)
- II. other serious misconduct which will lead to disciplinary consequences include but are not limited to the following: cyberstalking, sexting, gang participation or display of gang behavior, disseminating or posting to the internet any recordings of fighting or acts of -like bullying, assault, or battery, whether staged or real.

## **5510 MISCONDUCT THAT REQUIRES SPECIFIC CONSEQUENCES**

### **In General**

There are some things that result in a specific consequence if a student is found to have done them. These include acts involving:

- A. use of tobacco products;
- B. illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, and harmful substances;
- C. bombs and bomb threats;
- D. chemical and biological attacks or threats;
- E. guns, weapons, and dangerous objects;
- F. violent acts resulting in serious injury;

G. felony charges and convictions.

GACS promotes a safe and supportive learning environment in schools, to protect students and staff from conduct that poses a serious threat to school safety. GACS staff members are encouraged to use alternatives to expulsion or referral to law enforcement agencies unless otherwise required by law. School administrators shall provide consistent school-based discipline, where appropriate and authorized by policy.

Certain acts are considered a serious threat to schools safety and must be reported to law enforcement. These acts include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Possession or use of a bomb and making of a bomb threat;
- Chemical and biological attacks or threats; or
- Possession or use of a gun, weapon, or firearm.

Petty acts of misconduct and misdemeanors including, but not limited to, minor fights or disturbances, should ordinarily not be referred to law enforcement and should not ordinarily result in student arrest. Petty acts of misconduct are those that an administrator reasonably believes do not pose a threat to the safety of students, staff, volunteers, or other persons, or a threat of harm to Board property.

## **Tobacco and Nicotine**

### **A. Illegal Use of Tobacco**

GACS students are prohibited from possessing and using any types of tobacco products while on school grounds or participating in any GACS sponsored activity. Possession or use of tobacco products is considered as a violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

### **B. Violation of Code of Student Conduct**

If a student is caught using any form of tobacco or nicotine product at school, at any school-sponsored activity, at a bus stop, or on the bus, the student will be suspended for three (3) days.

For purposes of this policy, "possession or use of tobacco and nicotine products" shall mean tobacco products, including cigars, cigarettes, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff, or any other matter or substances that contain tobacco or nicotine as well as any uses of electronic cigarette/cigar or any other product designed to imitate any of the products mentioned herein regardless of whether it contains tobacco or nicotine.

## **ILLEGAL DRUGS, ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, HARMFUL, AND OTHER SUBSTANCES**

### **A. GACS Students**

If a student violates this policy for the first or second time, the Head Master will suspend the student for ten (10) days and, if appropriate, may recommend reassignment. Before a student may return to school, the student's parent must have a conference with the Head Master or someone designated by the Head Master. If the student's parent agrees that s/he will complete an approved drug or alcohol educational program, the student's suspension will be reduced to five (5) days. The program specialist must provide proof that the student successfully completed the educational program within the allocated period of time. If the student violates this policy a third time while in elementary school, then s/he will be suspended for ten (10) days and may be recommended for expulsion

## B. Policy

A student may not possess illegal drugs (including prescription drugs that are not the student's own) or alcoholic beverages use them or are under the influence of them:

1. on school property,
2. on a school bus or at a bus stop,
3. at any school activity,
4. before a student arrives on school grounds,
5. before a student arrives at any school activity, or
6. on any field trip.

## C. Purchase, Sale and Distribution

A student may not sell, purchase, or distribute illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages. Additionally, a student may not be involved in negotiating the sale or purchase of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages at school, at a school activity, or on a school bus, even if the sale/purchase does not actually take place.

## D. Definition of Illegal Drugs

"Illegal drugs" include any drug that is illegal under Florida law such as marijuana, cocaine, and heroin as well as prescription drugs for which a student does not have a valid prescription.

"Illegal drugs" also include any prescription drug that is not used as prescribed or that is in the possession of someone whose name is not on the prescription. This means that a student may not give his/her prescription medication to anyone else.

## E. Guilty of Unlawful Sale or Possession

If a student has been found guilty or delinquent for the unlawful sale or possession of any controlled substance as defined in F.S. Chapter 893, the student may be suspended for ten (10) days and recommended for expulsion.

## F. Fake Drugs

If a student is caught in possession of or caught distributing a substance that is represented to be an illegal drug, s/he will be suspended for ten (10) days. The student may ask to have the ten (10) day suspension reduced to five (5) days by participating in a work back program which would include the completion of an approved drug or alcohol assessment

# 5511 WAIVER OF THE DISCIPLINE OR EXPULSION

Any student who is subject to discipline or expulsion for unlawful possession or use of any substance controlled under F.S. Chapter 893 may be entitled to a waiver of the discipline or expulsion under the following conditions:

- A. If the student divulges information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person who supplied such controlled substance to him/her, or if the student voluntarily discloses his/her unlawful possession of such controlled substance prior to his/her arrest. Any information divulged which leads to such arrest and conviction is not admissible in evidence in a subsequent criminal trial against the student divulging such information.
- B. If the student commits himself/herself, or is referred by the court in lieu of sentence, to a State licensed residential drug abuse program and successfully completes the program. -

A student may be disciplined or expelled for unlawful possession or use of any substance controlled under F.S. Chapter 893 upon the third violation of this provision.

## **5512 BOMBS AND BOMB THREATS**

If a student is involved in the making of a bomb, plans for a bomb or a fake bomb, for use at school or at a school activity or while the student is at school or a school activity, s/he will be suspended for ten (10) days, recommended for expulsion, and reported to law enforcement for prosecution. The same actions will be taken if a student makes a bomb threat by any means that causes a disruption.

## **5513 CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL ATTACK OR THREATS**

If a student is involved in the making of a chemical or biological attack or threat against the school, a school function, or anybody at school or a school function, s/he will be suspended for ten (10) days, recommended for expulsion, and reported to law enforcement for prosecution to the fullest extent of the law. This applies whether or not the attack or threat is real or fake.

## **5514 GUNS, WEAPONS, AND DANGEROUS OBJECTS GUNS:**

Any student who brings a gun to school, to any school function, or on any school-sponsored transportation, or any student who possesses or exhibits a gun at school, at any school function, or on any school-sponsored transportation, shall be suspended for ten (10) days and recommended for expulsion for not less than one (1) full year. Guns shall mean firearms as defined by F.S. 790 and include any objects (whether operable or inoperable), including starter guns, which will fire a projectile by the action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, any firearm muffler or silencer, or any destructive device. Guns also include any weapons which are designed to or may readily be converted to such purpose.

### **Weapons:**

Any student who brings a weapon to school, to any school function, or on any school-sponsored transportation, or any student who possesses or exhibits a weapon at school, at any school function, or on any school-sponsored transportation, shall be suspended for ten (10) days and recommended for expulsion. Weapons as defined by F.S. 790 are any objects such as, but not limited to, the following: dirks, metallic knuckles, slingshots, billies, tear gas guns, chemical weapons or devices, knives or other deadly weapons, other than common pocketknives (blade of four (4) inches or less which are considered a dangerous object), plastic knives, or blunt bladed table knives.

If a student at a school function and are in a specific area or room where there is a gun or weapon, then s/he may be considered to be in possession of the gun or weapon if the Head Master believes the evidence shows that s/he knew about the gun or weapon and chose to remain in the area or room. If a student become aware that another student has a gun or weapon, s/he is expected to alert a school staff immediately.

### **Dangerous Objects:**

Dangerous objects include, but are not limited to, common pocketknives with a blade of four (4) inches or less, ice picks, razor blades, box cutters, air guns, bb guns, pellet guns, or spring guns of any sort (whether operable or inoperable).

Any student who brings a dangerous object to school, to any school function, or on any school-sponsored transportation, or any student who possesses or exhibits a dangerous object at school, at any school function, or on any school sponsored transportation, with use or threatened use in an offensive or defensive manner, will be suspended for ten (10) days and recommended for expulsion.

Any student who brings, possesses or exhibits a dangerous object at school, or to any school function, or on any school-sponsored transportation, without the use or threatened use in an offensive or defensive manner, is guilty of a serious breach of conduct and that student will be suspended from school for ten (10) days and may be recommended for reassignment or expulsion.

## **5515 VIOLENT ACTS RESULTING IN SERIOUS INJURY**

If a student violently attacks another person or acts as a decoy in a physical attack at school, a school function, on the bus or at a bus stop and that person is seriously injured, the student will be suspended from school for ten (10) days and recommended for expulsion. If the attack by the student was unprovoked, even if there was no serious injury, the student will be suspended from school and may be reassigned or recommended for expulsion.

If a student violently attacks another person somewhere else other than school, s/he may be removed from the general education program and administratively assigned to another program when there is evidence that the student's presence on campus may be disruptive.

## **5516 CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES**

### **IN GENERAL**

By riding a school bus the student consents to being videotaped and audio recorded while riding the bus.

Parents are responsible for providing the necessary assistance, protection and overall safety of their student while going to and from the bus stop.

Parents are responsible for their child's behavior at the bus stop prior to the arrival of the bus in the morning and after the departure of the bus at the end of the day. However, if a student is at the bus stop and violates the school rules, the school can still discipline the student for his/her behavior.

Students should arrive at the stop 5 to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time and stand off the roadway in a safe location where they are outdoors and visible to the driver. Students should remain at the stop up to 30 minutes after the scheduled pick up time in case the bus is running late.

GACS seeks to ensure the safety of all students who ride GACS buses and staff who operate them. Unauthorized individuals including, but not limited to: parents, students, and siblings may not board a school bus or attempt to conference with a bus driver or authorized rider, while en route to or from school. Individuals who do not adhere to this expectation may face criminal prosecution for trespassing, in addition to other charges which may be brought pursuant to local and State law.

Any concerns related to transportation should be communicated to the Head Master or Executive Director.

If a student causes any damage to the bus or another vehicle, the student's parent shall be responsible to pay for the damage.



### **Students must follow all safety procedures when loading/unloading from the bus:**

- Be ready to board the bus
- Cross in front of the bus (10 to 12 ft)
- Do not cross street until stop arms are fully deployed and all traffic has stopped
- Parents are responsible for insuring their student arrives and departs from the designated stop safely.

### **THINGS A STUDENT CANNOT BRING ON A BUS:**

- A. glass containers of any kind
- B. sharp objects
- C. balls
- D. bats
- E. roller skates
- F. skateboards
- G. cutting instruments of any kind
- H. any large or bulky item that interferes with proper seating of students (examples: large musical instruments or athletic equipment) (Items must fit on the student's lap)
- I. any animal (dead or alive)
- J. batons, drum sticks, tennis rackets (unless in proper carrying case)
- K. or any other item prohibited elsewhere in the Code of Student Conduct

### **RULES WHILE ON THE BUS**

The bus driver is in charge and the student must obey the driver's instructions at all times. The student must provide the bus driver his/her correct name when asked. The bus driver and school may keep an assigned seating chart. The student can be disciplined if s/he does not follow all GACS and school rules and the following special rules:

- A. sit in the student's assigned seat if appropriate and use the seat belt if available
- B. stay seated at all times while the bus is in motion
- C. do not put any part of a student's body outside the bus windows
- D. do not distract the driver with loud conversation or noises
- E. do not eat or drink on the bus
- F. maintain absolute silence at all times when bus is stopped at railroad crossings
- G. do not throw any items on the bus or out of the bus windows
- H. do not mark, cut or damage bus seats or the bus itself
- I. do not display signs from the bus
- J. do not use obscene language or gestures
- K. no pushing/kicking/hitting/spitting
- L. no bullying
- M. emergency door is only to be used when there is an emergency. If there is an emergency, the student must follow the driver's instructions.

### **DISCIPLINE IF A STUDENT DOES NOT FOLLOW THE RULES**

The GACS Board of Directors believes that the student and his/her fellow students, as well as the bus driver, should be able to ride safely on school buses. Therefore if a student misbehaves, s/he may be removed from the bus.

If a student commits minor infractions, the school bus driver has the authority to address his/her behavior. Minor infractions include but are not limited to:

- chewing gum
- eating on the bus
- general use of profanity
- being too loud and disruptive

If a student causes repeated problems on the bus by doing something the bus driver considers a more serious rule violation, the bus driver will report the student to the school office. The bus driver will give the school a written referral about what the student did. Major infractions include but are not limited to:

- sitting inappropriately
- throwing paper or items in or out of the bus
- spitting, rough housing, fighting, pushing, kicking, hitting
- inappropriate touching
- not using assigned bus stop
- moving while bus is in motion
- noisy at railroad crossings
- unsafe street crossing
- possession of tobacco products, drugs or alcohol
- spraying scents or perfumes while in the bus
- weapons of any type
- profanity directed to an adult

School administrators can take any of the following disciplinary steps against a student for misbehaving at a bus stop or on a bus, and will notify the student's parents, on an approved form, when they take any of these steps:

- A. Warn the student that his/her behavior is not allowed and if repeated, may result in further discipline as well as suspension of his/her bus riding privilege
- B. Discipline the student the same as if s/he had misbehaved at school.
- C. Suspend the student from riding the bus. Parents are responsible for transporting their student to and from schools during the suspension from the school bus.
- D. Expel the student from riding a school bus if previous discipline has not worked or if s/he commits a serious offense. The process by which a student is expelled from riding the bus is the same as the process for being expelled from school. The Head Master makes a recommendation to the Executive Director, who then recommends it to the Board. If fewer than thirty (30) school days remain in the semester when the Board considers the issue then the expulsion will include the remainder of the current semester as well as the designated semesters of expulsion.
- E. Appeal of Bus Suspension

A student's parent may appeal a bus suspension by calling the school principal or assistant principal. The parent must come to the school and have a conference with a school administrator and a representative from the transportation department as part of the appeal. The student may be permitted to ride a bus pending the outcome of his/her bus suspension appeal as long as s/he behaves. If expulsion has been recommended, a student cannot ride a bus until the Board rules on his/her expulsion.



If a student engages in violent or very unsafe behavior while riding the bus, the school shall additionally suspend his/her bus riding privileges until the school can hold a conference with the student's parent. The school will then determine whether to take additional disciplinary steps, including bus expulsion, and whether to impose further rules for the student's return to bus riding

## **5517 DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

The use of corporal punishment is prohibited. However, school personnel may use reasonable force to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment. Any use of reasonable force shall be in accordance with GACS Board of Directors policy and State Board of Education rules. The prohibition against the use of corporal punishment also extends to parents or guardians on school grounds. The following types of discipline may be used, as well as those found in the GACS discipline plan.

### **DETENTION**

A student can receive a detention either before school or after school. The school will give the student's parent twenty-four (24) hours' notice before s/he serves the detention. The administrator must contact the student's parent and have a conversation with the student's parent before the student serves the detention. If the administrator is unable to contact the student's parent by telephone, the student will still be required to serve the detention. The administrator must document that an attempt to contact the student's parent was made. The student's parent is responsible for the student's transportation when s/he has detention.

### **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

A student can be assigned and sent to designated rooms or programs during the school day. A student will receive full credit for class work completed while in the assigned room or program and his/her absence will be a Code 6.

### **REMOVAL FROM CLASS**

A teacher may require that a student be removed from class if it has been documented that his/her behavior has seriously disrupted the teaching or learning in the classroom. If a student is removed from a class the Head Master may place the student in another appropriate classroom, in-school suspension, or the Head Master may recommend the student for suspension or expulsion.

A student cannot be returned to that teacher's classroom unless the teacher. A decision on whether to return a student to the classroom must be made by the teacher or the committee within (5) days of the removal.

### **PARENT SHADOWS STUDENT**

With reasonable notice, and if the Head Master and the parent agree, the parent will attend classes with a student for a day or specific period of time.

### **OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

A student can be suspended from school for up to ten (10) days at a time. If a student is suspended s/he cannot be on school grounds or attend any school activities. The administrator may consider the following before deciding to suspend a student:

- A. has the student been sent to the administrator at least once before?
- B. has the student's parent been told that his/her behavior is a problem and that s/he may be suspended:
- C. has the student been given a work assignment before?
- D. has the student been referred to an outside agency for assistance?

There are circumstances under which the administration will suspend a student on the first offense.

## **EXPULSION**

An expulsion means that a student cannot attend GACS except as allowed by the Board. If a student commits an offense that is considered exceedingly serious, (a student causes critical human injury, extensive property damage, or excessive school disruption) the Board may decide refer the student for appropriate resources provided by external community resources.

## **5518 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES (HOW CAN A STUDENT SOLVE PROBLEMS OTHER THAN SUSPENSIONS OR EXPULSIONS)**

If parents or students have a problem with a teacher or an administrator, or disagrees with their decision on some matter other than suspensions or expulsions, they are encouraged to attempt to solve the problem or disagreement directly with the teacher or administrator. If the parent is unsatisfied with the outcome of the conference with the teacher or administrator, s/he may request a hearing with the GACS Board of Directors. Decisions involving suspensions or expulsions are governed by the discipline procedures in the Code of Student Conduct. This policy does not apply to complaints of discrimination or harassment on the basis of the student's age, sex, race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, or other characteristics protected by federal or state law or Board policy.

## **5519 POLICY AGAINST BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

### **STATEMENT PROHIBITING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of the GACS Board of Directors that all of its students, employees, and volunteers learn and work in an environment that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The Board will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited. This policy shall be interpreted and applied consistently with all applicable State and Federal laws. Conduct that constitutes bullying, harassment, or discrimination, as defined herein and in F.S. 1006.147, is prohibited.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **A. Bullying**

Includes cyberbullying and means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one (1) or more students or employees and may involve but is not limited to:

- 1. teasing

2. social exclusion
3. threat
4. intimidation
5. stalking, including cyberstalking as defined herein
6. physical violence
7. theft
8. sexual, religious, or racial harassment
9. public or private humiliation
10. destruction of property

## B. Harassment

Any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or employee that:

1. places a student or employee in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property;
2. has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits;
3. has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

## C. Bullying" and "Harassment" also encompasses:

1. Retaliation against a student or employee by another student or employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.
2. Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying or harassment by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by:
  - incitement or coercion;
  - accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of GACS school system;
  - acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying or harassment.

## D. Cyberbullying

Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes, but is not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

## E. Cyberstalking

Engaging in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose. (see F.S. 784.048(1)(d))

In addition, "bullying", "cyberstalking", and "harassment" (hereinafter referred to as "bullying" for the purpose of this policy) also encompass, but are not limited to, unwanted harm towards a student or employee in regard to their real or perceived: sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability (physical, mental, or educational), marital status, socio-economic background, ancestry, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, linguistic preference, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or social/family background, or being viewed as different in its education programs or admissions to education programs and, therefore, prohibits bullying of any student or employee by any Board member, Board employee, consultant, contractor, agent, visitor, volunteer, student, or other person in the school or outside the school at school-sponsored events, on school buses, at a school bus stop, and at training facilities or training programs sponsored by GACS.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE OF BEHAVIOR EXPECTED FROM EACH STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE**

The Board expects students to conduct themselves as appropriate for their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities, and expects students and employees to conduct themselves appropriately with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.

The Board believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents/legal guardians, staff, and community members producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, including obeying and responding to those who hold lawful authority, as well as for GACS and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers will demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate harassment or bullying.

The Board upholds that bullying of any student or employee is prohibited:

- A. during any education program or activity conducted by a GACS school;
- B. during any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity;
- C. on a school bus or at a school bus stop; or
- D. through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of GACS school system. "Within the scope of GACS school system" means, regardless of ownership, any computer, computer system, or computer network that is physically located on school property or at a school-related or school-sponsored program or activity.
- E. through the use of data or computer software that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by GACS, if the bullying substantially interferes with or limits the victim's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by GACS or substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of the school.

Student rights shall be as outlined in this policy and in the Code of Student Conduct. To positively reinforce good conduct, self-discipline, good citizenship, and academic success, the Executive Director, along with the support and assistance of the Head Master, shall continue and, as needed, expand GACS's student recognition programs and publicly congratulate students exhibiting exemplary qualities in these areas.

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR A STUDENT OR EMPLOYEE WHO COMMITS AN ACT OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT**

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for an employee found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment may be disciplined in accordance with GACS policies, procedures. Additionally, egregious acts of harassment by certified educators may result in a sanction against an educator's state issued certificate. (See State Board of Education Rule F.A.C. 6B1.006, The Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida.) Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR A STUDENT OR EMPLOYEE WHO IS FOUND TO HAVE WRONGFULLY AND INTENTIONALLY ACCUSED ANOTHER OF AN ACT OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT**

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for an employee found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment may be disciplined in accordance with GACS policies, procedures, and agreements. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials. Accusations made in good faith, even though subsequently determined to be false, shall not be subject to discipline, consequences, or remedial action as called for by this section.

## **REPORTING AN ACT OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR ANONYMOUS REPORTING**

The Head Master is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school-based employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the Head. All other members of the school community, including students, parents/legal guardians, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy anonymously or in-person to the Head.

The Head Master shall establish and prominently publicize to students, staff, volunteers, and parents/legal guardians, how a report of bullying may be filed either in-person or anonymously and how this report will be acted upon. The victim of bullying, anyone who witnessed the bullying, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying has taken place may file a report of bullying. An employee, school volunteer, student, parent/legal guardian or other persons who promptly reports in good faith an act of bullying or harassment to the appropriate official and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures set forth in GACS policy is immune from a cause of action for damages arising out of the reporting itself or any failure to remedy the reported incident. Submission of a good faith complaint or

report of bullying or harassment will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, learning or working environment, or work assignments.

Written and oral reports shall be considered official reports. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

### **INVESTIGATION OF WHETHER A REPORTED ACT OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT IS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF GACS SCHOOL SYSTEM AND, IF NOT, REFERRAL OF SUCH AN ACT TO THE APPROPRIATE JURISDICTION**

The Head Master may assign a designee(s) who is trained in investigative procedures to initiate an investigation of whether an act of bullying or harassment is within the scope of GACS. The trained designee(s) will provide a report on results of investigation with recommendations for the Head Master to make a determination if an act of bullying or harassment falls within the scope of GACS and will act according to the following protocols:

- A. If it is within the scope of GACS, further investigation will commence in accordance with *Prompt Investigation of a Report of Bullying or Harassment and the Persons Responsible for the Investigation* below.
- B. If it is outside the scope of GACS, and reasonably suspected to be a criminal act, refer to appropriate law enforcement, and inform parents/legal guardians of all students involved.
- C. If it is outside the scope of GACS, and determined not a criminal act, inform parents/legal guardians of all students involved.

### **PROMPT INVESTIGATION OF A REPORT OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT AND THE PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INVESTIGATION**

The investigation of a reported act of bullying or harassment is deemed to be a school-related activity and begins with a report of such an act.

The procedures for investigating bullying and/or harassment include:

- A. The Head Master/Executive Director selects a designee(s), employed or contracted by GACS, trained in investigative procedures to initiate the investigation. The designee(s) may not be the accused perpetrator (harasser or bully) or victim.
- B. Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses) will be interviewed separately and at no time will the alleged perpetrator and victim be interviewed together.
- C. The investigator shall collect and evaluate the facts including, but not limited to:
  1. description of incident including nature of the behavior; context in which the alleged incident occurred, etc.;
  2. how often the conduct occurred;
  3. whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior;
  4. the relationship between the parties involved;
  5. the characteristics of parties involved (i.e., grade, age, etc.);
  6. the identity of the perpetrator, including whether the perpetrator was in a position of power over the student allegedly subjected to bullying or harassment;
  7. the number of alleged bullies/harassers;
  8. the age(s) of the alleged bullies/harassers;
  9. where the bullying and/or harassment occurred; and
  10. whether the conduct adversely affected the student victim's education or educational environment or the employee victim's work environment.

- D. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances and includes:
1. recommended remedial steps necessary to stop the bullying and/or harassing behavior;
  2. a written final report to the Head Master/Executive Director.

Where the victim is a student, according to the severity of the infraction, the Head Master or designee shall promptly notify the parent/legal guardian of the victim of any actions being taken to protect the victim. The frequency of notification will depend on the severity of the bullying incident.

The initial filing of incidents and completion of the investigative procedural steps shall be completed within ten (10) school days, unless circumstances require a longer period, in which case it shall be completed within a reasonable time.

### **DETERMINATION OF DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS OR CONSEQUENCES AND DUE PROCESSES FOR A PERSON WHO COMMITS AN ACT OF BULLYING UNDER THIS POLICY**

Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances, followed by the determination of disciplinary sanctions appropriate to the perpetrator's position within GACS.

Consequences and appropriate interventions for students who commit acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to, but not limited to suspension, reassignment, or expulsion as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

Consequences and appropriate interventions for a school/GACS employee found to have committed an act of bullying will be instituted in accordance with Board policy. Additionally, egregious acts of bullying by certified educators may result in a sanction against an educator's State issued certificate (Rule F.A.C. 6B-1.006).

Consequences and appropriate intervention for a visitor or volunteer, found to have committed an act of bullying shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.

These same actions will apply to persons, whether they be students, school employees, or visitors/volunteers/independent contractors, who are found to have made wrongful and intentional accusations of another as a means of bullying.

If a complaint of bullying or harassment is made by the alleged victim during or after the commencement of an investigation into employee or student misconduct, it shall not be a defense to the allegations employee or student misconduct but may be considered as a mitigating factor under Board policy, if appropriate.

#### **Providing Immediate Notification to the Parents/Legal Guardians of a Student Victim of Bullying or Harassment and the Parents/Legal Guardians of the Student Perpetrator of an Act of Bullying or Harassment as well as Notification to all Local Agencies Where Criminal Charges may be Pursued Against the Perpetrator**

The Head Master, or designee, shall report the occurrence of any incident of bullying as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation of the incident has been initiated. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

Once the investigation has been completed, appropriate local law enforcement agencies will be notified to determine whether to pursue criminal charges.

## **REFERRAL OF VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS OF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT FOR COUNSELING**

The Executive Director shall establish a procedure to refer victims and perpetrators of bullying or harassment for counseling, including a protocol for intervening when bullying or harassment is suspected or when a bullying incident is reported. The procedure shall include:

- A. a process by which the teacher or parent/legal guardian may request informal consultation with school staff (specialty staff, e.g., school counselor, school psychologist, etc.) to determine severity of concern and appropriate steps to address the concern (the involved students' parents or legal guardian may be included);
- B. a referral process to provide professional assistance or services that includes:
  - 1. a process by which school personnel or parent/legal guardian may refer a student to the school intervention team (or equivalent school for consideration of appropriate services; (Parent -based team with a problem or legal guardian involvement -solving focus) is required at this point.)
  - 2. if a formal discipline report or formal complaint is made, the Head Master or designee must refer the student(s) to the school intervention team for determination of counseling support and interventions; (Parent or legal guardian involvement is required at this point.)
  - 3. referral of school personnel to the Employee Assistance Program;
- C. a school-based component to address intervention and assistance as determined appropriate by the intervention team that includes:
  - 1. counseling and support to address the needs of the victims of bullying or harassment;
  - 2. interventions to address the behavior of the students who bully and harass others (e.g., empathy training, anger management);
  - 3. intervention which includes assistance and support provided to parents/legal guardians, if deemed necessary or appropriate.

### **Providing Instruction to Students, Parents/Legal Guardians, Teachers, School Administrators, Counseling Staff, and School Volunteers on Identifying, Preventing, and Responding to Bullying or Harassment**

The Board seeks to ensure that GACS sustain healthy, positive, and safe learning environments for all students. It is important to change the social climate of the school and the social norms with regards to bullying. This requires the efforts of everyone in the school environment – teachers, administrators, other non-teaching staff (such as bus drivers, custodians, and/or cafeteria workers), parents/legal guardians, and students.

Students, parents/legal guardians, teachers, school administrators, and school volunteers shall be given instruction at a minimum on an annual basis on GACS's policy and regulations against bullying and harassment.

## **TRAINING**

GACS will conduct training for students, parents, teachers, school administrators, student support staff, counseling staff, bus drivers, School Resource Officers/Deputies, and school volunteers on identifying,



preventing, and responding to bullying. At the beginning of each school year, the school Head Master/designee and GACS administrator shall provide notice of this policy, as well as the process for reporting incidents, investigation, and appeal to students, school staff, parents, or other persons responsible for the welfare of a student through appropriate references in the Code of Student Conduct, the school website, and/or through other reasonable means.

## **REGULARLY REPORTING TO A VICTIM'S PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS THE ACTIONS TAKEN TO PROTECT THE VICTIM**

According to the level of infraction, parents/legal guardians will be notified of actions being taken to protect the child; the frequency of notification will depend on the seriousness of the bullying or harassment incident. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

## **5520 CELLULAR TELEPHONES, ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES, AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

*It is highly recommended that GACS students not bring such devices to school.* Students bringing such devices to school must have them powered off during the school day to ensure that there are no disruptions during class time. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or confiscation of the cellular telephone, ECD, or electronic device. If the cellular telephone, ECD, or electronic device is confiscated, it will be released/returned to a parent unless an alternative arrangement is agreed to by the Head Master (or designee)

Students may not use cellular telephones, or other electronic devices on school property or at a school-sponsored activity to access and/or view Internet web sites that are otherwise blocked to students at school.

The student who brings a cellular telephone, ECD, or other electronic device to school does so at his/her own risk. The student who possesses a cellular telephone, ECD, or other electronic device is responsible for its care.

Any cellular telephone, ECD, or other electronic device left behind on a GACS school bus will be retained school until retrieved either by the student or parent possessing proper identification.

GACS Board of Directors staff is not responsible for preventing theft, loss, damage, or vandalism to cellular telephones, ECDs, or other electronic devices brought onto its property, or left on school buses, including any electronic device confiscated due to inappropriate use.

## **5521 COMMUNICATIONS WITH STUDENTS VIA ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

- (1) The GACS Board of Directors encourages positive and professional communication between staff and students by means which best protect the interests of all concerned.
- (2) The GACS Board of Directors has provided staff with the means to communicate electronically with students concerning school matters. For staff to communicate on school matters with students by personal electronic means when sufficient GACS Board of Directors means are available is prohibited. Such communication could cause the appearance of inappropriate association with students.

Accordingly, staff shall utilize GACS Board of Directors resources in all electronic communications with students regarding school matters provided, however, private electronic media, such as a cellphone, may be used when GACS resources are not available, when such use is in the best interest of all concerned.

(3) Staff communications with students via private electronic media concerning non-school related matters are governed in part by, and may lead to discipline under, Board Policies 1140, 3140, and 4140.

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOL

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOL CLOSINGS IN AN EMERGENCY CLOSINGS IN AN EMERGENCY

Residents in Florida know the dangers of inclement weather especially during the hurricane season. Residents in Florida know the dangers of inclement weather especially during the season.

While very infrequent, there may be times when our schools may have to close to protect our students and be reopened as emergency shelters for the community. While very infrequent, there may be times when our schools may have to close to

protect our students and be reopened as emergency shelters with his staff and the Pinellas County Emergency Operations for the community. The superintendent in consultation

with his staff and the Pinellas County Emergency Operations for the community. The superintendent in consultation with his staff and the office makes decisions regarding the closing of public schools. *Galloway Academy Charter Schools* Pinellas County Emergency Operations office makes decisions regarding the works closely with our local television and radio media outlets to inform the public when closing of public schools. *Galloway Academy*

*Charter School*s works closely with our local school closings occur. In addition, GACS maintains its own public information television and radio media outlets to inform the public when school closings telephone number that provides information on a daily basis regarding the status of schools occur. In addition, GACS maintains its own public information telephone

being in session. GACS website, [www.pcsb.org](http://www.pcsb.org), also provides updated information number that provides information on a daily basis regarding the status of schools

and a link to Emergency Shelter Information. being in session. GACS website, [www.pcsb.org](http://www.pcsb.org), also provides updated information and a link to Emergency Shelter Information.

A recorded message will be provided each day regarding any changes in school openings or closings. The recording will be updated as additional information becomes available. A recorded message will be provided each day regarding any changes in school openings or closings. The recording will be updated as additional information

The following media outlets will also provide up-to-date information to the public in the becomes available.

event a school closing occurs or if the student day must be shortened due to emergency conditions: The following media outlets will also provide up-to-date information to the public in the event a school closing occurs or if the student day must be shortened due to

WFLA-Ch. 8 emergency conditions:  
BAY NEWS-Ch. 9

WTSP-Ch. 10 WFLA-Ch. 8

WTVT-Ch. 13 BAY NEWS-Ch. 9

WPDS-Ch. 14 *Galloway Academy Charter Schools* WTSP-Ch. 10

WFTS-Ch. 28 WTVT-Ch. 13

WUSF 89.7 radio WPDS-Ch. 14 *Galloway Academy Charter Schools*

WFLA 970 radio WFTS-Ch. 28

WUSF 89.7 radio

Should schools close during the day when students are already in attendance, information  
WFLA 970 radio

will be provided through GACS's automated phone notification system  
and our local media outlets. GACS emergency information telephone line (727-588-6424)  
will Should schools close during the day when students are already in attendance,  
provide additional details regarding specific times for release of students or their transfer to  
information will be provided through GACS's automated phone notification another site  
if necessary during an emergency evacuation.

system and line (727-588- our loc6424)al  
media outlets will provide additional details regarding specific times . GACS  
emergency information telephone for release of students or their transfer to another site  
if necessary during an emergency evacuation.